



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 6.6.22

Rejoice Always

Scripture: Philippians 4:1-7

It is possible to remember God and trust God when we are frightened, when we are sad, and even when we are happy. (Strangely, it is sometimes harder to do when we are busy being happy). This gives us a wonderful deep-inside-us joy, which is different than feeling “happy”, which is a feeling which drifts away. Philippians reminds us the source of lasting joy is trust.

- Paul tells us not to worry about anything. What do you worry about today? How can you give it over to God?
- Hearts have to be taught to be thankful. What is one thing you could add to your routine which would help you to be thankful by default?

Prayer: Life-giving God, heal our lives, that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds and offer you thanks from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TUESDAY 6.7.22

Prayer of Confession

Scripture: Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23

This Psalm is a litany of all the ways Israel has betrayed God in the past and, sort of, a promise not to do it again in the future. Except it's not anything the writer has done, but stuff other people have done instead. We are really good at pointing other people's faults.

- How can praying the confession as a group at the beginning of words help you acknowledge your own sin?
- Can God forgive the acts of the distant past? What role should the acts of our ancestors play in our own understanding of God's and our behavior.

Prayer: Faith giving God, help us remember we are valuable and important, even when the world tells us we are not. Enable to act out of security in your love, not the insecurity of our own vulnerability. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 6.8.22

Assurance of God's Grace

Scripture: Isaiah 25:1-9

Understanding this poem at a deep level requires either the knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem or the experience of having lived in a city that was destroyed (perhaps in a natural disaster). Many of us have not personally experienced the loss of everything we have, all we know, and been forced to a new place. But we have experienced loss. This story is the same kind of promise for the future that it was to Isaiah's original readers.

- How can you help restore others who have lost everything?
- When have you held on to the promises of God, despite the deepest kind of loss?

Prayer: God of all who wander in the wilderness, you go before us as beacon and guide. Lead us through all danger, sustain us through all desolation, and bring us home to the land you have prepared for us. Amen.

THURSDAY 6.9.22

Call to Worship

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-14

One commentator quipped that this parable should be “at least PG-13” rated. It is filled with details that on the surface don’t make sense. It is not a story but an allegory. But even if we understand allegories -- if God is the king why does God kill the unresponsive guests and burn their city and why does God send away the poor man who was swept into the feast because he wasn’t properly dressed? Ultimately, it is a reminder the church is God’s party and God chooses who is invited.

- What kind of presents could you bring to God’s party?
- Who do you need to invite to the party?

Prayer: Redeeming Sustainer, visit your people and pour out your strength and courage upon us, that we may hurry to make you welcome not only in our concern for others, but by serving them generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

FRIDAY 6.10.22

Prayer of the People

Scripture: Psalm 23

I just recently noticed all of the danger in this Psalm. It is most often used as a Psalm of comfort – it is read at funerals all the time – but it’s really a parable about the ways God leads us through the dangers of life. David is worried. Will there be enough to eat, will there be enough to drink or might I get swept away trying to drink from water that is too fast for me?

- What are the dangers you see at the edges of your life? Maybe write down a list to make those fears concrete.
- Looking at your list, what would happen if you saw Jesus amidst it? How is God leading you through the uncertainty?

Prayer: God of the worried, help us to see where you are in the midst of our worries. Amen.

SATURDAY 6.11.22

Charge and Benediction

Scripture: Exodus 32:1-14

John Calvin, the great Presbyterian theologian, described this passage as one which deals with the human tendency to idolatry. He said, “the root of Idolatry is when men think that God is not present, unless they see him physically.” And it’s true, we often fall into the I’ll believe it when I see it mentality. For those who can’t physically see God, we need to look for the evidence which isn’t physical to help us put our trust in the right places.

- Moses “talks back” to God in this passage. Have you ever given God a piece of your mind? Why?
- In the Lord’s Prayer, we ask about God to “Lead us not into temptation”. When you pray that section of the Lord’s Prayer, what comes to mind? What are you asking God to do?

Prayer: Lord, sometimes we think we cannot do what is needed on our own. We studied for a test, but fear we don’t know all the answers. We did not study and know we don’t know the answers. We have been assigned a task we fear we cannot do. We are tempted to cheat or plagiarize. When we are scared, help us not to be tempted by the whispers of sin. Amen. - Prayer by Carolyn Brown