



June 21st, 2020
Roadmap to Resilience II

Twin Towers United Methodist Church

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WORSHIP GUIDE

Before you begin your time of worship, find a comfortable place to be and gather whatever you might need: your Bible, some paper or a notebook, something to write with, your computer/connected device (if you intend to listen to music online), etc. Feel free to adapt this worship guide in any way that makes best sense to you and those you might be gathered with. (Consider inviting someone – a friend, a family member – to worship with you.) Commit to spending the next hour with God.

PRELUDE: “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me” UMH 521

Listen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvCCRr_Kyx0

WELCOME – Friends, I don’t know about you, but my week was filled with reminders to see: see clearly, see differently, to seek God’s vision. The word “see” literally popped up everywhere around me culminating in this verse from Ephesians that was offered during a devotion. It comes from the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. He writes: “¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope to which God calls you, what are the riches of God’s glorious inheritance among believers, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of God’s power that is working among us believers, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when God raised him from the dead...” Can you imagine it? Paul is saying here that the same resurrecting power that was at work in Jesus, raising him from the dead, can be seen working among us? I, too, pray that we see it.

The apostle Paul was a compelling witness of God’s power at work, wasn’t he? His conversion story - from a fervent, focused persecutor of Jesus’ followers to the premier evangelist of Jesus’ grace - shows us through and through God’s power at work. And one of the ways Paul was opened up to being such an incredible conduit of God’s power, is, ironically, by embracing his “weakness”. In his letter to the church in Corinth, he recounts Jesus saying to him: ““My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”” Paul goes on, “So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me...for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.” (II Cor. 12:9-10). This morning, as we think further about resilience, I invite you to consider this paradox of faith: “for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.”

OPENING HYMN - “Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy” UMH 340

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGvCm9I4H0A>

1. *Come, ye sinners, poor and needy
Weak and wounded, sick and sore
Jesus ready, stands to save you
Full of pity, love and power*

*Refrain:
I will arise and go to Jesus
He will embrace me in His arms
In the arms of my dear Savior
Oh, there are ten thousand charms*

2. *Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome
God's free bounty glorify
True belief and true repentance
Every grace that brings you nigh*

3. *Come, ye weary, heavy-laden
Lost and ruined by the fall
If you tarry 'til you're better
You will never come at all*

4. *Let not conscient make you linger,
nor of fitness fondly dream;
all the fitness he requireth
is to feel your need of him.*

OPENING PRAYER – *You are invited to take a deep breath as you pray:*

Embracing God, thank you for always holding your arms open wide to us.

We are, whether we know and admit it or not, every one of us, poor and needy, and so we arise this day and come to you.

We come with hearts ready to be opened and healed.

We come with eyes seeking to see.

We come with spirits thirsty for grace and direction.

We come with minds open to be moved and challenged.

We come, grateful to be met by your ten thousand charms.

Move through this time of worship with us

that we may be readied for a new week of walking faithfully with you.

We pray this in the name of the one whose arms we now rest in, Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE - **Psalm 86:1-13** (NRSV)

Our scripture reading today comes, again, from the Psalms and is prayer attributed to David. I invite you to open up your Bibles and Bibles apps to Psalm 86. We will be reading verses 1 through 13.

¹ Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

² Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;

save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God; ³ be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all day long.
⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.
⁶ Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication.
⁷ In the day of my trouble I call on you,
for you will answer me.
⁸ There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
⁹ All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
¹⁰ For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.
¹¹ Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
¹² I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.
¹³ For great is your steadfast love toward me;
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

REFLECT -

Two years ago, my siblings and I began a conversation with my father about his forgetfulness and the possible onset of dementia. We were brushed aside. To my father, who claimed to have read all about alzheimers and dementia, there was no way this was an issue for him. Yes, he was getting a bit forgetful, but he was, afterall, 80! A year ago, my older brother paid him a visit with the specific goal of having a full medical workup done. We had spent a great amount of time talking about this with him, even having Steven weigh in. Dad went along with everything

- blood tests, appointment with a neurologist - but on the morning of his MRI, balked. There was no way, no how he would do an MRI. This year, after a few concerning incidents, we had another family conversation. Dad made clear, as he has all along, "I'll let you know when I need help." When we countered, "But Dad, that's the thing: with dementia, you may not know when you need help," he laughed. "Don't worry," he said, "I will know."

I imagine that you, like me, like my brothers, are each shaking your heads. I imagine that you, like me, are feeling a tint of anxiety and concern. We all know what my father won't admit: he will not, in fact, know when he needs help. He will not, in all likelihood, pick up on problematic even dangerous happenings. And he will not let us know or reach out, at least not in time, to say that he needs help.

This is not an uncommon struggle we have with our loved ones who have dementia. But what if that struggle were ours also, one that we shared to varying degrees? American culture is, after all, built on rugged individualism and fierce independence. We are taught through all sorts of channels that to need help, to ask for help means that we are, somehow, weak, deficient, or needy. We are, more often than not, convinced that we can, we will, we must take care of whatever it is before us by ourselves. And so we persist...on our own. These are lies that our culture teaches that our faith seeks to heal and transform. So let me ask again - do you know when you need help? Are you open to the support, the care, the accompaniment of others - family, friends, professionals, God - to see you through? Do you, in fact, allow God's power to be made perfect in you, in your very weakness? I ask because I think this has something to do with our resilience.

This whole week, I've been sitting with these 6 words from the opening of the psalm: Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, *for I am poor and needy*. I confess I haven't moved much past them. They have captured my spirit. I have at once felt them deeply and resisted them with all my might. Who wants to be poor and needy, or to admit it to anyone, even to God? Who relishes the anguish and heartache that are surely present in that state? I don't. Yet I sense that I am drawn to these words because of the possibility they point to: the possibility that it is in embracing our poverty and need, our humanity and brokenness, our lostness, that we make room to encounter and welcome God's power and presence; and that it is when we encounter and welcome God's power and presence, we experience healing, strengthening, and transformation. We experience the ten thousand charms that the hymn writer, Joseph Hart, named.

Interestingly, admitting our need, our powerlessness, is the very first step of all 12 step programs. Doing so is no small feat. The wisdom of 12 steps teaches that admitting our need is what gets the ball rolling, enabling us to then reach out to God, enabling us to arise and go to Jesus.” For surely God can and will come alongside us, Jesus can and will make a way, the Holy Spirit can and will restore and heal us. It is in naming his poverty and need that the psalmist then goes on to acknowledge who God is: good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love, one who listens and responds, our deliverer. We experience the truth of these, the wonder of these, the concreteness of God at work, when we make space for God’s power and grace to work within and through us.

Friends, it is clear to me that we were not made to “go it alone”. We were not called to fight the good fight on our own. It is clear to me that there is no shame, no judgment, no failure in needing support, help, accompaniment, care. In fact, that is how we were created, how we were designed, isn’t it? Our need of God and one another is true in our individual lives, but it is true in our communal lives also. Last Sunday, my family attended a vigil in front of City Hall to remember and honor the many who have lost their lives to police brutality and racism. We were glad to join several of you there. The organizers’ intention was to create an open space for people to share their hearts and their anguish. Kids shared, young people shared, adults and elders shared. And time after time after time, folks named their need of one another. “Please keep showing up! Please, let’s stand together! Please, we need you! We cannot do this alone.” And it’s true, isn’t it? Every wave of social change has occurred because people took one another’s hands and rose up together.

And so I end by encouraging you and challenging you: reach out this week, whether you are feeling poor and needy or not. Do this every day. Reach out as a way to exercise a key muscle that we need to build up. Reach out as a way to take hold of one of the most precious gifts that we have: relationship and community. Reach out to God and, like the psalmist, ask God to incline Their ear to you. Reach out to God and sense your need of Them. For some of you, that will be challenge enough. But here’s one more stretch: when you reach out, share a concrete request for support. Reach out and ask your friend or family member to pray for you, for example. Reach out and invite input, wisdom, or experience around something you are thinking about or going through. Reach out and practice putting out what you might need - to be checked on more often, to be given a ride, support with an errand or a project. I invite you to take this on as a way to make space in your life for that power and grace that Paul speaks about,

that power and grace that are sufficient, that are made perfect in weakness, that is at work among us as surely as it was in Jesus' resurrection. It is my hunch that when we do so, when we let each other and God into our lives in those tender and vulnerable spots, we will not only build up our community, we will more clearly point to God as the source of our resilience. I can't wait to begin worship next week with the sharings you'll bring!

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE – *Spend time in prayer. What did you hear for yourself through today's scripture and reflection? Talk to God about it. Then lift up the joys and concerns that are in your heart. You might write them down, speak them aloud, or pray them in silence.*

Joys –Where are witnessing God's presence and power in yourself and in the world?

Concerns – Where are you yearning for God's presence and power...for yourself and for the world?

I would be honored to pray with you and for you.

Please send a note via text, mail, or email or give me a call if I can do so.

SHARING OUR GIFTS– *How might you offer yourself and all that you have to God this week? How are you being invited to practice generosity? Spend a moment listening for God's direction.*

You are invited to contribute financially towards the purpose and ministry of TTUMC. We are a congregation committed to being conduits of God's healing in our neighborhood and beyond, and in so doing, impact the last and the least. You can contribute by mailing in a check, dropping off cash, or giving online via PayPal (visit www.twintowersumc.org). Take a moment and do that now.

CLOSING HYMN - "My Life Flows On (How Can I Keep from Singing)" TFWS 2212
Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li2hddmy63U>

1 My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation

2 Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing
It finds an echo in my soul
How can I keep from singing?

3 What though my joys and comforts die?
I know my Savior liveth
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth

4 No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing

5 I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin
I see the blue above it
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love...

BENEDICTION - *(May) Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)*

NOW GO AND PASS CHRIST’S PEACE!

You are invited to spend the next stretch reaching out. Pick up our directory and consider calling someone you don’t yet know well or someone who might not know others. It doesn’t need to be complicated. Perhaps something as simple as, “Hi! I’m calling to say ‘hello’. How have you been?”



If you are on Facebook, please like and follow our page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ttuncAlameda/>

Scripture for Sunday, June 28th - **Psalm 13**

This week, please pray for Alameda City Council’s ongoing discussion of reimagining community safety and the role police and other services play, and our upcoming Dine & Connect meal (July 6th).