

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

May 5, 2021

Psalm 85 (NRSV)

To the leader. Of the Korahites. A Psalm.

- 1 Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.*
- 2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin. Selah*
- 3 You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.*
- 4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward
us.*
- 5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all
generations?*
- 6 Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?*
- 7 Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.*
- 8 Let me hear what God the Lord will
speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him
in their hearts.*
- 9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those
who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.*
- 10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each
other.*
- 11 Faithfulness will spring up from the
ground,*

*and righteousness will look down from
the sky.*

*12 The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.*

*13 Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.*

Meditation

Read Judges 6:1-40

Does God believe in you? Often we ask the opposite question: Do you believe in God? But that's another question entirely. That has to do with our faith and trust in God, and our willingness to follow him. This question is different.

Does God believe in you? It's not a question of whether or not God believes in your existence—after all, he created you. It's a question of whether or not God has faith in you—whether he trusts you to do his will, has confidence in your character, and is willing to rely on your ability. And it's a question of whether God's faith in you leads to faith in yourself.

In the days of Gideon, Israel (who had done evil in God's sight) was attacked and oppressed by the Midianites. God called Gideon to deliver Israel from them and restore their freedom. But Gideon seems to have had little or no self-confidence. God worked to build his confidence by showing him that he believed in him.

When God's angel (messenger) first addresses Gideon in Judges 6:12, he says to him "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior." At this point there's no evidence that Gideon is a warrior of any sort, let alone a mighty one! Yet God sees something in Gideon that Gideon can't see in himself. He sees the potential for greatness and service.

As God continues to work with Gideon (through his angel, or messenger), he continues to build Gideon's confidence. He answers Gideon's request for a sign: he waits for Gideon's sacrifice and then burns the

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God believes in you!

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sacrifice with miraculous fire. He continues by giving Gideon a relatively small task—destroying an idol to Baal (a false god)—to do first.

When Gideon succeeds in that smaller task, God calls him to a much larger one. He asks Gideon to gather the Israelite fighting men, and defeat an invasion by the Midianites and the Amalekites. Gideon asks for another sign from God, and God provides it. Then Gideon asks for yet another sign. God is patient, and provides the sign the Gideon requests. Finally Gideon has the confidence to obey God, and lead Israel to victory.

When the battle finally comes, God gives Gideon a risky battle plan, but further strengthens Gideon's confidence when Gideon overhears a Midianite sharing a dream that Israel would be victorious. (Judges 7) Gideon obeys God's plan, and God gives him the victory. Gideon learned to believe in himself because God first believed in him.

Do you believe that God believes in you? Sometimes when God asks us to do something we have no self-confidence. We tend to say, "Lord, I can't do it. Please ask someone else." But when God calls us to a task it's because he believes in us—he knows we're capable of fulfilling his purpose. Moses is a good example (see Exodus 3:1 - 4:17). God called him to lead his people to freedom, yet Moses made all kinds of excuses. But God believed in Moses, saw his potential, and built up his self-confidence. Moses was able to do all that God asked him to do as he led God's people to the promised land.

God believes in all of us, but sometimes he shows it in a different way. We may have too much self-confidence instead of too little. We may think that we can do everything on our own, without relying on God's strength and the power of the Holy Spirit. At times like that, God believes in us so much that he works to decrease our false confidence and increase our reliance on him. Those experiences may be difficult, but they yield increased faith and reliance on God.

God may even use you to help others believe that God believes in them. I'm reminded of a person I

knew who had a gift of mentoring young people in the church. He could help them see that God believed in them, help them discern what God was calling them to do, and help them to have faith in themselves and their own potential as well as faith in God. When they stumbled and made mistakes (as everyone does) he was there to remind them of God's unconditional love. He built them up so that they would eventually build others up in the same way.

I think that God believes in every one of us. Do you believe that God believes in you?



Prayer

Most loving God, you call us to serve you and serve others in so many ways. Yet sometimes, Lord, we make excuses; we lack confidence in you and in ourselves. Grant us grace to trust in your call, and confidence to step out in faith. Enable us to use the gifts you give us to love others in your name as we work for freedom and justice. Help us to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

We pray for the healing power of your grace in our world. Be with those who are sick, that they may become whole and well again. Comfort those who mourn, and strengthen those who face difficult situations. We continue to pray for those individuals and nations which are affected by COVID, and for justice in our world.

Forgive us, Lord, for those times we fall short of your faith in us. Cleanse us from sin, and put a new and loving spirit within us. Enable us to live our lives for you as we reach out to others in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, for it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

Serve the Lord with gladness!

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1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Gettysburg United Methodist Church" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app

If you don't have (or don't want to get) the app, you can sign in at smile.amazon.com. Just type smile.amazon.com into your browser and follow directions from there.

"Spring of Promise" Worship Services

The United Methodist Churches of Upper Adams and Gettysburg are holding Wednesday evening outdoor services from April 14 through May 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Oakside Community Park Amphitheater, 2880 Table Rock Rd., Biglerville.

This week (May 12) Bill Ingraham (Certified Lay Minister) will preach on "The Promise of Freedom".

The weekly offering will be divided among area fire companies.

Jesus never promised us a life without suffering, but he did promise that it is possible to experience peace in all circumstances. In this Spring Series of Worship, we'll discover that we can always rely on the Promises of Jesus.

Weekly Prayer Concerns

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

This week's list (as of 5/4/2021) is:

Rodney Truscott
Penny Daugherty
Scott Bowers
Imogene Hunt's brother
Florence Davis
Mary Fleming
Ben Fisher
Family and friends of Don Richmond, who went home to be with the Lord on May 4
Jackie Rudisill
Rev. Meredith Ball
Pat Kellam

Members in Assisted Living / Skilled Care Homes:

Edith Bulman (SpiriTust Lutheran, York); Shirley Hammond (Morning Glory, Littlestown); Missy Legay (Moul Home, York); Peggy 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 Schable, Betty Schulteis, June Spencer

Announcements

We will not be holding the spring yard sale this year due to continuing COVID concerns.

The Missions Committee is collecting gently used shoes for donation to Mission Central. If you have shoes that you can donate, please place them in the box in the church lobby. Thank you for your generosity.

HYMN

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Thomas O. Chisholm, William M. Runyon

1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. Refrain

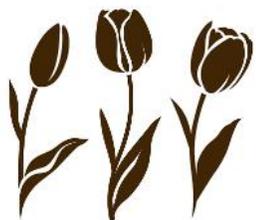
3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! Refrain

Born in Franklin, KY, in 1866, Thomas O. Chisholm was a newspaper editor who later became editor of the *Pentecostal Herald*. He was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1903, but only served one year due to ill health. After his recovery, he worked as an insurance agent. He wrote over 1,200 poems, and died in 1960. William M. Runyon was born in Marion, NY, in 1870, and died in 1957. Beginning at age 12, he served as a church organist and taught music as a teenager. He was ordained in the Methodist Church in 1891, and served churches in Kansas before becoming an evangelist with the Central Kansas Conference. Runyon was music editor and advisor for the Hope Publishing Company, and was associated with the Moody Bible Institute after his retirement.

In 1923 Thomas Chisholm sent a number of his poems to his friend William Runyon. Runyon was especially taken with *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, and decided to set it to music. The title and theme come from Lamentations 3:22-23, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (NRSV) The text and the music together capture the unchanging nature of God's steadfast love—a solid rock in the midst of challenging times. *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* is number 140 in our hymnal.

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers for Sunday, May 9, are presented by Jim and Marilyn Schville in honor of all mothers.



We greatly appreciate your continued faithful donations to GUMC during this time of continuing change. Your faithful giving is greatly appreciated, and we are very grateful for your continued generosity.

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