



GOBIN CHURCH

A United Methodist Community for All

Monday, June 1, 2020

Romans 8:18-24 CEB

<https://tinyurl.com/yaz42xwu>

“Baby, you ain't seen nothing yet.” Those song lyrics, and the intentional stammer of B-b-b-baby, jumped out of the speakers of my older sister's silver Vega as we cruised around listening to Bachman Turner Overdrive back in 1974. As a 9-year-old kid I thought that song was pretty cool, and my sister's super cute Vega was even cooler with it's stick shifter and stack of 8-track tapes – Carole King, Todd Rundgren, Janis Joplin. “You ain't seen nothing yet” became a playground catch-phrase among us kids shooting basketballs for our long-distance last-second buzzer-beating fantasies. With our futures shining out in front of us, we dreamed of glorious fun away from our tiny farm town, driving off into the future in our shiny silver Vegas. At least I did. More breathless with anticipation than worried about tomorrow, any thought of future frustrations was easily brushed aside. And yet these days, in this time of pandemic, riots and brutality, societal isolation, and FaceTime without actual face time, breathless seems more easily paired with dread and frustration. The early Christians in today's scripture passage recognized both hope and frustration. They were encouraged to look ahead, despite the groaning of all creation. They were encouraged to live into hope, but not the hope that they could already see. Certainly not the hope of the good old days when life seemed easier. Letting go of the past is important so we aren't stuck in our present condition. Our hope is not in the easy past, where there were no face mask rules and when tiny bottles of hand sanitizer were abundant freebies. For what do you hope? If we see what we hope for, that isn't hope. Who hopes for what they already see?

Prayer:

Dear God, We hope for a glory yet unseen. We hope for a tomorrow where all suffering and strife is gone, because we are perfecting this world through your love. Each place we go, each person we see, we pray we share hope with them, too. You are our only certainty, Lord, and that means we will move beyond this world of decay, and help our brothers and sisters along the way. Lead us and guide us. Amen.

Action:

Write your worries down in a list. Read back through the list, and release each item into God's hands. For added closure, dispose of the list.

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Romans 8:26-27

<https://tinyurl.com/y76j2bsn>

We bow our heads to pray, and sometimes, the words slip away into emotions rather than words. Maybe we don't know what we should pray. There are so many things to pray about and people to pray for. Sister Marie once told me she prayed all the time, "even as I'm sitting here", because she didn't want to leave anything out. She was pleading the case of all situations in her personal sphere of influence. She prayed for the young people who drove too fast up Apple Street. She prayed for the young mother on the sidewalk pushing the baby stroller and for the child wrapped up inside. She prayed for her friends in the South End when storms knocked down tree limbs and bent gutters. She prayed she made it up the steps of the church building each Sunday. An endless stream of prayers that weren't simple mutterings or a habitual way of speaking, but actual hopes for a positive outcome. She took in all she saw around her, and breathed out countless prayers from the heart. When her eyesight dimmed in advanced age, she kept up her prayers for the nurses around her and the other residents down the hall of her new home. Now, she'd be the first to say she wasn't always a saint, and that she certainly knew what sinning was about. She had some wild stories to tell full of laughter and drama. Each story ended with a sigh, a chuckle, and prayer. She had learned how to pray.

Prayer:

Dear God, You've given words of prayers to many saints, and I ask that you open my heart and my mouth so I, too, may pray more often and more faithfully. Each day is a prayer of hope, Lord. Use me so all people will know they are loved by you. Amen.

Action: Write a list of people for whom you can pray, and include situations you can pray about. Keep the list somewhere you can see it, and add to it. Encourage others in your household to create their own lists. Make time to pray each day for the people and situations on the list.

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

Numbers 11:24-30 CEB

<https://tinyurl.com/yafoouvg>

The church has left the building. That's become a popular phrase these days as we are all called to be disciples sharing the love of Christ in our communities. We're often reminded that sharing the Good News isn't just up to clergy people, just as prophesy wasn't limited to the 70 elders in the tent with Moses when the spirit rested on them. Others still in the camp at the time also had the spirit touch them, and Moses was glad they chose to prophesy in the camp.

When we look around our world today, and at our own encampments, it sometimes seem there are so many people talking it's hard to listen to the overlapping messages and voices, let alone recognize prophets. Other times, there no one is speaking, and in those times we might ask, where are the prophets? Well, the church has left the building, Spirit-equipped with kind words, helping hands, listening ears and loving hearts. Where can you be a prophet of peace and love today?

Prayer:

Dear God, May your Spirit awaken in me when I see trouble, or heart-ache, or actions needing your love. Move me to be fruitful with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I want to put away anger and jealousy. May I plant only good things for the growth of your kingdom. Amen.

Action:

Make a "sharing stone" you can leave somewhere that another person will find it. Paint or color the stone with a positive word or a scripture verse.

Thursday, June 4, 2020

2 Timothy 1:8-12a CEB

<https://tinyurl.com/y7u64w89>

Maybe you work in a place or attend school where the majority of people around you are not Christians. Maybe you feel uncomfortable sharing your faith, or feel inadequate to defend your faith if a challenge arises. In today's Scripture, it seems like Timothy was tempted to feel the same way. He wasn't looking forward to being exposed to ridicule in the city of Ephesus, and with his mentor Paul considered a political prisoner, maybe he felt that laying low and taking a pass on sharing about Jesus was a wise thing to do. It's pretty common to feel overwhelmed these days, asking ourselves how so many cruel and unkind things can continue to happen in the world today. And yet, we feel we must do something to help end the pain and suffering and rioting around us. Maybe it's peaceful protests. Maybe it's writing letters to legislators. Maybe it's donating to organizations who promote peace and tolerance. We wish we could figure out a solution to the world's problems. We like to be self-sufficient and independent, and we want others to be the same way. It can be hard to rely on the love taught by Jesus as we navigate these times. It can be hard to speak the hope of Jesus to those who are in the midst of sorrow. But being ashamed of our faith should not be our fall-back position. Today's Scripture is a call to be courageous in these times. Think about being willing to stand for justice, to be tested, to endure the challenge to share peace and love, and to resist the temptation to join or ignore the tragedies of the world. May we continue to be encouraged, not ashamed.

Prayer:

Dear God, Give us words to speak, and the courage to say them. Open our mouths to give voice to your love and care for this world. We know you are with us, and we rely on your strength to get us through difficult times. Help us to help others, so that everyone will know we are Christians through your love.

Action: Show the world around you that you are a Jesus believer through your words, through a necklace or other symbol displayed on your body, or through a T-shirt message.

Friday, June 5, 2020

Psalm 8 CEB <https://tinyurl.com/y87hx5cf>

Grass green is the color of yarn I recently used in a knitting project. The name itself is part of the reason I bought the yarn. I love the feel of grass under my bare feet, and the smell of freshly mown grass. I enjoy the shape of green leaves on tall trees with branches reaching to a blue sky. When one of my daughters asked why I like green so much (because she preferred purple) I told her that for me, green is the color of life in the world around me. It is spring wheat in the fields. It is the stalk that strongly holds up the beautiful flowers. So many of our gifts from God are green. Psalm 8 is a celebration of God as creator. Not only of everything green, but of the moon and stars, the sheep and cattle, wild animals, birds of the air and fish of the oceans. God created everything that travels the pathways of the sea. And us. God pays attention to us. How humbling! What an honor to rule over his handiwork! Are we doing a good job?! I must confess for myself, only some of the time. When I treat the world – every person, place and thing – as a blessing and divine gift from God, only then am I honoring the trust God has placed in my hands. God claims, values and loves the whole creation. Praise be!

Prayer:

Dear God, You have painted this world with so many beautiful colors and hues. When we see all the good things you have made, we are thankful, and we are blessed by your love. May we be good stewards of all things in our earthly environment. Let us never forget your creative power. Amen.

Action:

Volunteer to plant flowers or pick up litter in a place that needs some attention. Sweep a sidewalk, weed a flower bed, or hang a bird feeder that you will tend.

Saturday, June 6, 2020

Job 38:22-38 CEB <https://tinyurl.com/ya6z4t4p>

An amazing, diverse universe has been created by God. As we read dialogue between Job and God, these passages are like being taken into a literary spacecraft to look toward a planet splendidly put together in a way we can't understand. God appears in a whirlwind and he takes Job to the wildness of hail, rain, ice, snow, and where the wild creatures live. Where the wild things are. That's the title of a book I checked out way too many times from my elementary library. I loved the story of Max, a child who was sent to bed without his supper after he dressed in his wolf costume and terrorized his household. Young Max went away in a boat to the land of wild things and they played and roared and had a great hairy time. But Max felt lonely and decided to return home, leaving the wild things behind. When he got back to his bedroom, Max found a hot supper waiting for him. A comforting story. For me it reinforced the love of parents who wants the best for us even when we are acting up or acting out. God created a sometimes wild world full of potential, with the possibility for growth, creativity and understanding. When we relent and turn to God, we can leave the wild things behind too.

Prayer:

Dear God, you have created a beautiful world for us and we thank you for the natural beauty around us. Among the beauty, we know there can be danger zones and risks we can't always avoid. We trust in you to guide us through this beautiful, hazardous world, and to comfort us in our sorrows, and share our joys in celebrations. Amen

Action:

Read a favorite children's book to a young person, either in person or via video, and ask the young person how they might fit themselves into such a story. Listen well.