



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

MONDAY 4.18.22

Help! I've Fallen

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:1-6

This passage comes from what is called “The Book of Consolation”, Jeremiah’s attempt to soothe and relieve the burdens of the long night of national grief the people of his country had experienced. Jeremiah recognizes Grace only comes at the end of a dark night. He tells the people God will return “again” as a reminder that when they turn back to their familiar celebrations, they will experience God’s grace over and over again.

- Why do we experience “dark nights”? When and where do you find yourself most lost?
- The more and more we fall, the harder and harder it gets to get walking again. If we believe “the worst thing is never the last thing”, how might it shape our day-to-day life and approach to our hurdles?

Prayer: God, we lay awake some nights searching for answers, for the courage to get out of bed in the morning. You always offer us grace. Give me a drop of your peace and a large dose of strength to face the day. Amen.

TUESDAY 4.19.22

Compass of Light

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-4

Colossians reminds us sin isn’t about our behavior, but about our spirit’s orientation which tends to bend away from God. Some people believe if you can control your desires and passions it will lead to peacefulness. This would probably work if we could control our desires and passions. “Being Good” is a gift from God and comes from constantly returning to God’s guidance.

- Are we more concerned about outward behaviors or inward heart? How do you think they are related?
- How can you reorient yourself in the midst of the darkness?

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, you know our faults and have heard our prayers. You have ripped apart the barriers that separate us from God and opened us to the grace of God through your sacrifice of love on a cross, and your resurrection from the dead. Promise of God, fill your people and give us peace. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 4.20.22

Abstract Truth

Scripture: Acts 10:34-43

Peter uses Jesus’ resurrection as proof of God’s commitment to humanity because he sacrificed not only his life, but his standing with God. God’s embrace of all people has been made concrete in his willingness to die on the cross for all people. The fact Jesus came as a specific person, in a specific place, reaffirms God’s promise to Israel and allows for its expansion to all people.

- The message was clear; those who believed (regardless of nation, class, color or culture) in Christ would receive the forgiveness God offered to all. Does our faith in Christ’ name help us to see everyone as God’s child?
- How can you trust in something which isn’t tangible, but proven only by other people’s stories?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, like Peter, I keep finding a need to grow even in areas I thought I was done with. Thank you for your ongoing grace, for urging me to grow even when I’m comfortable. Amen.

THURSDAY 4.21.22

Manifesting the Future

Scripture: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

God's assurance of care and concern for you, individually you, is timeless and not dependent on your earning or deserving it. In this Psalm, God sees possibility even for the stones rejected by the builders. Our ability to recognize God's saving action is essential to understanding our position and role in creation. God will act. We simply need to be present in the day to see God's promise at work.

- How does dependence on God actually make faith more difficult?
- Make a list of things you can praise God for in this day. How does this list help you to be aware of how God is present?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to trust you even when life gets hard. Give me the strength and patience I need to deal with life's struggles, the ones I am facing now and any others in the future. Amen.

FRIDAY 4.22.22

Rolling Stones

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

The two women were present for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Life crises change us. An indescribable event forever changed the women who visited the tomb of their beloved master. They came to grieve. They left with a message that would change the world. Dramatic moments can turn deep sorrow to joy overflowing, distress into transcendent peace. The results of these moments, however, depend upon our environment and our inner disposition. The people and events that step into these moments of change are just as important as an inner sense of balance.

- How has tragedy touched your life? How have you reacted? How have you grown from the experience?
- How does faith in the Resurrection change your outlook on tragedy? On death?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, you walked into the most awful prison: the prison of death. But you went there to break those dark doors wide open. Thank you for bringing light into darkness, life out of death. Amen.

SATURDAY 4.23.22

The future is scary

Scripture: Luke 20:41 – 21:28

For Jesus, true worth lay in people like the humble widow, whose tiny gift only he saw. And worse lay ahead—the end of the Temple, where devout Jews met God. Great hardship and suffering would follow. It all happened—Rome destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D. Despite this world's sad state, Jesus urged his listeners to keep faith whatever came. He told them, “Don't be alarmed...raise your heads, because your redemption is near” (21:9, 28).

- The Covid-19 pandemic did more harm than most of us could have dreamed. To Jesus' hearers, the Temple's destruction sounded just that incredible. How can trusting God is near help you not to “faint from fear,” but hold your head up even in times of pandemic or war?
- Life in a broken world gets tough. Scholar N. T. Wright said, “This is what it's about: not an exciting battle, with adrenalin flowing and banners flying, but the steady tread, of prayer and hope and scripture and sacrament and witness, day by day and week by week.” In what ways can you sustain the “steady tread” of your faith journey even through personal or world crises? What models of patient, steady faith can you draw on?

Prayer: Living Lord, I rejoice in your saving acts in the past. But even more, I eagerly look forward to the day when you fully establish your kingdom. Keep me faithfully on track until that day. Amen.