

Zion Lutheran Church, Harrisburg, PA /October 4, 2023

WOW (Worship On Wednesday) – FALL SERIES - 12:10pm Service of Holy Communion

“KNEELING WITH GIANTS – Learning to Pray with History’s Best Teachers”

*Based on the book of the same name by Gary Neal Hansen*

*Praying with John Calvin: Studying & Praying the Psalms*

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Opening Versicles**

L O Lord, open my lips.

C **and my mouth shall declare Your praise.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

L Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence for self-examination*

C **I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed; wherefore I pray to God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.**

L The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins. Amen.

**Prayer**

L The Lord be with you,

C **And also with you.**

L Let us pray: Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may never forget you, but remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

**Scripture Reading:**

**Psalm 4** *(read responsively)*

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have given me relief when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

- <sup>2</sup> O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?  
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?**
- <sup>3</sup> But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;  
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- <sup>4</sup> Be angry, and do not sin;  
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.**
- <sup>5</sup> Offer right sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup> There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?  
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"**
- <sup>7</sup> You have put more joy in my heart  
than they have when their grain and wine abound.
- <sup>8</sup> In peace I will both lie down and sleep;  
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.**

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### **Readings by John Calvin**

#### **From *preface to the Commentary on the Psalms***

I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, "An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul"; for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not represented here in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.

In short, as calling upon God is one of the principle means of securing our safety, and as a better more unerring rule for guiding us in this exercise cannot be found elsewhere than in the Psalms, it follows, that in proportion to the proficiency which a man shall have attained in understanding them, will be his knowledge of the more important part of celestial doctrine.

#### **From *Commentary on Psalm 3:4***

*With my voice have I cried unto the Lord.* [David] here informs us that he had never been so broken by adversity, or cast down by impious scornings, as to be prevented from addressing his prayers to God. And it was an infallible proof of his faith to exercise it by praying even in the midst of his distresses.

#### **From *Commentary on Psalm 4***

[David,] therefore, teaches us by his example, that as often as we are weighed down by adversity, or involved in very great distress, we ought to meditate upon the promises of God, in which the hope of salvation is held forth to us, so that defending ourselves by this shield, we may break through all the temptations which assail us.

### **From Commentary on Psalm 6:2**

*Heal me, O Jehovah.* And this the order which we must observe, that we may know that all the blessings which we ask from God flow from the fountain of his free goodness, and that we are then, and only then, delivered from calamities and chastisements, when he has had mercy upon us.

### **Homily**

#### **The Prayers**

L Show us your mercy, O Lord,

**C and grant us your salvation.**

L Clothe your ministers with righteousness.

**C Let your people sing with joy.**

L Give peace, O Lord, in all the world,

**C for only in you can we live in safety.**

L Lord, keep this nation under your care.

**C and guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

L Let your way be known upon the earth;

**C your saving health among all nations.**

L Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten,

**C nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

L Create in us clean hearts, O God,

**C and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

L *Additional petitions offered...*

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **C Amen.**

#### **Great Thanksgiving**

L: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

L In the night

in which he was betrayed  
our Lord Jesus took bread,  
and gave thanks; broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples,

saying: Take and eat;  
this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.  
Again, after supper,  
he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink,  
saying: This cup is  
the new covenant in my blood,  
which is shed for you and for all people  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

L Lord, remember us in your kingdom and reach us to pray:

**C 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.**

L This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are they who are called to his supper.

### **The Communion**

*All baptized persons who believe in the Real Presence of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine are welcome to the Table of the Lord. Please take an empty cup to receive wine or a pre-filled cup with grape juice.*

*For those fasting from the sacrament, you are invited to pray the following prayer,  
The Spiritual Communion:*

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

I love You above all things,

and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if you were already there,  
and I unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

*(Saint Alphonsus Liguori)*

### **Post-Communion Blessing**

L The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.  
C **Amen.**

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

L Let us pray: Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
C **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

L Lord, remember us in your kingdom and reach us to pray:  
C **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.**

### **Benediction**

L Let us bless the Lord.  
C **Thanks be to God.**  
L The Lord almighty bless us and direct our days and our deeds in his peace.  
C **Amen.**

### **Additional Teaching on Praying with The Psalms**

#### **From Introduction in *Psalms in 30 Days: compiled and with an Introduction by Trevor Wax***

For generations, Christians have prayed and sung the psalms. It was the prayerbook of Jesus. It is the Old Testament book most often quoted in the New. The songs in this book form the bedrock of both corporate and individual devotion...

Songwriter Michael Card writes: "The psalms are a connection for us. When I am lamenting, I may feel disconnected from God. The psalms express that experience. When I am joyful, the psalms give me language to connect with that joy and remember that it comes from God."

When you pray the psalms, you may not feel all of the emotions or passions of the psalmist when you read. But that's the point. "The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer. "It does not depend, therefore, on whether the Psalms express adequately that which we feel in a given moment in our heart. If we pray aright, perhaps its is quite necessary that we pray contrary to our own heart."

***From Kneeling with Giants by Gary Neal Hansen***

**[excerpts from] Questions for Studying a Psalm**

Who is speaking? An individual? A congregation? God? An enemy?

If the psalm tells a story of some kind, what is it?

What do you see in the poetry? Which lines repeat or contrast?

What life circumstances are described or implied?

What actions of God are described or implied? What does this imply about what God is like?

**[excerpts and adaptations from] Listening with Your Life**

In your present or past life, what situation is most similar to what the psalmist is feeling?

Who do you know who faces a situation like that of the psalmist?

What in your church or fellowship reminds you of what is described in the psalm?

Who can you imagine, in another country or another part of society, who might face what the psalmist faces?

Recently when I was praying Psalm 23:1 (The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want), I stopped and wrote about the grammar in my journal:

*“The Lord is my shepherd,” says the psalm. It is in the present tense. It is not that, “The Lord will be my shepherd” in the future, meaning that right now all I can do is wait for it to be true, and be patient. Nor does the text say, “The Lord was my shepherd,” in the past. I do not need to grieve that it is over now, and God is no longer caring for me, looking wistfully back to when God seemed closer or more caring. No, God is my shepherd right now, today in my current circumstances.*

That may not seem like a particularly deep insight, but it made a difference to me that day – and it came only because I was studying.

**Devotional Books on Praying with the Psalms:**

***Psalms in 30 Days: compiled and with an Introduction by Trevor Wax***

Provides both a path to read through the book of Psalms in one month and a guide for praying at morning, at noon, and at evening.

***Daily Meditations on the Psalms: Minute Meditations for Every Day containing a Psalm reading, a reflection, and a prayer; by Rev. Msgr. C. Anthony Ziccardi***