



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



2084 Wilson Pike · Franklin, TN 37067 · 615.794.2665
Pastor Dennis Meaker: 615.794.2665 · djmeaker@gmail.com

June 29, 2016

Psalm 139: At Once a Psalm of Hope and Hate

¹⁷ *How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you. Psalm 139:17-18 NRSV*

²¹ *Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
²² I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies. Psalm 139:21-22 NRSV*

The Bible is a very complex book. As we teach in Disciple Bible Study it is a ‘Book of Books.’ The bible contains books of histories, poetry, hymns, prayers, mythologies and even the personal correspondence of some of the early Apostles. It rarely speaks about how good people are, but it does not paint a bleak picture of how bad people are either. Rather it seeks to shine a light on human nature showing us just the way we are; the good and the bad existing side by side. Nowhere in scripture is this more evident than in the Book of Psalms.

The Book of Psalms is a prayer book for the People of Israel; the Jews. When we read the Psalms we are, in a sense, worshiping with the people of Israel as they were three thousand years ago. When we read the Psalms we hear expressions of the joy of Israel, the despair of Israel, the love of Israel and the hate of Israel. For example, consider Psalm 150, the last of the psalms and one of the shortest.

¹ *Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!*
² *Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!*
³ *Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!*
⁴ *Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!*
⁵ *Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!*
⁶ *Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!*

Praise the LORD! NRSV

Psalm 150 is a prayer of praise for God. God should be praised for everything God is and does and with everything we can find.

In contrast is Psalm 137, a prayer of lament apparently composed by the Exiles in Babylon, then held as slaves.

*¹ By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.
² On the willows there
we hung up our harps.
³ For there our captors
asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” Psalm 137:1-3 NRSV*

As they serve their captors in Babylon they are mocked by being asked to “sing a song of Zion,” a term meaning Jerusalem and, in a broader sense, their home of Israel. Perhaps their captors do not appreciate the depth of hatred of their slaves as those slaves contemplate the day that Babylon will know conquerors.

*⁸ O daughter Babylon, you devastator!
Happy shall they be who pay you back
what you have done to us!
⁹ Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock! Psalm 137:8-9.*

The image of children being beaten to death on the rocks of the river is certainly one of the grimmest in scripture. Yet the people of Israel did not hesitate to vent this anger before God.

Some of you have heard me describe Psalm 139 as my favorite Psalm. In the first 18 verses, the psalm is a powerful affirmation of the nature of God’s love for humankind; a psalm of hope that declares in the darkest times we are still in the presence of God.

*⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,”
¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you. Psalm 139:7-12 NRSV*

However, in the last six verses the tone of the psalm changes abruptly.

¹⁹ *O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—*
²⁰ *those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!*
²¹ *Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?*
²² *I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.*
²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.*
²⁴ *See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps 139:19-24*

The psalmist who has just proclaimed the profound love of God that is a constant presence with us wherever we go in life or in death, now calls on God to kill the ‘wicked.’ Here we see the passion of the deeply faithful who believe that those who do not love and praise God are a danger and are people who God must hate. The psalmist wants to affirm that he is on the side of God and is prepared to act on God’s supposed hatred of these same people. In a real sense he has abandoned the theme of hope that supports the rest of the psalm. This is the religious extremist. He fears those who do not believe as he believes; is convinced that God must mirror his fear with hate; and is willing to strike out in hate and fear believing that is God’s will. We see this in many places today in the acts of adherents of every major religion including Christianity.

And yet the psalm ends with a prayer for God to correct the psalmist himself.

²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.*
²⁴ *See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24 NRSV*

As I read this psalm it seems to me that the psalmist is feeling the discord within his heart. The discord is with the belief in the loving presence of God and the desire to strike out at God’s ‘enemies.’ And, there is still hope for the psalmist if he can acknowledge that his heart might not yet be right with God.

In a world that too often calls us not only to hate but to strike out in hate, the prayer of verses 23 and 24 is a worthy one. Let us acknowledge that there might still be some part of us that ‘needs work.’ Let us ask that God test our hearts each and every day and that God help us to walk in the way everlasting.

Preacher, What Does the Bible Say about ...?

From the time I came to Trinity I have stated on numerous occasions that I am willing to consider a sermon, or sermon series, on any subject that is of concern. I want to reaffirm that offer since it’s been a while since I have stated it. If there is a subject upon which you would like me to preach I will consider it. If I do not think it appropriate for a sermon I will explain why. It might also be appropriate to address some issues as part of a Newsletter article or series or as part of the Sunday School curriculum. But, if at all possible, I will seek to

Speak to these issues that are of interest on Sunday morning. One purpose of worship is to contemplate our relationship with God and if something is bothering you it is likely bothering others as well.

New Disciple Bible Study

Disciple Bible Study is a powerful experience that can open the Bible up for the participants. I would be willing to begin a new class this September if at least seven people desired to undertake the 34 week study. I could do this study on Monday or Tuesday nights between 7 and 9. If participants would prefer to meet on a week day that could also be arranged. In years past I have also taught Disciple Bible Study between 7 and 9 AM Sunday mornings. If you are interested please contact me at the Church. If you desire additional information for yourself or to give to a friend I have some explanatory booklets available.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study Group has voted to take a break for the summer. We will begin again on August 25th at 10:00 AM. At that time we will start a study of Philippians.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Rachel Newman	Sam Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Leslie Eastwood	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

Up-Coming Sermons

July 3rd: Sermon: The Fourth of July and Freedom. We are a free people. But, if we choose, we can give away our freedom. Paul pleads with us not to give our freedom away. My texts are Psalm 30 and Galatians 5:1, 13–25.

July 10th: Sermon: View From the Ditch. When someone tells a story we want to be able to identify with the ‘good guy,’ the hero. That is human nature and was true in Jesus’ day. But, when Jesus tells the story of the Samaritan, the crowd is at a loss. How can they be expected to identify with their worst enemy? My texts are Colossians 1:1–14 and Luke 10:25–37.

Worship Leader’s Schedule

July 3

Marty Bauguess, **Liturgist**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Mike and Renee Fetting, **Ushers**

July 10

Houston Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Donnie and Renita Hartsock, **Greeters**

Hal and Rachel Newman, **Ushers**

Announcements

The men’s group is planning to attend an evening **Sound’s game Friday, July 22. The start time for the game is 7:05. Wives and family members are included in the invitation. Please make Marty Bauguess** aware if you are planning to attend. He will need to know by **Sunday, July 16.**

Parents Night Out: The dates for this event in July are: **July 15 and July 29. Lindsay Stafford and Jan Strait** have done a wonderful job in providing leadership and organization for this event. Please make your friends and neighbors aware of this opportunity for **children ages 4-12.** Please pray for the children and the volunteers who will be participating.

VBS

Interested volunteers are meeting weekly (**Thursday evenings**) for planning this year’s event. You are welcome to attend this **6:30 PM** meeting if you would like to be a part of this opportunity

The enrollment form is online on our website, www.trinityfranklinUMC.org. **Please utilize this form and share this address with neighbors and friends.**

If you have questions, please contact Dawn Stevens at (615)-638-8827 or dawnstevens1961@gmail.com. VBS is an exciting, fun time for all, come join in! **VBS dates: July 18 – 21 from 6:30 – 8:00 PM.**

Erin McKibben is hosting a weekly devotional meeting at her home, **“Meditations on Tuesdays.”**

This weekly meeting will take place each week through July. Time of meetings is 7:00 – 8:30 AM. Her address: 8358 Carriage Hills Drive which is off of Wilson Pike across from Ravenwood High School.

Hosts and Hostesses for First Sunday Lunch: Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Please add your name to host this occasion for the coming months.

Trinity UMC Directory: We are updating our directory. If you are not listed in the current directory, if you have changed address, phone numbers, email address, we would like to make these changes in the directory.

Please see the document on the table at the back door. Please make your changes on this document.

The **Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School class** is both learning and enjoying a series of videos, narrated by Ray Vanderlann. The videos as well as the narration take place in ancient lands described in the Old Testament. We enjoy discussion about what we are learning and the application of the lessons to our lives.

We enjoy fellowship beginning at 9:45 with our study beginning at 10:00. All are welcome to join us as we pursue Biblical truths and the application for our lives.

Birthdays in July

Leslie Eastwood, Jeff Otto, Linda Robinson, Renita Hartsock

Happy Birthday to each of you!