



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 7.18.22

Stranger Things

Scripture: Revelation 1:5-6, 9-13

John began the telling of us vision from God with a greeting. This greeting doesn't seem at all connected with the strangeness – and the horror – of what is to come in the rest of John's book. It almost feels like a bait and switch. John recognizes suffering as a mutual reality of the life of true faith.

- I wonder what it is like to have the Holy Spirit give a vision? I wonder what Jesus looked like when he spoke to John?
- When, in your life, has the beginning of something seemed full of promise, only to turn out less than you'd hoped?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are so real, your trumpet-voice still speaks. Thank you for caring about your suffering people and giving John a vision of you. Help us to see your beauty and power in new ways. Amen.

TUESDAY 7.19.22

Holy Jesus!

Scripture: Revelation 1:13-29

This is such a strange vision of Jesus, unlike anything else we see in scripture outside of other prophet's visions of God's throne room in heaven. He a tongue which is a shape sword with two edges! This seems to be a clear sign John's story is a metaphor, it's meant to be understood as a story about a deeper truth God provides us.

- I wonder what John felt like when he saw Jesus? What about when Jesus put his hands on John? What do you wonder about?
- What is the deeper truth about Jesus John's vivid pictures is supposed to reveal to us?

Prayer: Jesus, when we see you for the first time, it will be hard to stand on our own two feet. We've never seen a person as bright and beautiful – and in charge – as you! And yet you care about us. Our present and our future are safe with you. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 7.20.22

Lambs and Scrolls

Scripture: Revelation 5:6-10

It's unusual for the Bible to tell us right out what the symbols are supposed to mean – Jesus only does it one time with his parables – but John goes to lengths here to explain why the lamb is put together with all these extra bits. Except, in this case, the explanation doesn't seem to help us understand it any better! The prayer helps us more. The Spirit goes out to the end of the world, helping us to live lives worthy of God.

- I wonder what the song sounded like and the incense smelled like? What do you wonder?
- Do you think it's important to understand the mechanics of each part of the Bible? Or is the experience or image enough?

Prayer: Lord, we may not always understand it, but we do understand you deserve the highest praise of every person from every place. You died for us. You made us a royal family. Receive our praise, Jesus! Amen.

THURSDAY 7.21.22

Out the Other Side

Scripture: Revelation 7:9-17

Scholars believe Revelation was written to provide hope for the communities of Jesus who were facing real suffering, including martyrdoms, economic consequences, and family and social strife. The promising end of life, with a peaceful celebration in heaven, helps us endure the difficulties and challenges of our life, no matter when and how they come to us.

- I wonder how it would feel for God to *literally* wipe your tears away? What do you wonder about?
- Do you find this image in Revelation comforting or distressing? How might your belief about the end of life affect how you approach everyday life?

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for your people from every language and peoples. Thank you for those suffered for following you who now get shade from your throne. We praise you God for their life! Amen.

FRIDAY 7.22.22

New Things

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-5

Write that down – you can trust these words. These phrases from Revelation seem out of place in a world where we are unsure when and who to trust. Jesus is trustworthy and true and the more we return to God’s word to hear and see that God is good, the more we are able to determine who in our world is also trustworthy and true.

- Imagine sitting next to Jesus and hearing these words from Revelation. Is there anything you’d like to ask Jesus about?
- How do you determine whom to trust?

Prayer: Beautiful God, this is what we’ve been longing for all our lives – to be with you, in a world made right and new. We are thankful this is our future. Amen.

SATURDAY 7.23.22

Climbing the Mountain

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Why is it so hard to do the right thing? So often, the right choice – the one which leads to a life of integrity where we discover and become who God calls us to be – is the **more** difficult choice, the one which comes with sacrifice and challenge, which requires something from us.

- How does a faith which sees itself outside of and/or apart from mainstream society behave differently?
- I wonder what the most authentically faith-filled response is when we are sick or in trouble?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, help us to pray when we’re in trouble, when we’re happy, when we’re sick, and when we’ve sinned. Give us courage to say “I’m sorry” when we’ve done something wrong. Thank you for listening and for making things happen through prayers. Amen.