

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 worship

DIALOGUE

Behold, now is the acceptable time;

now is the day of salvation.

Turn us again, O God of our salvation,

that the light of your face may shine on us.

May your justice shine like the sun;

and may the poor be lifted up.

Gracious and holy God, give us diligence to seek you, wisdom to perceive you, and patience to wait for you. Grant us, O God, a mind to meditate on you; eyes to behold you; ears to listen for your word; a heart to love you; and a life to proclaim you; through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SONG, VV. 1-2 *I Love to Tell the Story* (ELW 661)

1 I love to tell the story
of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory,
of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings
as nothing else would do.

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

2 I love to tell the story:
how pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it,
more wonderfully sweet!
I love to tell the story,
for some have never heard
the message of salvation
from God's own holy word. *Refrain*

SCRIPTURE READING: EPHESIANS 5:8-10, 19-20 (NIRV)

⁸ At one time you were in the dark. But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done. Live like children of the light. ⁹ The light produces what is completely good, right and true. ¹⁰ Find out what pleases the Lord.

¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. ²⁰ Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

HOMILY

Grace to you and peace. At this point in the service, we would have watched a couple of videos in which our confirmation youth interviewed members of Zion about their lives of faith. These are great conversations, but we will find another time to watch the remaining 6 videos so we don't have to put them out on the world wide web!

This strange time we are living in will one day become a faith story for us. How we navigate these days, relying on God's mercy and provision will become our testimony of God's faithfulness.

I have a friend who said she sees this time as our Flood story. We certainly feel like this virus is flooding over us, attacking us in some ways. But she said this is really about our opportunity—the world's opportunity—to reset. We will be resetting our priorities and how we live together. We also have God's promises to carry us into this new future.

Think about which Bible story you are identifying with these days. Maybe it's the Exodus story as we wander in the wilderness, not know how long this time will last. Or maybe you have another salvation story in mind.

We have been looking at four practices that contribute to our faith formation. Now, in these days, we get to really put them to work. Let's look at each practice to see how they apply to our lives these days.

Respectful Relationships—in stressful times it can be hard to be respectful! One way I am thinking about how I interact with others is when I receive a text message I am calling the person back to respond to them. I have had some wonderful conversations just today with a friend from seminary and a pastor in town.

Spiritual Practices—how can these days at home foster new patterns for devotional time? Maybe breakfast can be eaten at the table with devotions added in.

Guided Learning—if you are going to take time to read a book, pick up your Bible or the kids' story Bible. And if you have a study Bible, read the notes in the margins or the intro to that book of the Bible. I'm hoping that once the dust settles from figuring out this technology that I can do some of the reading that I usually don't have time for.

Faith-filled Service—How might we be ministering to our family, friends and neighbors these days? Do you know someone who lives alone? Even if they are not elderly, living alone can be pretty isolating these days. If you can think of some other ways we as a congregation can be serving our community, please let me know!

This is a time when it might feel like our faith is being tested, but really it's a time when our faith is being strengthened. We will need stamina to live through this time, especially when we don't know when it will end. And it will end!

When we are building the muscles in our body it may seem like we can't do one more sit up or one more pull up, and our muscles feel sore. When our faith is being strengthened we can feel like we can't do one more thing or make it through one more day. But God is with us, we are not alone, and we still have our community of faith to be with us—even if it is virtually or over the phone. Reach out, and know that God is presence and will carry you through.

Our God is best known for bringing life out of death and light out of darkness. God is faithful and God is at work in us, forming our faith, so that we can live as God's children of the light. Thanks be to God. Amen

SONG, V. 3

3 I love to tell the story,
for those who know it best
seem hungry and thirsting
to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story
that I have loved so long.

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

PRAYERS

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For each holy house, and for all who offer tonight their worship and praise,

let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the health of the creation, for abundant harvests that all may share,
and for peaceful times, let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For public servants, the government, and those who protect us;
for those who work to bring peace, justice, healing, and protection
in this and every place, let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel, for those who are sick and suffering,
and for those who are in captivity, let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance in the time of affliction, wrath, danger, and need,
let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all servants of the church
and for all people who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy,
let us | pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence for reflection.

Giving thanks for all who have gone before us and are at rest, especially Loyd Bowen, and
rejoicing in the communion of all the saints, we commend ourselves, one another, and our
whole life to you, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us.

Amen.

BLESSING

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

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