



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 5.2.22

Walking into the Tunnel

Scripture: Psalm 30

In response to an unknown event which caused a sense of impending doom, this Psalm was written as a reminder to sing praises. The Psalmist shows how God acts throughout the passage of time. The acts of the past shows God's faithfulness in the future.

- When you look at your past, where do you see God at work? How is that a foretaste of God's actions on your behalf in the future?
- Are we walking into the light of the future or do we remain stuck in the darkness of the tunnel which has become more familiar?

Prayer: God, help us to remember you have always been with us in the past. There is no certain way to secure the end of the story we desire, so help us to be thankful for the day and the blessings we have now. Amen.

TUESDAY 5.3.22

Religion vs. Faith

Scripture: Revelation 7:9-12

Sociologists define religion as anything which binds people together because of shared belief. If true, anything can become a religion, even a shared belief McDonald's is the best hamburger. This passage is the result of a confrontation between different groups of believers who defend their shared beliefs as the only true Christian religion.

- How are religion and faith different? Where are they the same?
- How can our "religion" complicate finding a deeper faith in the true God?

Prayer: Faith giving God, help us discover the ways in which our religion and other human structures prevent us from seeing and seeking the true gift of your grace given to us in faith. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 5.4.22

Working in a Coal Mine

Scripture: John 21:1-19

After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples were left without a leader. Despite Jesus' preparation of Peter for this role, the other disciples didn't trust his guidance. In this passage, Peter is given the opportunity to prove he has the right tools and skills to be the head of the disciple's family. In the end, all a leader needs is the ability to see Jesus.

- What leaders do you follow? Are they equipped with the "right tools" as defined by Peter's example?
- Peter's humility is what allowed him to get out of his own way enough to lead. How does our ego prevent us from being effective faith role models for others?

Prayer: Holy and loving God, Peter didn't appear on the service to be the right kind of leader. Help me to be like Peter, knowing all I need to serve is the ability to see you at work. Amen.

THURSDAY 5.5.22

Story of My Life

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Israel's response to struggle of exile and the journey through Sinai is a recommitment to faithfulness in heart, mind, and soul. They taught their children what was important by repeating shared stories which provided meaning and purpose, helping to shape their understanding of what it meant to be a part of Israel.

- What stories does your family tell about you? How have those stories shaped your identity?
- Are there stories which shape your identity? Which ones which have had a positive impact or have caused struggle and heartache? What about the ones you tell of others?

Prayer: God, you tell us we are your child. Help us to hear and share the stories which shape a life of service, generosity, open hearts, and strong minds. Amen.

FRIDAY 5.6.22

Resilient Ruth

Scripture: Ruth 1:1-8

Ruth and Naomi are heroes of the Biblical story, not because they conquered armies or defeated enemies or talked to kings. Naomi is a serious, thoughtful, intentional actor, while Ruth tends to be more emotional and spontaneous. Both are needed to emerge from their crisis through clear-headed intentional action. They go to Israel with eyes wide open on the difficulties and challenges they would face.

- We can hide from the truth of our situation. What truth do you need to acknowledge in order to move forward?
- Are you more likely to "shoot from the hip" when facing a time of trouble or do you spend time in careful thought? How might you become more like the other type of person in order to better emerge from crisis?

Prayer: God of Naomi and Ruth, help me to see your possibilities for the future and to act with intentional and purpose like Naomi, with the energy and enthusiasm of Ruth. Amen.

SATURDAY 5.7.22

Marvelous Mystery

Scripture: Hebrews 9:11-15

Hebrews is one of many Bible writers who attempt to explain the Mystery of Christ's atoning death. But this is an impossible problem. As theologian Matthew Henry put it, "The depth of the mystery of the sacrifice of Christ, we cannot dive into, the height we cannot comprehend. We cannot search out the greatness of it, or the wisdom, the love, the grace that is in it. But in considering the sacrifice of Christ, faith finds life, food, and refreshment."

- In some ways, our religion filled with activities and study can make it difficult to have a real holy encounter. How does the business of the "work" of faith influence your ability to worship God in wonder?
- Christianity is one of the few religions where we can encounter God instead of the High Priest doing it on our behalf. How does this shape your experience of faith?

Prayer: Jesus, in becoming human, you bridged the gap between God and humanity in order to restore the relationship in ways that nothing else can. Help me rejoice in your sacrifice on my behalf. Amen.