



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the Old Testament The Psalms and Proverbs

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

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Ps 22:1-2 NRSV

⁶ *Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD! Ps 150:6 NRSV*

The Book of Psalms is one of the Bible's spiritual treasures. In its pages you will find prayers to express every feeling that you ever experienced. When the People of Israel prayed it was from the heart; from the deepest depths of their souls. They did not hold back their joy, their fear, their anger, their despair or their sorrow. They took everything to God in prayer.

Once, while leading a Disciple Bible Study class, I told the class that it was okay to offer an angry prayer to God. One woman was shocked. "You can't offer an angry prayer! That's disrespectful! After all, Paul says to give thanks for everything in your life!" 1 Thess 5:18. "God might punish you if you're angry with him." I thought about that for a moment and then asked her if she really believed that God didn't know how she felt, even if she wasn't speaking words in anger. The people of Israel proceeded from the standpoint that God always knew what was in their hearts so there was no reason to try and disguise their feelings.

How do you speak of the profound sense that, wherever you go, God is always with you? Look to Psalm 139. Have you ever been overwhelmed by the immensity of creation and wonder how God could care about you? Look to Psalm 8. Ever **felt** like your body was being ripped apart and everyone around you was against you? Read psalm 22. How about a feeling that God is always with you, leading you through the hard times? Reflect on Psalm 23.

The psalms of the People of Israel are about our day to day interaction with God and our feelings about God. Some will shock you because of their brutality. Others will make you laugh because of the things about yourself they bring to your mind; your experience of life. If you have never taken the time to read all the psalms, set aside a brief time every day for a couple of months to read and reflect on the psalms. There are only 150 of them. I suspect that you will find your own prayer life enriched by the genuine emotions evoked by the psalms.

The Book of Proverbs is part of the Wisdom literature of the bible. Wisdom, as the term is used in scripture, is defined as the ability to discern the difference between good and evil in all that we do. It's relational. It's about how we get along with one another. And, according to scripture, Wisdom is part of God's creation and is **characterized as a female**:

¹⁹ *The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens;*
²⁰ *by his knowledge the deeps broke open,
and the clouds drop down the dew. Proverbs 3:19-20 NRSV*

As portrayed in the Book of proverbs, Wisdom, that knowledge of right and wrong, is a woman:

8 *Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?*
² *On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;*
³ *beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:*
⁴ *“To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.*
⁵ *O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.*
⁶ *Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;*
⁷ *for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips. Proverbs 8:1-7*

Wisdom is a woman. Many of the proverbs are not very favorable to women but there is no basis for challenging that Wisdom is portrayed as a woman in scripture.

The Book of proverbs provides a lot of advice and some of that advice is pretty practical, aimed at getting along in the world. For instance, consider this one:

Proverbs 26:17

¹⁷ *Like somebody who takes a passing dog by the ears
is one who meddles in the quarrel of another.*

Ever been there? Two people are quarreling and you decide to step in, either to take sides or try to resolve the quarrel. How did that work out for you? A lot of the time it does not work out well.

How about 26:18- 19:

¹⁸ *Like a maniac who shoots deadly firebrands and arrows,*
¹⁹ *so is one who deceives a neighbor
and says, "I am only joking!"*

Watch out for those practical jokes on the neighbor. They may well come back to haunt you. What you think is a real thigh slapper may not be funny to your neighbor.

I especially like this one: Proverbs 27:14

¹⁴ *Whoever blesses a neighbor with a loud voice,
rising early in the morning,
will be counted as cursing.*

You may be a **morning** person. You may like to get up early. You may think that it's a good thing to get up early. But when you do, keep it down. Even if you are shouting a blessing, your neighbor may hear it as cursing.

Then there is Proverbs 25:17:

¹⁷ *Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house,
otherwise the neighbor will become weary of you and hate you.*

Even four thousand years ago, people liked their privacy. A few neighborly visits are okay, but be careful over doing it.

For those who like to bargain there is proverbs 20:14:

¹⁴ *"Bad, bad," says the buyer,
then goes away and boasts.*

And then there are those proverbs that deal with wealth and poverty. While laziness is condemned, the proverbs do not assume that all the poor are lazy: Proverbs 13:23

²³ *The field of the poor may yield much food,
but it is swept away through injustice.*

The poor may have the means of taking care of themselves, but their poverty makes them vulnerable to the rich who would cheat them of what they have. Proverbs also emphasizes that God does not look with kindness on those who cheat the poor or who will not give to help the poor: 14:31

³¹ *Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,
but those who are kind to the needy honor him.*

22:2

² *The rich and the poor have this in common:*

the Lord is the maker of them all.

We are all made by God. If you oppress the poor you insult God and if you are kind to the poor you honor God. 19:17

Central to the biblical story and the law of Israel is that God hears the cries of the poor and oppressed. This proverb reminds us that it is wrong to pretend we do not see or hear the poor around us. Jesus spoke of what we do for the least person around us we do for Him. Proverbs 31:8-9

⁸ *Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.*
⁹ *Speak out, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

We are not only to give to help those less fortunate, but to speak out for them as well.

There are many more proverbs. I encourage you to take the time to look through them. The thought I will leave you with is this: The bible calls us to live our faith. The Book of Proverbs emphasizes that our faith is centered not only on God but on how God would have us live. As a text from James points out, what good is our faith if we will not give it life through our actions? James 2:14-26.

Conclusion

I began this series some eleven weeks ago. What I have attempted to provide in these articles is a simple guide for reading through the Old Testament without getting lost in the historical or theological context of the scriptures. I barely scratched the surface of what could be said about the Old Testament but I have hopefully cut a narrow path through the jungle that you can widen for yourselves. I'd be glad to discuss any of these articles with you and elaborate on any issues that concern you. I also hope that some of you might be interested in studying the bible with me or in a group among yourselves. The Bible is meant to be read by Christians in community and discussed in community. If you would like to be part of a bible study group, please contact me. Alternatively, if there is an interest in participating in an online bible study I'd be glad to explore that as well. The Bible is central to my faith as it is to yours, and I enjoy exploring it with others.

Children's Church/Nursery

Sunday School and Nursery care is available every Sunday during the Sunday school hour. Children from birth through the 6th grade are welcome. Children's Church and Nursery care are available for Children from birth through pre-k after the Children's Time in worship. We encourage parents to keep their children of Kindergarten age and up in the sanctuary during worship. It's important that our children experience the worship of the Church community from an early age.

Lesson plans are currently available that volunteers can use to lead Children's Church during worship. These lesson plans (almost 100 separate plans) do not require any preparation or pre-planning. Each lesson includes a short Bible Story to be read to the children as well as a corresponding craft project. All supplies for the crafts are on hand in the Nursery.

We need two volunteers each Sunday to provide Children's Church during worship. With enough volunteers it shouldn't be necessary for any adult to miss worship more than one Sunday every two months. If

you would be willing to volunteer to help with the Children's Church ministry please see Jeanne Rybolt, Julia Moore, Dawn Stevens or Dana Bauguess to learn more.

Halloween Trunk or Treat Event at Trinity

From Jeanne Rybolt

There will be a brief meeting this Sunday following worship regarding the Trunk or Treat event. If you have volunteered to provide a trunk for the event or otherwise to help, or have not volunteered yet and are interested in helping, please take a few moments to meet with us following worship.

For the uninitiated, think of Trunk or Treat as tailgating for Halloween. We'll have cars placed in the parking lot with their trunks decorated and the kids go from car trunk to car trunk to trick or treat. Beyond that, events are still in the planning stage. The *almost firm* date for the event is Saturday October 29th. Possible events include contests (best costume, best decorated trunk, most original, etc.), hot dog supper inside, movie night, the ever-popular bounce house, games, entertainment, crafts, photo booth, etc.– whatever we feel we'd like to include in our event. You can find loads of ideas for trunk decorations on-line. I encourage the adults to come in costumes as well as the kids (a certain preacher and I would be dressing up as a couple of dwarves). Selfishly, I think it important to have family friendly decorations and costumes only – I get “spooked” very easily and will want to be able to sleep at night..... I'm proposing having the event on Saturday, October 29 beginning at 4 or 4:30 PM (the cars with decorated trunks would need to be in place earlier). We already have nine trunks promised but there is room for more. Please e-mail me to let me know if you would be willing to participate and would be able to help with games and food.

Jeanne.Rybolt@gmail.com

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. 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.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

There will be no Bible Study this week due to a conflict with the Columbia District Ministers' meeting.

The Thursday Morning Bible Study Group meets weekly on Thursdays at 10:00 AM. We are currently studying Romans.

Prayer Ministry

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

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|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 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

October 16th: Sermon: Persistent Prayer. Many of Jesus' parables are puzzling, and none more so than the Crooked Judge and the persistent widow. She continues to demand justice even when she knows her case is hopeless. What is Jesus trying to say about God and what is Jesus saying about prayer? My texts are Jeremiah 31:27-34 and Luke 18:1-8.

October 23rd: Sermon It's All Up to Me. One of the hardest aspects of our faith life is acknowledging our relationship to God. My texts are 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18 and Luke 18:9-14.

Worship Leaders

October 16

Stacy Bell, **Liturgist**

Dorise and Bill Lecates, **Greeters**

Ken and Jan Strait, **Ushers**

October 16

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Linda Robinson and Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Mike and Renee Fetting, **Ushers**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trunk or Treat: There will be a brief meeting this Sunday following worship regarding the Trunk or Treat event. If you have volunteered to provide a trunk for the event or otherwise to help, or have not volunteered yet and are interested in helping, please take a few moments to meet with us following worship.

GraceWorks has a shortage on many items in our food pantry, and we need your help restocking it! Here is a list of some very critical items needed in our food pantry: **Critical Needs:** Canned green vegetables (not green beans), Canned beans, Canned meat (not tuna), Cereal, Hamburger Helper type boxed meals, Soup. Please support this important ministry with your regular donations. The box is located beside the side door.

Parents Night Out: Parents Night Out takes place October 14th from 5:30 – 9:00 PM. (This is a deviation from the usual schedule which is the first Friday of the month). If you can help, or simply wish to become familiar with this new ministry, please come out. Please make your friends and neighbors aware of this opportunity for children of all ages.

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.

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 October

Elaine Rohrig, David Stafford, Julia Moore, Jan Strait, Reba Collier

Happy Birthday to each of you!