

Saturday, May 30, 2020

Matthew 5:1-12

<https://tinyurl.com/yd4naccm>

Ponder

“...know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.” In this passage Jesus tells those who will listen how they may be blessed: those who have lost everything, those who are grieving, those who care for others, those whose hearts and minds are ever on God. Even those who get in trouble for speaking God’s truth are blessed. I think this means that God blesses us when we need it most.

Pray

Blessing God, You alone know the ways we suffer, and we all have at different times. With Jesus’s followers, help us understand that though life can bring struggle, Your blessings make us whole. Amen

Creative Action

Jesus never advised his friends to stay out of trouble. What “risky” action would bless someone else this week? Speak up? Call your Member of Congress? Support the ministry of your church? Find a way to help someone you might have disdained in a previous life? (I have discovered the mentally ill neighbor who needs rides to the grocery twice a month is MY friend.)



GOBIN CHURCH
A United Methodist Community for All

Monday, May 25, 2020

1 Peter 4:1-6

<https://tinyurl.com/y83yrk5x>

Ponder

Such an interesting thought, that our sufferings can teach us an important lesson, one of helplessness, and the pain of not getting one’s way. I for one do not believe God causes suffering to teach us a lesson, but there must be a lesson in our suffering which helps us redeem it with God’s help. I think of all the times I had to learn that Once again, I was not God and could not heal the ill, the dying, the broken-hearted, but only accompany them. That has been a lesson of a lifetime for me.

Pray

Gentle One, you have been both mighty and broken, and still are our God. Help us learn we are not entitled to success, affirmation, wealth or health. In a spirit of humility we can find meaning and joy. Amen.

Creative Action

As a person who identifies with many majority groups, I have worked to learn the ways my sense of entitlement harms me and others. You might want to take this test. It can be painful however. <https://tinyurl.com/yxmnsmtt>

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Number 16:41-50

<https://tinyurl.com/yc76v4oc>

Ponder

This is a story about God’s wrath at the people’s ungratefulness and the plague that followed. 14,700 deaths occurred, and more were prevented only because Aaron ran swiftly to atone for the people’s sins. Do you think this time of pandemic is a punishment from God? Do you think someone’s atonement would help us? What behaviors of your own would you change if you thought it would save lives?

Pray

Dear God, there have been times I have genuinely repented and worked to atone for my sins, and times when I bargained with You instead. Help me make my efforts genuine and as good for others as can be. Let me be like Aaron, willing to run to save others when help is needed. Thank you for running to save us. Amen.

Creative Action

So many problems in this world could be fixed if folks knew how to say, “I am so sorry! Please forgive me! I don’t know why I did that, but I will try to figure it out! My bad! I will never do that again! Please tell me how that made you feel? How can I make amends?” Is there someone in your life you have treated ungratefully? Which of those phrases could be spoken? Written? Shouted? Whispered? Here is a tutorial on writing a letter of apology.

<https://tinyurl.com/yapmd24k>

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

John 3:31-36

<https://tinyurl.com/yca7s94q>

Ponder

It is interesting to think about the way we expect and experience God’s anger when we know we have failed to speak and act on the truth of God’s word. An angry and jealous God has been the subject of thousands of sermons, but what if it was angry and jealous folks preaching? Do we make God in our own image at times? Or allow God to subvert our dominant paradigm, up end the lies we tell ourselves about the way things are “supposed to go” and show us God’s Truth.

Pray

We are loved. You love us. Loving you guides us and protects us. All of us fail at one time or another, AND You love us extravagantly. We are amazed.

Creative Action

What does extravagant love look like in your home? Are there still times of angry darkness? Light a candle, safely of course, and ponder which parts of your life need the light shined in?

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Acts 2:1-11

<https://tinyurl.com/yb9e5tgc>

Ponder

It’s not very often that we find people who can “speak our language.” In fact, some people spend much of their lives without hearing their language spoken by anyone else. By language I mean words and deeds that make sense to us, our hearts and minds, and increase our connection to others, and provide a homecoming, a real sense of safety. Shared language is something we can learn in Christ though, when we love one another.

Pray

You who speak my “mother tongue”, You who listen to my heart’s desires, You who know my name and call me Yours, let me also speak to You and know that I am understood. Amen.

Creative Action

Ask everyone who will answer you what makes them feel most loved. Spend some time in thought and prayer pondering how you can express the love of God in your love for them. Start small but start.

<https://www.umcmmission.org/umcor>

Friday, May 29, 2020

Romans 8:14-17

<https://tinyurl.com/y8kqx2w8>

Ponder

I love this translation! Let’s let the old “do it yourself life” die. Let’s bury this old way of worry and suffering and trying to be God ourselves. What does it mean to humble ourselves in relationship, to allow ourselves to experience the unselfconscious grace of dependency on the Divine? What do we fear? It is sometimes hard to trust that God will not let us down. It may be the work of a lifetime. Everyday, spend time relaxing in this truth. Someday you will know it.

Pray

Faithful One, once upon a time we learned in so many hard ways to depend upon ourselves to survive. We were strong, determined, responsible, persistent, and some of the time and with the right help we triumphed over difficulties. Now Wisdom teaches us that triumph is not Your object. Open our hearts to relationship and trust. Amen.

Creative Action

Once upon a time I did a course on Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, and one thing we learned was the body scan. The teacher once had to wake me, I had gone so deeply to sleep. We usually started with our feet, and I was often asleep by the time we reached our knees. Her voice was a foretaste of heaven. Here is a link to a body scan....done by someone else of course. John Kabat Zinn wrote Full Catastrophe Living and his is the voice in this exercise. He will remind you to stay awake.

<https://tinyurl.com/yyofqcx3>