

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

March 10, 2021

Psalm 42

To the leader. A Maskil of the Korahites.

- 1 *As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.*
- 2 *My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and behold
the face of God?*
- 3 *My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”*
- 4 *These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I went with the throng,
and led them in procession to the house of
God,
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival.*
- 5 *Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.*
- 6 *My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.*
- 7 *Deep calls to deep
at the thunder of your cataracts;
all your waves and your billows
have gone over me.*
- 8 *By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.*
- 9 *I say to God, my rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?”*

*Why must I walk about mournfully
because the enemy oppresses me?”*

10 *As with a deadly wound in my body,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”*

11 *Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.*

Meditation

Read Matthew 4:1-11

Temptation is something we don't talk about much, yet it's something all of us face. To understand temptation we must first realize that moral choice exists—that some things are right and other things are wrong, and that we have freedom to choose one or the other. The concept of temptation further implies the existence of something within us and/or within the world that tries to lead us away from right choices and toward wrong ones.

As Christians, we believe that morality is defined by God's character, revealed in scripture and ultimately in the Living Word of Jesus Christ. We believe that we have genuine freedom to choose right and wrong, and that there is a force within creation (Satan) and an influence within ourselves (our “sinful nature”) that try to lead us astray.

Jesus himself faced temptation at the beginning of his ministry. The Spirit led him into the desert, where he fasted for forty days and nights. At the end of his fast, Satan came to tempt him.

Jesus was first tempted to turn stones into bread. He must have been famished after a fast of forty days. Satan attacked him at the point of his greatest physical need, but the temptation was deeper than that. Jesus was tempted to rely on his own abilities,

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You can trust . . .

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to be self-sufficient, rather than rely upon the grace of his heavenly Father. Jesus resisted by quoting the words of Deut. 8:3, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (NRSV)

Although we’re not tempted to turn stones into bread, we face the deeper temptation of relying upon ourselves rather than upon the grace of God. We think we’re self-sufficient, that we can handle everything ourselves, that we don’t need God. Eventually we learn our limitations, and realize our need for God’s grace. It’s God’s grace that forgives us and leads us into a relationship with him, God’s grace that imparts love and meaning to our lives, God’s grace that equips us to deal with life’s challenges and opportunities, and God’s grace that leads us to love others as ourselves.

Then Jesus was taken to the pinnacle of the temple. Satan tried to persuade him to throw himself down, so God would send his angels to rescue him. Imagine the response of the crowds who saw him borne up by angels! It would have been proof that he was the Son of God! But Jesus replied (quoting Deut. 6:16), “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” He wasn’t seeking the adulation of the others. His power was in humility. He sought only his Father’s will, not the approval of the crowds.

We won’t be tempted to cast ourselves down from a high place, but we will be tempted to follow the voice of the crowd rather than the voice of God. It’s so much easier to just go along, to fit in, to do what everyone else is doing, to do those things that make us popular and well-liked. Sometimes we can obey God and please others, but other times we can only obey God by going against the crowd and the spirit of the age.

Finally, Satan took Jesus to a place where he could see all the nations of the world. He offered him power over them, if only Jesus would bow down and worship him. Jesus knew that only God was worthy of worship, so he again quoted Deut., “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” Jesus knew he should worship God and God alone.

The root of our sin is the temptation to worship any-

thing other than God—to worship self, to worship power, to worship pride, to worship wealth, to worship any part of creation rather than the Creator himself. We all face the temptation to worship something other than God, or to worship a false image of God (God as we want him to be rather than as he really is).

When we face temptation we resist by the grace of God. Our own strength is not sufficient. God gives us what we need to follow him—his Word, the fellowship of other Christians, and the witness and gifts of the Holy Spirit. If we try to resist temptation on our own, we will fall short. But if we rely upon the strength of Christ, we are able to overcome the temptations we face.

Even if we rely on God’s grace, there will be times when we sin, when we choose darkness instead of light. But God makes provision for the forgiveness of our sins through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ. “If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) We may yield to temptation and sin, but we will find forgiveness and wholeness in Christ.

Temptation comes in many forms, but God provides an answer through his grace. May we resist temptation and find peace for our souls in the grace of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, we pray, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Put a new and right spirit within us. Give us strength and wisdom to resist temptation in whatever form it comes to us.

We pray for the needs of our world. Bring peace to those who endure conflict and freedom to those

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. . . in God's grace.

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who are oppressed; meet the needs of the homeless and the hungry. Enable us to carry the light of your love into the darkness of our world.

Be with those who need the healing touch of your presence—the sick, the mourning, the despairing—those with any type of need. Pour out your blessings upon them that they may know your healing and your strength.

Lead us in paths of righteous and love for your name's sake. Keep us and those dear to us safe in the shadow of your wings; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

UMCOR Sunday

This Sunday (March 14) we receive a special offering for UMCOR.

UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, acts on our behalf when there is a crisis. UMCOR works to meet people's daily needs such as health care, food, hygiene and job security. UMCOR equips local churches, annual conferences and nonprofit organizations to be in mission with their communities, to respond to those left most vulnerable during this challenging time. And UMCOR doesn't just respond to the emergency for the short term. UMCOR cultivates relationships and helps communities rebuild, often for years after the disaster.

When we give to specific Advance projects, 100% of our gifts are directed to the designated response. UMCOR can do this because the funds we receive today join with those of millions of United Methodists to help cover the costs of doing business.

Checks may be made payable to GUMC, marked "UMCOR Sunday", and mailed to the church. Please give generously as the Spirit leads!

Weekly Prayer Concerns

To add someone to this prayer list, please call the church office.

This week's list (as of 3/9/2021) is:

Rodney Truscott
Penny Daugherty
Scott Bowers
Imogene Hunt's brother
Jean Green
Joyce Dye
Tom and Pat Kellam
Sandy Shelley
People trying to get a COVID vaccine

Members in Assisted Living / Skilled Care Homes:

Edith Bulman (SpiriTust Lutheran, York);
Shirley Hammond (Morning Glory, Little-
stown); Missy Legay (Moul Home, York); Peg-
gy Reynolds (Quincy-cottage, Waynesboro);
Gloria Swingler (Country Meadows-
apartment, Mechanicsburg)

Members with Limited Mobility:

Butch Carter, Betty Cook, Joyce Dye, Barbara
Evans, Pearl Keckler, Raymond Koenig,
Chuck Lutz, Ruth Anna Polley, Wilma Schai-
ble, Betty Schulteis, June Spencer, Virginia
White

In-Person Worship Suspension Continues

Due to the continued high COVID rates in Adams County, on Feb. 22 Church Council voted unanimously to continue the suspension of in-person worship. They set a target date of March 28 (Palm Sunday) to reopen in-person worship, if current trends continue. That decision will be finalized on March 22.

Online Worship Services continue to be available weekly on Facebook.

Sermon by Phone is now available at 717-200-2956

HYMN

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Augustus M. Toplady, Thomas Hastings

- 1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
save from wrath and make me pure.
- 2 Not the labors of my hands
can fulfill thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.
- 3 Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.
- 4 While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyes shall close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778) was born in Farnham, Surrey, England. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and served as a priest in the Church of England. He was strongly Calvinistic in theology, and engaged in a long-term public theological feud with John Wesley (the founder of Methodism). He died of tuberculosis. Thomas Hastings was born in Washington, CT in 1784 and died in New York in 1872. He was a self-taught musician who served as a choir director, and as a publisher of hymns and sacred music. Along with Lowell Mason, he played an important role in the establishment of public school music in America.

The text of *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me* was published in 1776. There is a legend that Toplady wrote the hymn after taking refuge in a cleft in a rock during a thunderstorm. The text was somewhat altered by Thomas Cotterill in 1815. The tune was written for this text in 1830. The text has been set to same tune as *Go to Dark Gethsemane* in some hymnals. The hymn describes our utter dependence on God's grace through Christ for salvation and eternal life. It may be found as No. 361 in our hymnal.



Time Change

We begin Daylight Savings Time this weekend. Please set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night before bedtime. Remember: "Spring Forward, Fall Back."

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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