

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

July 15 2020

Psalm 95

- 1 *O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of
our salvation!*
- 2 *Let us come into his presence with
thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with
songs of praise!*
- 3 *For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.*
- 4 *In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.*
- 5 *The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have
formed.*
- 6 *O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!*
- 7 *For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.*

- O that today you would listen to his voice!*
- 8 *Do not harden your hearts, as at
Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the
wilderness,*
- 9 *when your ancestors tested me,
and put me to the proof, though they had
seen my work.*
- 10 *For forty years I loathed that
generation
and said, "They are a people whose
hearts go astray,
and they do not regard my ways."*
- 11 *Therefore in my anger I swore,
"They shall not enter my rest."*

Meditation

Read Jeremiah 18:1-12.

Many of us are familiar with the story of the potter and the clay in Jeremiah 18. We understand that God is like the potter, and we are like the clay. God molds us and shapes us according to his good will and purpose. Sounds rather idealistic and straightforward, doesn't it?

There's just one problem—clay has no free will, but people do. Clay has no choice other than to do what the potter wants. We, on the other hand, have freedom. We can choose to submit ourselves to the potter, or we can refuse to allow the potter to shape our lives as we try to mold and shape our own.

God gave the people of Judah the gift of freedom. He led his people out of slavery in Egypt, he protected them from other nations, he blessed them with good and bountiful harvests. God knew that true freedom requires boundaries, or it descends into injustice and anarchy. So he gave them his law as a gift to safeguard their freedom. But the people of Judah misused their freedom. They chose to disregard

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God is the potter.

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God's boundaries, and shape their own lives. They worshiped idols and false gods, instead of the one true God. They neglected the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the alien in the land. They failed to honor God by keeping the Sabbath holy. They tried to mold their own lives and be their own potter, and turned away from the Master Potter who alone could shape their lives with selfless love. The people of Judah said, "It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; we will all follow the stubbornness of our evil hearts." (Jer. 18:12)

What happens when we misuse our freedom, neglect God's boundaries, and try to shape our own lives? If we think that we can be both the clay and the potter we alienate ourselves from God, and our relationship with him is broken. We often break our relationships with others, for we follow our own selfish desires rather than seeking their good. We hurt ourselves, for the clay can never shape itself with the same skill and grace as the Master Potter.

At the potter's house, God called his people to return to him, to submit once again to his purpose, to use their freedom for his glory and for the good of others. God calls us to return to him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived a life of perfect freedom within the boundaries of God's love—his love for his heavenly Father and his love for his fellow human beings. He chose to obey his Father in all things, so he was free from selfishness and sin. He chose to love others and put their needs ahead of his own. He chose to die for our sake on the cross, that we might be reconciled with God. He took our disobedience upon himself as he died for our sin. He invites us to use our freedom to choose to return to God through faith in him, and allow the Master Potter to shape and mold our lives according to his loving will for us.

To follow Jesus Christ is to have our sin forgiven, to be reconciled with God, and to allow God to take control of our lives. It's to use our freedom to make choices for good, and to allow God to be the Master Potter of our lives as he shapes us according to his will. It's to live in true freedom within the bounda-

ries of God's love—our love for God and our love for our neighbor. It's to invite others realize the full meaning of their freedom through their own relationship with Jesus Christ.

God is the Potter, we are the clay. May he grant us grace to allow him to shape our lives, that we may enjoy the freedom and love he intends for each one of us.

Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord God, grant me grace to choose to follow you in all things. Remind me that you are the potter, and I am the clay. Mold me and make me in the power of your Holy Spirit that I may live in the true freedom of Jesus Christ.

Grant us your wholeness and strength in this time of trouble. Heal our bodies of this dangerous virus; heal our souls of racism and division; grant us wisdom to follow in your will. Enable us to live in freedom within the boundaries of your perfect love.

Lord God, you are the source of all blessing and joy. Lift us up into your presence that we may rejoice in your love at all times and in all places; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are the clay.

Prayer for True Life

Govern all by thy wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving thee as thou dost will, and not as I may choose.

Do not punish me, I beseech thee, by granting that which I wish or ask, if it offend thy love, which would always live in me. Let me die to myself, that I may serve thee; let me live to thee, who in thyself art the true life. Amen.

—St. Teresa of Avila, 16th Century

Crisis Hotlines and Helplines

During these trying times, it's good to be aware of some of the positive resources available in our community. Many people are under extraordinary stress because of the current situation. Please feel free to share this information with others as you feel appropriate.

CONTACT Helpline: (800) 932-4616

Wellspan Behavioral Health Helpline (Philhaven):
(800) 932-0359

TrueNorth Crisis Line: (866) 325-0339

Substance Abuse Hotline: (800) 662-4357

Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-7233

Adams-Hanover Crisis Information Referral Hotline:
(717) 632-4900

Weekly Prayer Concerns

Every week a list of recent prayer concerns will be included with this mailing. To add someone to the list, please call the church office.

This week's list (as of 7/14/2020) is:

Tim Weitkamp—recovering at home from shoulder surgery

Genny Reaver—in the Rehab unit of Chambersburg Hospital recovering from a heart attack and minor stroke

Barbara Evans—in Gettysburg Hospital

Address for Genny Reaver:

Wellspan Chambersburg Hospital
Room 404 Rehab
112 N 7th St.
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Worship Services

Our regular Sunday Worship Services have resumed at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Guidelines are available on our website. Each person and family should prayerfully make their own decision about attending at this time. We support and respect whatever choice you make.

Sunday worship video services are uploaded to our GUMC Facebook page every week in time for Sunday morning. You don't have to be a member of Facebook to view them. If you have any trouble watching our services, feel free to call Larry Speer at 717 642-6123 (H) or 717 387-3577 (M).

Sunday School has not yet reopened.

HYMN

Marching to Zion

Isaac Watts, Robert Lowry

1. Come, we that love the Lord,
and let our joys be known;
join in a song with sweet accord,
join in a song with sweet accord
and thus surround the throne,
and thus surround the throne.

Refrain:

We're marching to Zion,
beautiful, beautiful Zion;
we're marching upward to Zion,
the beautiful city of God.

2. Let those refuse to sing
who never knew our God;
but children of the heavenly King,
but children of the heavenly King
may speak their joys abroad,

may speak their joys abroad.
(Refrain)

3. The hill of Zion yields
a thousand sacred sweets
before we reach the heavenly fields,
before we reach the heavenly fields,
or walk the golden streets,
or walk the golden streets.
(Refrain)

4. Then let our songs abound,
and every tear be dry;
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
to fairer worlds on high,
to fairer worlds on high.
(Refrain)

Isaac Watts has been called “the father of English hymnody.” He was born in Southampton, England in 1674, and died in 1748. He served as pastor of Mark Lane Independent Chapel in London, as well as a private tutor and chaplain. He broke away from the tradition of only singing Psalms and scripture in worship, and wrote hymns which expressed his personal faith and relationship with God. His most famous hymn is *Joy to the World*. Robert Lowry was born in Philadelphia in 1826, and died in 1899. He was a graduate of Bucknell University and pastored churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. He wrote both texts and music for hymns.

Marching to Zion was originally written in 1707 as *Come, We that Love the Lord* (no. 732 in our hymnal) without the refrain. Lowry added the refrain and wrote the tune for *Marching to Zion* in 1868. Lowry's version is much more refreshing and energetic than the previous musical setting, and captures the true joy of being in God's presence. It may be found as number 733 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

Bible Studies

Our Wed. Bible Study has resumed on ZOOM from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm. Please contact Pastor Rick for a link to the weekly Zoom meetings.

Our Thursday Bible Study continues to meet at the church from 9:30 to 11:00 am, with masks and social distancing required.

Both groups are studying 1 John.

We greatly appreciate your continued faithful donations to GUMC during this time of change and crisis. Your faithfulness has enabled us to continue to pay all of our expenses, and we are very grateful for your continued generosity.

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