Gratitude and Sermon Journal

MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND CAVES

December 27, 2021 - April 24, 2022

Name: _____

Dear Church,

The purpose of our Gratitude and Sermon Journal is to help us connect with the Lord through daily prayer and study. Furthermore, we want to help connect others to the church. Monday's reading is the sermon text for the next Sunday. All daily readings support the Sunday sermon. Some, including Discipleship Communities, small groups and prayer groups, use their journals to discuss the texts and the Sunday morning sermon. Asbury is deeply rooted in Scripture and tradition while also being relevant for today. To overlook the wisdom of the past can restrict our growth and insight. This Gratitude and Sermon Journal looks back at Scripture and the teaching of the church for application today.

Tom

Small Group Discussion Questions

Consider using this journal not only for yourself, but also as an opportunity to meet with others in a small group. The Christian faith is about Helping Others Follow Jesus. This journal provides a mutually blessed way for you to do precisely that. Below are some questions your small group may use for discussion each week:

- Review the key Scripture(s).
- Review the key point(s) from the sermon.
    - How were you encouraged?
    - How were you challenged?
    - What questions did it create?
    - What convictions did it bring?
- What was the pastor asking of you, even expecting you to do in response?

Scripture Readings

MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND CAVES

ABRAM ON MOUNT MORIAH

- ❑ 12/27 Genesis 22:1-14
- ❑ 12/28 Genesis 12
- ❑ 12/29 Genesis 15-16
- ❑ 12/30 Genesis 17
- ❑ 12/31 Genesis 21
- ❑ 1/1 2 Chronicles 3
- ❑ 1/2 Genesis 22:1-14

MOSES ON MOUNT HOREB

- ❑ 1/3 Exodus 3:1-6
- ❑ 1/4 Exodus 1-3
- ❑ 1/5 Exodus 4-6
- ❑ 1/6 Exodus 7-9
- ❑ 1/7 Exodus 10-12
- ❑ 1/8 Exodus 13-15
- ❑ 1/9 Exodus 3:1-6

MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI

- ❑ 1/10 Exodus 19:16-25
- ❑ 1/11 Exodus 20
- ❑ 1/12 Exodus 24
- ❑ 1/13 Exodus 32
- ❑ 1/14 Exodus 34
- ❑ 1/15 Exodus 40
- ❑ 1/16 Exodus 19:16-25

MOSES ON MOUNT NEBO

- ❑ 1/17 Deuteronomy 34:1-8
- ❑ 1/18 Numbers 10:11-36
- ❑ 1/19 Numbers 13
- ❑ 1/20 Numbers 14
- ❑ 1/21 Numbers 20
- ❑ 1/22 Numbers 27:12-23
- ❑ 1/23 Deuteronomy 34:1-8

DAVID IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH

- ❑ 1/24 1 Samuel 17:1-11
- ❑ 1/25 1 Samuel 17:12-30
- ❑ 1/26 1 Samuel 31-54
- ❑ 1/ 27 1 Samuel 8-9
- ❑ 1/28 1 Samuel 10-11
- ❑ 1/29 1 Samuel 15-16
- ❑ 1/30 1 Samuel 17:1-11

DAVID ON MOUNT ZION

- ❑ 1/31 Psalm 122
- ❑ 2/1 2 Samuel 5
- ❑ 2/2 2 Samuel 6
- ❑ 2/3 Psalm 9
- ❑ 2/4 Ephesians 1:3-23
- ❑ 2/5 Philippians 4:4-9
- ❑ 2/6 Psalm 122

Scripture Readings

MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND CAVES

DAVID IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH

- ❑ 2/7 Psalm 23
- ❑ 2/8 2 Samuel 15
- ❑ 2/9 John 10:1-19
- ❑ 2/10 2 Corinthians 1:3-11
- ❑ 2/11 2 Corinthians 4
- ❑ 2/12 2 Corinthians 5:1-21
- ❑ 2/13 Psalm 23

ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

- ❑ 2/14 1 Kings 18:17-19
- ❑ 2/15 Deuteronomy 4:1-40
- ❑ 2/16 Deuteronomy 30:11-20
- ❑ 2/17 1 Kings 17
- ❑ 2/18 1 Kings 18
- ❑ 2/19 Acts 26
- ❑ 2/20 1 Kings 18:17-19

ELIJAH IN THE CAVE OF HOREB

- ❑ 2/21 1 Kings 19
- ❑ 2/22 1 Kings 21
- ❑ 2/23 2 Kings 1-2
- ❑ 2/24 Psalm 88
- ❑ 2/25 2 Timothy 4
- ❑ 2/26 James 5:13-20
- ❑ 2/27 1 Kings 19:9-18

JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF TEMPTATION

- ❑ 2/28 Matthew 4:1-11
- ❑ 3/1 James 4:1-12
- ❑ 3/2 Matthew 4:1-11

JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

- ❑ 3/3 Matthew 5:1-12
- ❑ 3/4 Matthew 6:1-18
- ❑ 3/5 Matthew 6:19-34
- ❑ 3/6 Matthew 5:1-12

JESUS ON MOUNT GERIZIM

- ❑ 3/7 John 4:1-42
- ❑ 3/8 Isaiah 53
- ❑ 3/9 Matthew 21:28-32
- ❑ 3/10 Luke 15:11-24
- ❑ 3/11 John 3:16-21
- ❑ 3/12 Revelation 3:15-22
- ❑ 3/13 John 4:16-26

JESUS ON THE MOUNT AT GALILEE

- ❑ 3/14 John 6:1-15
- ❑ 3/15 John 6:16-40
- ❑ 3/16 John 6:41-59
- ❑ 3/17 John 6:60-71
- ❑ 3/18 Matthew 28:16-20
- ❑ 3/19 Colossians 2:6-7
- ❑ 3/20 John 6:1-15

Scripture Readings

MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND CAVES

JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

- ❑ 3/21 Matthew 17:1-13
- ❑ 3/ 22 Isaiah 6
- ❑ 3/23 Matthew 16:1-20
- ❑ 3/24 Matthew 16:21-28
- ❑ 3/25 2 Peter 1:16-21
- ❑ 3/26 Revelation 1
- ❑ 3/27 Matthew 17:1-13

JESUS AT THE CAVE OF LAZARUS

- ❑ 3/28 John 11:38-44
- ❑ 3/29 John 11:1-16
- ❑ 3/30 John 11:17-37
- ❑ 3/ 31 John 11:45-57
- ❑ 4/1 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
- ❑ 4/2 Revelation 21:1-6
- ❑ 4/3 John 11:38-44

JESUS ON MOUNT OF OLIVES

- ❑ 4/4 Matthew 21:1-11
- ❑ 4/5 Psalm 25:8-10
- ❑ 4/6 Isaiah 66:1-2
- ❑ 4/7 Daniel 4:34-37
- ❑ 4/8 Philippians 2:1-11
- ❑ 4/9 1 Peter 5:1-11
- ❑ 4/10 Matthew 21:1-11

JESUS AT THE EMPTY CAVE

- ❑ 4/11 Matthew 27
- ❑ 4/12 Matthew 28:1-10
- ❑ 4/13 Luke 24:1-12
- ❑ 4/14 John 13
- ❑ 4/15 John 19
- ❑ 4/16 John 20
- ❑ 4/17 Matthew 28:1-10

JESUS ON MOUNT OF OLIVES

- ❑ 4/18 Acts 1:6-11
- ❑ 4/19 Isaiah 55
- ❑ 4/ 20 John 15:26-27
- ❑ 4/ 21 2 Timothy 2:22-26
- ❑ 4/22 1 Peter 3:8-17
- ❑ 4/ 23 1 John 1:1-4
- ❑ 4/24 Acts 1:6-11

MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS AND CAVES

December 27, 2021 - April 24, 2022

Mountains, Valleys and Caves

The geography of the Holy Land is full of mountains, valleys and caves. Mountains provide great visibility. The high places allow us to discern location, find direction, and feel awe and inspiration. We have certain "mountaintop" experiences in life where things go well and help us sense the presence of God. *"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."* (Psalm 121:1-2)

On the other hand, we also have valleys. Not everything in life goes our way. As Psalm 23 says, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death…."* Going through a valley often describes a troubling time. Yet, most crops are grown in fertile valleys, not on mountaintops. Likewise, many of us learn more from failure than from success. While not as frequent as mountains and valleys, the Holy Land also has caves. We think of a caveman as having severe limitations in intellect, health, social skills, or spirituality. Caves are places of retreat, hiding and waiting. Lot, Elijah and Lazarus were not doing well when they were in caves.

This sermon series uses mountains, valleys and caves to tell stories. We will highlight the three main characters of the Old Testament: Abraham, Moses and David, plus the greatest Old Testament prophet, Elijah. If we know Abraham, Moses and David, we will have a basic understanding of the Old Testament.

On Ash Wednesday, we shift to a New Testament Gospel survey. During Lent we will look at the mountains, valleys and caves Jesus graced.

Though this is one of the longest sermon series we've produced, we still left out much. So, we included a "bonus" page at the end of this journal with more references. Best of all: we will be sending you an interactive digital version of this journal. We are adding lots of great resources (illustrations, maps, videos, etc.) to make this Bible study comprehensive, engaging and fun. I strongly encourage our small groups and Discipleship Communities to journey through the Old and New Testaments, the Holy Land, Holy Week, and the ups and downs of life together with this "special edition" interactive journal.

Monday, December 27, 2021
Genesis 22:1-14

Genesis 1-11 is considered prehistory. We do not know the dates and location of creation, the Garden of Eden, the Flood, or the Tower of Babel. Genesis 12 through Chronicles and the stories of Abraham, Moses and David give an overview of the Old Testament.

This week we survey Genesis 12-22 and "Father Abraham." God told Abram to leave his home, Ur (200 miles southeast of modern Baghdad, Iraq), to receive three promises: land, seed (children) and blessing. Abram obeyed and traveled to the Promised Land. He and Sarai had a miracle son in their advanced years.

We squirm on multiple levels when we read the Binding of Isaac. Though child sacrifice was a common religious practice, the Old Testament condemned it (Leviticus 20:1-3). In the Hinnom Valley of Jerusalem, the worship of the god, Molech, included child sacrifice. This valley later became associated with the idea of hell (Jeremiah 19:12-13, Mark 9:45).

Any thoughtful person would ask, "Why would God do this?" Isaac was the beloved son and Abram's future rested on him. Did Abram misunderstand? Abram had fouled up before—was this another blunder? With this event, God was establishing that HE would provide for His people, not the other way around. The Lord was setting Himself apart from all other gods.

Mount Moriah, the site of Isaac's binding, was later purchased by King David (1 Chronicles 21:18-30). *"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."* (2 Chronicles 3:1) The gold dome on Temple Mount in modern Jerusalem marks the traditional site for Mount Moriah. The "Dome of the Rock" is an Islamic shrine built over the spot where the Jewish Temple once stood.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **trusting God**. What God did for Abram (Abraham) He did for us. This was revealed later near Mount Moriah where God's own Son had His hands and feet bound at Mount Calvary. There was one difference—Isaac was delivered but Jesus was crucified. Our application follows Abraham's: to trust the Lord. As Paul said, we walk by faith, not by sight (1 Corinthians 5:7). God provides. We trust Him, especially when the present moment doesn't make sense.

Tuesday, December 28, 2021
Genesis 12

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, December 29, 2021
Genesis 15-16

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, December 30, 2021
Genesis 17

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, December 31, 2021
Genesis 21

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, January 1, 2022
2 Chronicles 3

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, January 2, 2022
Genesis 22:1-14

Sermon Notes:

Monday, January 3, 2022
Exodus 3:1-6

Genesis 12-50 is a study of a dysfunctional family. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and Joseph were the patriarchs God used to create a nation. Abraham and Jacob were flawed, larger-than-life characters. Only Joseph, a type of Christ, was exemplary. Anybody named Joseph should be proud of their name.

"They all lived happily ever after" in Genesis 50, but Exodus 1 explains there's a new king in town. This week we survey the first half of Exodus. The Israelites populated like rabbits and this Pharaoh didn't care for the demographic shift. Moses was supposed to be their deliverer, but he blew his chance and got out of Dodge before Pharaoh could nab him. He knew God could never use him to redeem the Israelites. Yet, God was not finished with Moses. In fact, He was just getting started. At the spry age of 80, Moses answered "the call" in a surprising episode at "Horeb, the mountain of God." Horeb and Sinai may be two sides of the same mountain. For Moses to bring the people here, makes sense.

Read Exodus 1-15 this week. There is a lot of ground to cover (no pun intended). The Bible in one word is the story of "redemption." We see this thread from beginning to end. Redemption is at the heart of the book of Exodus. Before God could redeem His people, He had to redeem their leader. Moses was a bird with a broken wing. His inferiority was well-founded. He needed a lot of help. As God provided for Abram, so God provided for Moses. Moses offered five excuses, culminating in: *Please, God, just send somebody else!* God gave Moses his brother Aaron as a spokesman. He gave Moses a rod as a symbol of God's power. Remember the quote, *"It's not the rod—it's the God behind the rod that made it happen."*

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **redemption**. Exodus is the story of "orientation, disorientation and reorientation." Moses experienced this. God redeemed Moses' early life. When have you gone through a process of "orientation, disorientation and reorientation"? When has God redeemed an experience in your life? Being on a mountain gives us a different perspective. How can you help others experience the redemption that comes from following Jesus?

Tuesday, January 4, 2022
Exodus 1-3

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, January 5, 2022
Exodus 4-6

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, January 6, 2022
Exodus 7-9

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, January 7, 2022
Exodus 10-12

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, January 8, 2022
Exodus 13-15

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, January 9, 2022
Exodus 3:1-6

Sermon Notes:

Monday, January 10, 2022
Exodus 19:16-25

This week we survey the second half of Exodus. After escaping bondage in Egypt, the Israelites needed a time out corner. Chapters 16-19 tell how God provided for them in the wilderness. They had sweet water from bitter, bread from heaven, and water from a rock. They defeated an enemy as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, gave some great advice about delegation. Their exit from Egypt was better than their entrance into the Promised Land.

Despite all God's provisions, the Israelites weren't happy campers. They continually grumbled against Moses' leadership. He grew frustrated and impatient with their complaints. Some tried to sabotage him. Some advocated for a return to the "good old days." They had just left captivity in Egypt. How quickly we forget.

The Israelites needed rules of engagement for life, so the Lord gave them a map to help them live a healthy and holy life as individuals within their community. This map is called the "Mosaic Law." Exodus 20 contains the moral law, the "Ten Commandments." Civil and ceremonial laws follow.

The Lord's conversation was transmitted with thunder and lightning. This event must have been a spooky time and place. Moses brought them out of their camp to meet God—no wonder they were scared. God was not approachable by the common Israelite. The idea of one God was very different from what they had known in the Egyptian culture.

Read through Exodus (including their rebellion with the golden calf in chapter 32). Moses' mountaintop experience crashed in the painful valley below. However, all is not lost. With all the highs and lows of this second book in the Bible, it is encouraging to see Exodus concludes like Genesis: on a high note. The final paragraph of Exodus ends with God's glory filling the tabernacle (40:34-48). Twice, it says the Lord was with His people *"throughout all their journeys."*

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **God's presence**. God not only provides and redeems, but He is with us in all our journeys of life, too. How has God's presence been with you? What mountaintop and peak experiences have you known? What valleys have you walked through? Who is journeying with you? Everyone is carrying something. How are you helping others know that God is with them?

Tuesday, January 11, 2022
Exodus 20

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Exodus 24

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, January 13, 2022
Exodus 32

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, January 14, 2022
Exodus 34

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, January 15, 2022
Exodus 40

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, January 16, 2022
Exodus 19:16-25

Sermon Notes:

Monday, January 17, 2022
Deuteronomy 34:1-8

This week we survey the Book of Numbers, ending with the selection of Joshua as Moses' successor. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, but they did not go immediately into the Promised Land. Instead, their lack of faith resulted in constant complaint and mistrust of the Lord and His leader. The people had a once-in-a-lifetime chance to enter the Promised Land, but they sided with the negative report of the ten spies. They believed they were unable to overcome their adversaries. They entered a desolated area. The wilderness was not the destination; it was supposed to be a temporary place. They entered a "neutral zone" to determine their future.

The Lord gave His people all they needed to succeed, including the Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai. Moses took the Israelites out of Egypt but had a hard time taking Egypt out of the Israelites. That entire generation, except Joshua and Caleb, had to die before they could enter their destination.

Numbers 20 tells us that Moses lost his trusted confidantes, his sister, Miriam, and his brother, Aaron, but also lost his temper. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it.

Moses looked over the Dead Sea from Mount Nebo to see the Promised Land, though he did not get to enter. On the one hand, he had a lifetime of memories and a glimpse of the future of the Israelites. On the other hand, he had to contemplate his personal loss and his own mortality. Moses experienced mountains, valleys and caves.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is about dealing with **disappointment.** The postscript about Moses (verses 9-12) tells us there was no one else like him, but even he experienced loss and sadness. Having unfinished business or not getting to cross the finish line is discouraging. When we do not handle the neutral zone well, we can become stuck there. We don't like to think about our own mortality, yet death is 100% certain. What have been major disappointments in your life? What are you struggling with now? Who do you know who is going through a discouraging time? What can you do to help? What hope do you gain from this text?

Tuesday, January 18, 2022
Numbers 10:11-36

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, January 19, 2022
Numbers 13

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, January 20, 2022
Numbers 14

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, January 21, 2022
Numbers 20

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, January 22, 2022
Numbers 27:12-23

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, January 23, 2022
Deuteronomy 34:1-8

Sermon Notes:

Monday, January 24, 2022
1 Samuel 17:1-11

We've examined two of the three great people in the Old Testament: Abraham and Moses. Now we discuss the third person—David. This week moves us into a brief survey of the first two kings of Israel: Saul and David.

Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses' death. The Book of Judges, another book filled with violence and conquest, shows what happens when *everyone does what is right in their own eyes.*

This week we read the story of the selection of the kings of Israel. The prophet Samuel gave stern warnings not to demand a king (1 Samuel 8), but they wanted to be like all the other nations. Saul, the first king, looked the part. He was tall and handsome. However, looks can be deceiving. He was an ineffective leader on multiple levels. We read about his troubles this week.

The Valley of Elah began as a disaster for King Saul and the Israelites. Goliath was a Philistine menace taunting the Israelites and their God. 1 Samuel 16 introduces us to the second king of Israel, David, who became their greatest king. He was the opposite of Saul in many ways. David was overlooked and forgotten. He was so unlikely to be king that his own father hesitated to mention him to Samuel. Consider reading Malcolm Gladwell's fascinating book, "David and Goliath." He explains how Goliath was at a severe disadvantage. He didn't stand a chance. This is one of the greatest stories in the Bible.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week concerns our **enemies**. We all have adversaries, foes, rivals and opponents. Antagonists may be large or small. They are not limited to the Valley of Elah. We face them today, too. Seeing how and why David won his battle is helpful. Like the shrewd money manager of Luke 16, David recognized the situation had changed. He used his own approach, not Saul's, to slay the giant. Every enemy has weakness. We must adapt in a crisis. What opportunities are your "enemies" presenting to you now? What innovative methods can you employ to solve them? Matthew 5:43-48 has some novel advice.

Tuesday, January 25, 2022
1 Samuel 17:12-30

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, January 26, 2022
1 Samuel 31-54

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, January 27, 2022
1 Samuel 8-9

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, January 28, 2022
1 Samuel 10-11

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, January 29, 2022
1 Samuel 15-16

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, January 30, 2022
1 Samuel 17:1-11

Sermon Notes:

Monday, January 31, 2022
Psalm 122

Mount Zion has always occupied a special place in Judaism. The term can refer to part of the City of Jerusalem or its whole, or to the entirety of the nation of Israel (Zionists). David founded Mount Zion when he defeated the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6-7). The "Songs of Ascent" (Psalms 120-134) are sung by Jewish pilgrims as they ascend to Jerusalem for worship.

King Solomon pursued wisdom but his father, David, pursued worship. David REALLY loved God. He seemed unique among the kings of Israel in this regard. Wisdom is important for this life, but worship lasts forever.

Like all of us, David made mistakes, but make no mistake about it—despite his imperfections, this was a man who loved God. The Psalms give us a look at David's heart and character. David is credited with writing about half the 150 Psalms. David constantly affirmed the beauty, goodness, and truth of God's law. The Lord is magnificent and worthy of glory, honor, and praise. David praised God, not because of his circumstances, but because of the nature, goodness, and character of God. Even after the death of his son, whom he had fasted and prayed for, we see David's abiding trust in God. This is the next line after he hears the news: *"And he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped"* (2 Samuel 12:20). Through all the tumult of his life, David always worshiped. He praised God in his mountaintop experiences, while in the valley, and even in the cave.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **praise**. In the Old Testament, David was THE model of praising and thanking God in all circumstances. There are so many benefits of giving God glory. What comes to your mind when you think of praising God? Why is praising God so important? How big a part of your spiritual life is praising the Lord? What other scriptures come to mind about it? How can you incorporate the praise of God into your life in a more regular and consistent way? Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* Try writing your own psalm of praise to God.

Tuesday, February 1, 2022
2 Samuel 5

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, February 2, 2022
2 Samuel 6

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, February 3, 2022
Psalm 9

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, February 4, 2022
Ephesians 1:3-23

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, February 5, 2022
Philippians 4:4-9

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, February 6, 2022
Psalm 122

Sermon Notes:

Monday, February 7, 2022
Psalm 23

While Psalm 23 mentions *"the valley of the shadow of death,"* death is not the focus of the text. David concentrates on the Lord who is his shepherd. Of course, being a shepherd was David's occupation as a youth. Because of his skill with a sling, he prevailed over Goliath in the Valley of Elah in a thrilling laser tag match.

Death is not just a physical event. We experience debits to our accounts with relationships, health, addiction, employment, and finance. We don't "die" in these valleys, but they can be dark and shadowy places. When we flunk, get a divorce, receive unfavorable medical news, are fired, sued, incarcerated, or audited, we are welcomed into the valley of the shadow of death. We didn't sign up for it and we don't want it—we only want to survive it.

We read this week about our Good Shepherd. For us to be able to trust God, we must believe He is good. One of the most familiar responses in church today is: "God is good all the time—all the time, God is good." As followers of the Good Shepherd, we believe He will be with us in the dark spaces of fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, and grief. Not only is He with us now, but He promises always to be with us wherever we are. The last clause of the Psalm, *"…and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever"* is something Jesus mentioned, too: *"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"*

Be sure to read the story of Absalom's revolt in 2 Samuel 15. David left his palace and had to travel down through the Kidron Valley and up the Mount of Olives. Betrayed by his own son, David was devastated.

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APPLICATION: Our theme this week is about **loss.** David's first valley (Goliath) was a great victory, but the man took it on the chin several times. What's your story of the valley of death? Why? How? When? Are you there now? Note the Lord is with us. Note, also, in 2 Corinthians the Lord has given us the ministry of reconciliation. How are you using your wounds from the valley of death to help others find the comfort and presence of the Good Shepherd?

Tuesday, February 8, 2022
2 Samuel 15

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, February 9, 2022
John 10:1-19

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, February 10, 2022
2 Corinthians 1:3-11

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, February 11, 2022
2 Corinthians 4

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, February 12, 2022
2 Corinthians 5:1-21

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, February 13, 2022
Psalm 23

Sermon Notes:

Monday, February 14, 2022
1 Kings 18:17-19

We survey part of 1 Kings this week as we read about the greatest prophet of the Old Testament—Elijah. In Scripture, Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the wisdom of the Prophets. Elijah had a true mountaintop experience in 1 Kings 18. Next week, Elijah is in the valley of depression. How quickly we can go from high to low. But we can also regain lost ground.

1 Kings 17 introduces us to this strange character. He seems to be a maverick Lone Ranger type. The Lord often selects oddballs to do His greatest work. Like Elijah, John the Baptist was a non-conformist. John came in the *"spirit and power of Elijah"* (Luke 1:5-17). His diet (locusts and honey) will never be made into a kid's breakfast cereal.

The first commandment demands: not to have any other gods before the Lord. The second rejects graven images. Deuteronomy 4 repeated the warning. Deuteronomy 30:11-20 set up "The Choice." The God or gods they serve will determine their outcome.

After Elijah taunts and ridicules Baal's prophets, his biting sarcasm concludes by asking the Israelites: *"How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people did not answer him a word"* (1 Kings 18:21-22). The Israelites waited until the Super Bowl of the Old Testament was over before they placed their bets.

Paul had the same strategy as Elijah when he stood before a king in the New Testament—Agrippa. He tried to force a choice, too.

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APPLICATION: Our theme this week is about **choice**. Why are the first and second commandments so important? What idols do you see others choosing to follow? Why are they so attractive and tempting? How does idolatry tempt you? We do not have unlimited opportunities in life to make certain choices. Not to choose is also a choice. What is appealing about Elijah's character and message? Jesus wanted us to let our light shine (Matthew 5:14-16). How can we witness to our faith in a secular world?

Tuesday, February 15, 2022
Deuteronomy 4:1-40

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, February 16, 2022
Deuteronomy 30:11-20

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, February 17, 2022
1 Kings 17

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, February 18, 2022
1 Kings 18

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, February 19, 2022
Acts 26

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, February 20, 2022
1 Kings 18:17-19

Sermon Notes:

Monday, February 21, 2022
1 Kings 19

"Everyone has feet of clay." The saying is an idiom. We don't take the saying literally, but it means everyone has weaknesses. The "feet of clay" idiom comes from a dream of the king of the world at the time, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, in Daniel 2:32-33: *"The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay."* That king's "feet of clay" were exposed by his pride which resulted in foolish and ungodly decisions that finally led to a mental illness in Daniel 4.

We've seen "feet of clay" in our Old Testament study as the three greatest figures of the Old Testament, Abraham, Moses, and David all had problems. Elijah, after one of the most spectacular victories in the Bible, folds like a cheap tent when threatened by the wicked Queen Cruella de Vil (a.k.a. Jezebel). After the victory on Mount Carmel, it seems inconceivable that this abrupt reversal could happen. He was on top of the mountain and fell into the valley of despair. Part of Elijah's problem is identified in 1 Kings 19:3—because he was alone. The verse concludes with *"…and he left his servant there."* He had nobody to help him. In contrast, Paul recognized his need for others while he was imprisoned. Elijah didn't write Psalm 88, but it sounds like he could have. We can all end up as "cave" men or women in the pit of despair. Sometimes our depression is genetic—we come from families prone to it. Often our problem is circumstantial, and depression is a realistic conclusion that things can end in a bad place. Like walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we just don't want to get stuck here. Wilderness, valleys and caves are part of life. Read all of 1 Kings 19, but also read chapter 21. Elijah recovers. In 2 Kings 1-2, his successor, Elisha, is named. He embodies hope.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is about dwelling in the cave of **depression**. How are you doing with this topic? How are you seeking help? Don't go it alone—others can and want to help. We need to be reminded that depression is normal and sometimes, appropriate. We don't just skip through times of significant loss. We can use our weakness to depend on the Lord. Furthermore, our wounds make us sensitive to help others who stand in need. Who do you need to reach out to for help? Who are you helping?

Tuesday, February 22, 2022
1 Kings 21

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, February 23, 2022
2 Kings 1-2

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, February 24, 2022
Psalm 88

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, February 25, 2022
2 Timothy 4

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, February 26, 2022
James 5:13-20

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, February 27, 2022
1 Kings 19:9-18

Sermon Notes:

Monday, February 28, 2022
Matthew 4:1-11

We move from the Old Testament mountains, valleys and caves into the Gospels. Jesus loved mountains. He taught and prayed on mountains. He was on a mountain when He cast demons out of a man into some wild pigs that rushed downhill into the Sea of Galilee. He took Peter, James, and John to a mountain where Moses and Elijah greeted them (Matthew 17).

The host for Jesus the first time He was on a mountain was the devil. The devil claimed HE owned these kingdoms and could give them to Jesus. The tempter invited Jesus to worship him. Jesus, not wanting to drink the cup of crucifixion makes sense, but it's hard to imagine that worshiping the devil was appealing. Why would Jesus trade His birthright for a bowl of porridge like Esau (Genesis 25) or betray His Father for 30 pieces of silver like Judas Iscariot? Anything the evil one could offer were trinkets in comparison with the glory of God.

Jesus prepared before he began His public ministry. Likewise, we are invited to do the same for the period before Easter.

APPLICATION: Our Ash Wednesday theme is **preparation.** Ash Wednesday begins our 40-day period before Easter (not counting Sundays). In the Bible the number 40 means "preparation." A major event always followed the number 40.

As we prepare for Lent, we apply the three practices John Wesley used for the Methodists: Avail yourself of the means of grace (worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship), do good (lots of opportunity here), and avoid harm. What are your plans for a holy Lent? Will you pray and read your Bible daily, come to worship weekly? Who could you invite to be in a small group to share this time together? What is something new you can start? What should you give up?

Tuesday, March 1, 2022
James 4:1-12

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, March 2, 2022
Matthew 4:1-11
Ash Wednesday

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, March 3, 2022
Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus was a contrarian. He was not grumpy, but He saw things differently than the unrighteous Gentiles and the self-righteous Pharisees. The Mount of the Beatitudes shows how He flipped the blessing upside down. Blessing wasn't about grabbing, but about giving. His teachings were contrary to the way of the world. *"Don't be like them"* (Matthew 6:8). "Them" refers both to the Gentiles and the Pharisees. Seek the righteousness of Christ.

APPLICATION: Our theme for the rest of the week is about **blessing.** Lent is an excellent time to not only receive God's blessings and to live it out, but to extend it to others.

We said on Ash Wednesday: As we prepare for Lent, we apply the three means of grace Wesley used for the Methodists: Avail yourself of the means of grace (worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship), do good (lots of opportunity here), and avoid harm. What are your plans for a holy Lent? Will you pray and read your Bible daily, come to worship weekly? Who could you invite to be in a Lenten small group? What is something new you can start? What should you give up?

Friday, March 4, 2022
Matthew 6:1-18

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, March 5, 2022
Matthew 6:19-34

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, March 6, 2022
Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon Notes:

Monday, March 7, 2022
John 4:1-42

Jesus encountered a woman with a checkered past. Jesus was "kind" but not "nice" as He spoke plainly and directly with her. He was not mean, judgmental, and bombastic—He just spoke to her. That was remarkable. A Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman? Not only that, but she was "that woman" in her community. Decent people wouldn't be caught dead with her. She was despised, rejected, cast-off, unwanted, and shunned because of her past. As Isaiah 53 prophesied, Jesus had to deal with the same rejection not because of unrighteousness but because of His righteousness. John 3:16 is followed in the next few verses with the statement that people love darkness rather than light. Jesus engaged her in conversation. She used a diversion tactic in verse 20 when she went into the old "Jew vs. Samaritan" routine. After a civil war, an alternative site for worship was set up locally in Samaria. The Jews and the Samaritans had hostility toward each other. Jesus responded and redirected the conversation.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had to redirect the conversation about reaching the lost. In his day, 1700s in England, the poor were marginalized and disregarded. They were considered disposable, too. When George Whitefield invited Wesley to preach outdoors to the coal miners early in the morning, Wesley thought the Lord would be offended. However, when he tried it, he realized that audience was more receptive than most who attended church. Early Methodists were overwhelmingly poor. Wesley cared for them, like Jesus cared for this woman.

Jesus' conversation on Mount Gerizim in Samaria is the model of invitation. He broke down cultural barriers and invited someone considered to be trash in the community to talk to Him. He listened. He had compassion. He wanted everyone to belong. He invited anyone and everyone to the party in the kingdom of God. She, in turn, became an evangelist.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **invitation.** What lessons can you learn about invitation from Jesus? What lessons can you learn from the woman about inviting others to meet Jesus? Consider inviting someone to watch the episode of "The Chosen" (season 1, episode 8) where Jesus meets the woman at the well. What are ways you can help others follow Jesus?

Tuesday, March 8, 2022
Isaiah 53

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, March 9, 2022
Matthew 21:28-32

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, March 10, 2022
Luke 15:11-24

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, March 11, 2022
John 3:16-21

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, March 12, 2022
Revelation 3:15-22

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, March 13, 2022
John 4:16-26

Sermon Notes:

Monday, March 14, 2022
John 6:1-15

If you ever go to Israel, you'll understand why Jesus preferred the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem. The "Holy Land" is far more than rocks and sand. While it is about the size of New Jersey, those who have been to Israel often say it reminds them of California—a coastal plain, a mountain ridge that creates a desert, and a northern area that is plush and fertile. The Sea of Galilee is the largest freshwater lake in the Middle East though it is not a large area, about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. In the northwestern part of the lake is where Jesus performed this amazing miracle. The Feeding of 5,000 was truly a mountaintop experience. Jesus put Philip on the spot. The disciple who got second billing, Andrew (Peter's brother), always seemed to be bringing people to Jesus. This time it was a little boy. Some say this miracle is their favorite of all (other than the Resurrection, of course). Jesus wasn't finished with the miraculous, either. Next, He walked on the water and calmed a storm.

However, John 6 tells the rest of the story. The great victory turned south the next day when many of "His disciples" left Him. His sayings were too difficult. Some just wanted the goodies but truly weren't interested in following Him. They were fickle followers. Their departure is a classic case of, "Lower your expectations; raise your commitment."

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APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **discipleship.** Write out your definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus:

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Jesus said the mission of the church was to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. Are you a disciple? Why? How are you Helping Others Follow Jesus? When in your discipleship have you felt like you were on a mountaintop, multitude-feeding, water-walking experience; and when have you felt confused and thought of dropping out? Disciples have mountains, valleys and sometimes caves.

Tuesday, March 15, 2022
John 6:16-40

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, March 16, 2022
John 6:41-59

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, March 17, 2022
John 6:60-71

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, March 18, 2022
Matthew 28:16-20

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, March 19, 2022
Colossians 2:6-7

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, March 20, 2022
John 6:1-15

Sermon Notes:

Monday, March 21, 2022
Matthew 17:1-13

Peter figured out the identity of Jesus: *"you are the Christ, the son of the living God."* Jesus responded with stunning news. He would suffer, die, and rise on the third day. Peter, who had done so well earlier, made a rookie mistake when he tried to dictate the rules to Jesus. Jesus was not "nice" in His response. Peter got a serious and public rebuke. Not only would Jesus be put to death, but they would have to take up their crosses and follow Him. However, Jesus also let them in on big surprise. Some would not die until they saw Jesus coming in His kingdom. Then the story of the Mount of Transfiguration follows. The traditional site of the transfiguration is Mount Tabor, but it is probably NOT the actual site. Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the Prophets, are shown in subordination to Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment to the Law and the Prophets. Both Moses and Elijah had mountaintop, valley, and cave experiences, too. However, this passage is clear: Jesus is Lord of all.

We see the highs and lows of following Jesus. On the one hand, disciples may suffer and die for their commitment. On the other hand, disciples will experience the glorious kingdom of God for all eternity. Abundant life comes to those who worship the eternal God.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **worship**. Be sure to read how Isaiah felt when he had a vision of the Lord, Peter's description of his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration and John's account in Revelation 1 of what he saw in Jesus. Jesus is beyond comparison. Our hearts melt in His presence. The only appropriate response is worship.

Tuesday, March 22, 2022
Isaiah 6

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, March 23, 2022
Matthew 16:1-20

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, March 24, 2022
Matthew 16:21-28

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, March 25, 2022
2 Peter 1:16-21

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, March 26, 2022
Revelation 1

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, March 27, 2022
Matthew 17:1-13

Sermon Notes:

Monday, March 28, 2022
John 11:38-44

Jesus delayed going to Bethany when He learned Lazarus was sick. Why? This confused Martha. She did not hesitate to share her opinion with Jesus (Luke 10:38-42). She was a hard-charging force with a dominant personality. She could also be wrong. Her sister Mary was far more tender-hearted. Both sisters had broken hearts. Where was Jesus when they needed Him most? His actions did not make sense. They were disappointed and hurt.

Asking questions is part of life. We have questions like this all day long—not only about Bible stories but concerning events in our lives. Our questions often go unanswered. We may never understand why certain things happen. Paul's quote is appropriate: *"For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known"* (1 Corinthians 13:12). Lazarus coming out of the cave and back to life was unprecedented. Believe it or not, it was also the final straw for Jesus' opponents. He was too popular for them. Sadly, they preferred a funeral to a party.

Jesus delayed His trip to Bethany so people could grasp more about His identity. We also perceive His compassion. The shortest verse in the Bible packs a wallop: *"Jesus wept."* He came to redeem the sting of sin from us.

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **perception**. Synonyms are *insight*, *awareness*, *discernment*, *observation*, *sensitivity*, *assessment* and *experience*.

When have you been disappointed in life only to have looked back later and realized that the experience was helpful in some way? Remember Jesus' words, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* That is who HE is. We have a response to make to Him: *"Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* Have you put your faith in Him?

Tuesday, March 29, 2022
John 11:1-16

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, March 30, 2022
John 11:17-37

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, March 31, 2022
John 11:45-57

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, April 1, 2022
1 Corinthians 15:50-58

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, April 2, 2022
Revelation 21:1-6

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, April 3, 2022
John 11:38-44

Sermon Notes:

Monday, April 4, 2022
Matthew 21:1-11

Our theme this week is confident humility, which is the first of Asbury staff's core behaviors. The term sounds like an oxymoron—how can a humble person be confident, or a confident person be humble? *"Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth."* (Numbers 12:3) Moses accomplished much. His experiences had stripped him of arrogance. Instead, he learned to rely on the Lord.

Because Jesus knew who He was, He could reach the dregs of society, play with the kids, touch unclean lepers, hang out with stinky fishermen, talk to women with a checkered past, or stoop to wash the dirty feet of His self-absorbed and competitive disciples. He was so confident and so humble that He rode a donkey down the Palm Sunday Road while the crowds cheered. He didn't need a stallion with a military escort, like the Roman governor, Pilate. Verse 10 says, "*And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, 'Who is this?'*" Jesus was one of a kind. He excelled because He was supremely confident and supremely humble.

Humble people have certain traits. Paul said it so well in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is what Jesus exuded: **confident humility**. Who do you know who models this, too? How are you doing with this? How is your confidence level? Next to Jesus and Moses, are you the humblest person who has ever lived ☺?

Tuesday, April 5, 2022
Psalm 25:8-10

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Isaiah 66:1-2

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, April 7, 2022
Daniel 4:34-37

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, April 8, 2022
Philippians 2:1-11

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, April 9, 2022
1 Peter 5:1-11

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, April 10, 2022
Matthew 21:1-11
Palm Sunday

Sermon Notes:

Monday, April 11, 2022
Matthew 27

During this series on "Mountains, Valleys and Caves," we've looked at sites in the Bible where people experienced mountaintops of faith, victory, triumph, and vision. We have also looked at those valley times—like walking through the valley of the shadow of death. While caves are not as prevalent in the Bible as mountains and valleys, they are places where two things happen. First, it is the place where people hid when in trouble. Second, the soil in Israel is so rocky that it would be hard to bury people underground so they would put the body into a cave until it decomposed and then collect the bones and put them in an "ossuary," a type of urn. Ancient ossuaries continue to be found in Israel. When Jesus was crucified, they laid him in a type of cave before the Sabbath. The women went to the tomb on Sunday morning. Something miraculous had to happen for fiercely Sabbath-worshipping Jews to shift their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. This change is another testimony to the truth of the Resurrection.
The empty tomb did not convince the disciples: they believed because of the other sounds, sights, and touches they experienced. Ultimately, the disciples experienced the resurrected Christ. Jesus was not a "caveman" for long. He triumphed over death, our final enemy.

APPLICATION: Our theme during Holy Week is the **Resurrection**. Others can have a "Last Supper," thousands were crucified, and everyone dies, but Jesus' resurrection stands alone. This was as shocking to His disciples, even though Jesus told them it would happen, as it is to us today. They acted upon this truth. According to tradition, all the disciples except John, who was exiled, were martyred for their faith. An appropriate question is: Do you trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? There are huge benefits to following Jesus in this life as well as in the life to come. Know that Jesus died and rose for you. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us give our hearts to Him anew. He is risen. He is risen, indeed!

Tuesday, April 12, 2022
Matthew 28:1-10

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, April 13, 2022
Luke 24:1-12

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, April 14, 2022
John 13
Maundy Thursday

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, April 15, 2022
John 19
Good Friday

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, April 16, 2022
John 20
Holy Saturday

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, April 17, 2022
Matthew 28:1-10
Easter Sunday

Sermon Notes:

Monday, April 18, 2022
Acts 1:6-11

Mount of Olives is a key geographical spot in the Bible. The location and elevation of the mount provides a scenic overlook into Jerusalem. David fled barefoot from Jerusalem, through the Kidron Valley, and up Mount of Olives when his son, Absalom, had his coup d'état. Bethany, the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, is just east. The Palm Sunday Road begins here and passes by Gethsemane, where Jesus loved to pray. This mountain is the site of the ascension and the promise of power when the disciples would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This mountain is also where thousands of Jews have been buried through the centuries. Mount of Olives is a perfect description of "Mountains, Valleys and Caves."

We uphold our loyalty to Jesus through Asbury by five actions: our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Asbury exists to help others follow Jesus. A witness has had some type of experience. A major reason Christians become bored with their faith is because they have ceased to be witnesses. Jesus told us to be a witness. Witnessing is core to our identity as His followers. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8) And 1 Peter 3:15-16 says: *"…but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience…."*

One illustration says, "Witnessing is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." Jesus is the bread of life. The story is not about us, but what He has done in us. In a quote attributed to the author of "Amazing Grace," John Newton, said: *"I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'"*

APPLICATION: Our theme this week is **witness**. Letting our light shine may help others who are living in darkness. Who can you share your faith with this week? Small groups are great opportunities to witness and share. The story is not about us, it's about Jesus. When was the last time you verbally talked about your faith in Jesus? Our mission of Helping Others Follow Jesus will be demonstrated during the 11:00 service today as our confirmands unite in membership.

Tuesday, April 19, 2022
Isaiah 55

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Wednesday, April 20, 2022
John 15:26-27

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Thursday, April 21, 2022
2 Timothy 2:22-26

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Friday, April 22, 2022
1 Peter 3:8-17

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Saturday, April 23, 2022
1 John 1:1-4

- What are your thoughts, feelings and application from reading today's text?
- How does it tie in with the upcoming sermon?
- Write down (at least) one person/thing/situation for which you are thankful.

Sunday, April 24, 2022
Acts 1:6-11

Sermon Notes:

Additional Texts

Noah, the Flood, and the Mountains: Genesis 8:1-5

Abram, Lot, and the Jordan Valley: Genesis 13:8-13

A High Fortress, Masada: Psalm 31:1-5

The Dew of Mount Hermon: Psalm 133

Mountains and Valleys, Prepare the Way of the Lord: Isaiah 40:1-5

Jesus Prays on a Mountain: Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus Prays on Another Mountain: Luke 22:39-46

Peter Speaks of the Mount of Transfiguration: 2 Peter 1:16-21