

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# GRATITUDE AND SERMON JOURNAL

## **Adore Him**

November 26 – December 30, 2018

## **One Thing**

December 31, 2018 – January 27, 2019

## **God is Good**

January 28 – March 6, 2019



Dear church,

Advent. The word is from two Latin words, “Ad” (“toward”) and “venio” (“to come”). “Advent” means coming toward the Incarnation. Advent is the time we prepare our hearts for Christmas. Unfortunately, Advent is often co-opted by other forces. Many people become depressed during this season. Anxiety prevails in many hearts. “Hurry” and stress easily distract us from preparing our hearts for Christ. So many of us are ransacked by consumerism that the “Ho, Ho, Ho” of Christmas becomes the “Owe, Owe, Owe” of credit card debt in January. Advent is not about the accumulation or swapping of stuff. Advent is not about self. Advent is about God’s incredible gift to us in Jesus Christ. There is only one appropriate response to this amazing gift: Worship. The worship of God is what holds our lives together. “O Come Let Us Adore Him” – with favor, from generation to generation, in the Spirit, with wonder, awe and devotion.

We’ll begin the New Year by looking at what kinds of things keep us distracted from the one thing that matters most. During our series, “One Thing,” we will take time to reflect and prioritize. We will start the year with purpose and focus. This is an invitation to prayerfully determine what we need to do (or not do) to make our “one thing” the main thing.

Leading up to Lent, we will study the amazing story of Joseph. Through all the injustice, mistreatment and reversals of fortune, Joseph trusted that God would work it for good. In our series, “God is Good,” we look at suffering through the lens of Joseph’s life and perhaps find the Lord’s redemption for our own.

In Christ,

*Tom*



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 making disciples of Jesus. This happens in community. 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.

**Weekly Small Group Reflection Questions:**

- 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 is the pastor asking of you, even expecting you to do in response?
- How is the Lord speaking to you through this sermon?
- What are you going to do?

*“Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants  
of the world stand in awe of him!”*

**-Psalm 33:8**

# ADORE HIM

## *WITH FAVOR*

- 11/26 Luke 1:26-38
- 11/27 Genesis 6:5-8
- 11/28 Genesis 39:1-5
- 11/29 Exodus 33:12-23
- 11/30 Ruth 2:1-13
- 12/1 Luke 4:16-19
- 12/2 Luke 1:26-38

## *FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION*

- 12/3 Luke 1:39-55
- 12/4 Genesis 15:7-21
- 12/5 Esther 9:23-28
- 12/6 Psalm 78:1-8
- 12/7 Psalm 102:12-28
- 12/8 Ephesians 3
- 12/9 Luke 1:39-55

## *IN SPIRIT*

- 12/10 Luke 1:57-79
- 12/11 Luke 1:5-25
- 12/12 Acts 2:14-28
- 12/13 1 Corinthians 12
- 12/14 1 Corinthians 14
- 12/15 Galatians 5:16-26
- 12/16 Luke 1:57-79

## *WITH WONDER*

- 12/17 Luke 2:8-20
- 12/18 Psalm 8
- 12/19 Psalm 89:1-18
- 12/20 Isaiah 29:13-14
- 12/21 Acts 3:1-16
- 12/22 Hebrews 1
- 12/23 Luke 2:8-20

## *IN AWE*

- 12/24 Genesis 1:1 &  
John 1:1-18

## *WITH DEVOTION*

- 12/25 Matthew 2:1-12
- 12/26 Acts 6:1-7
- 12/27 1 Corinthians 7:1-7
- 12/28 Titus 3
- 12/29 1 Timothy 4:11-16
- 12/30 Matthew 2:1-12

## Scripture Readings

# ONE THING

### *DISTRACTED BY BUSYNESS*

- 12/31 Luke 10:38-42
- 1/1 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- 1/2 Psalm 141
- 1/3 Matthew 16:16-23
- 1/4 John 11:28-44
- 1/5 John 16:8-11
- 1/6 Luke 10:38-42

### *DISTRACTED BY COMPETITION*

- 1/7 John 3:25-30
- 1/8 Matthew 11:1-19
- 1/9 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- 1/10 Philippians 2:1-11
- 1/11 Philippians 2:12-24
- 1/12 Galatians 6:1-5
- 1/13 John 3:25-30

### *DISTRACTED BY THE PAST*

- 1/14 Philippians 3:12-16
- 1/15 John 16:29-33
- 1/16 1 Timothy 6:11-16
- 1/17 2 Timothy 1:3-7
- 1/18 2 Peter 3:14-18
- 1/19 1 John 1:5-10
- 1/20 Philippians 3:12-16

### *DISTRACTED BY STUFF*

- 1/21 Mark 10:17-22
- 1/22 Mark 10:23-31
- 1/23 Mark 12:41-44
- 1/24 Luke 12:13-21
- 1/25 Luke 16:1-15
- 1/26 1 Timothy 6:6-10
- 1/27 Mark 10:17-22



# Scripture Readings

## GOD IS GOOD

### *EVEN IN DYSFUNCTION*

- 1/28 Genesis 37:1-11
- 1/29 Psalm 31
- 1/30 Psalm 37:12-40
- 1/31 Psalm 103:1-5
- 2/1 Acts 17:1-15
- 2/2 Romans 8:26-30
- 2/3 Genesis 37:1-11

### *EVEN IN REVERSAL*

- 2/18 Genesis 41:37-49
- 2/19 Genesis 41:1-36
- 2/20 Genesis 42
- 2/21 Genesis 43
- 2/22 Genesis 44
- 2/23 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
- 2/24 Genesis 41:37-49

### *EVEN IN INJUSTICE*

- 2/4 Genesis 39:1-18
- 2/5 Psalm 94:16-23;  
Proverbs 16:8-9
- 2/6 Matthew 5:43-48
- 2/7 Acts 7:54-60
- 2/8 Ephesians 4:31-32
- 2/9 Hebrews 12:1-3
- 2/10 Genesis 39:1-18

### *EVEN IN THE UNSEEN*

- 2/25 Genesis 45:1-15
- 2/26 Genesis 46:1-7
- 2/27 Genesis 47
- 2/28 Genesis 48
- 3/1 Genesis 49
- 3/2 Genesis 50
- 3/3 Genesis 45:1-15

### *EVEN IN THE PIT*

- 2/11 Genesis 39:19-23
- 2/12 Psalm 9:13-20
- 2/13 Psalm 34:19-22
- 2/14 Psalm 40:1-3
- 2/15 Psalm 88
- 2/16 Luke 22:54-71
- 2/17 Genesis 39:19-23

### *EVEN IN MORTALITY*

- 3/4 Genesis 50:15-21
- 3/5 Matthew 6:7-15
- 3/6 Genesis 50:15-21



# **ADORE HIM**

November 26 – December 30, 2018

ADORE HIM

WITH FAVOR

Monday, November 26, 2018

Luke 1:26-38

**WHY** do we worship God? We worship because of God’s creation of the world (and of us). We worship because of God’s gift to the world in Jesus Christ. As such, the worship of God is our primary purpose and our greatest privilege. The worship of God holds us together as a community, but it also holds us together as individuals. It is our core identity, both corporately and privately. While we belong to the Body of Christ, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and become servants of Jesus, we worship first and last. This is what it means to be a disciple.

There are many different words we can use to describe **HOW** we worship. This series is how we **ADORE HIM**. The hymn, “O Come All Ye Faithful” has a line, “O come let us adore Him.” We emphasize this week: “Adore Him with Favor.” To “find favor in someone’s sight” opens doors. This was a very important concept in the Old Testament. Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, etc. all found favor. Mary and Jesus found favor in the New Testament.

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**APPLICATION:** Many of us feel we cannot approach God because of our guilt, shame and fear. The New Testament message is that Jesus brings us God’s favor. When we receive favor from God, it gives us confidence to approach the throne of grace. Do you feel God’s favor upon your life? One of my memory verses is Luke 2:52. Like Jesus, we can *increase* in favor with God and people. What needs to happen so you can grow this Advent in favor with God and others?















ADORE HIM

Monday, December 3, 2018  
Luke 1:39-55

The singular, “**generation**,” occurs 96x in the Bible. Jesus said He was living in an “evil generation.” The New Testament often uses this word in that way, too. Whether secular or religious, Jesus described a culture living apart from God.

The plural, “**generations**,” occurs 119x in the Bible. The transmission of the faith through the generations is of extreme importance. The church must do some things differently to reach new generations (while retaining the essential message).

Mary realizes it is NOT all about her. Even though she is living in a period where there is much evil (e.g. Herod), she looks back and remembers “father” Abraham, the father of the Jews. She also leans into the future and anticipates her place effecting all the generations to come.

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**APPLICATION:** Statistically, the best way for children to develop a faith that “sticks” is for families to worship together. Intergenerational worship is key to helping the next generation learn to love and follow God. How are you at making families with young children feel welcome in services? How are you modeling worship for other generations (up and down)? Parents and caregivers, are you bringing your children to worship with you every Sunday? Will you do this for *them*?”















IN SPIRIT

Monday, December 10, 2018

Luke 1:57-79

The Holy Spirit seems to always be in the picture when we study the New Testament. He is everywhere. The Holy Spirit always seems to be creating a wide variety of miraculous events. Read previously in Luke 1 about Elizabeth's identity and miracle ("barren" and "advanced in years") of having her son, John.

It is my fervent prayer that "signs and wonders" would make themselves known in our worshipping community, too. (The phrase, "signs and wonders," shows up 63x in the Bible and 28 of these are found in the OLD Testament – surprise! It is found 20x in Acts 2-15.) I pray people will be healed and delivered. I pray people will allow the Holy Spirit to lead them into spiritual growth. I think miracles happen when we pray, study the Scriptures, are part of the church, and give ourselves in service.

I love Galatians 5:25, *"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."* The Holy Spirit helps us worship. We are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in worship.

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**APPLICATION:** To worship in spirit and in truth is to engage both the heart and mind. It indicates integrity between the two. It is an exercise of emotion and intellect. It is loving the Lord with everything we are and everything we have. How do you worship in spirit and in truth? Why do you think the Holy Spirit is necessary for us to worship God? In what ways do you (or should you) rely on the Holy Spirit in worship?"















ADORE HIM

Monday, December 17, 2018

Luke 2:8-20

Look at this week's text in "The Message." It is a delightful reading. I sometimes wonder about things like "How can we get radio?" "How can a huge airplane fly?" "How could we fly to the moon?" I wonder at the gifts of musicians. I am amazed by technology (cell phones and microwaves) and by modern medicine. Pictures of galaxies and universes beyond us reveal planet earth is tiny. I am stunned when I think of how incredible planet earth is and yet, when I see it compared to other stars and planets, it is beyond belief. Check this out: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=octRYMsiLX0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=octRYMsiLX0).

It is a source of wonder that the God who created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1) opened the heavens and touched the Earth the night of our Savior's birth. He came to redeem us. That Jesus Christ is God – who was "The Word" at the very beginning – WONDER! Wonder leads to worship, because we only truly worship a God we cannot possibly understand.

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**APPLICATION:** What causes you to wonder? That would be a great list to write down (and maybe share as the basis for a Christmas letter to someone). How do you understand your place in the universe or in relationship to God? How does it cause you to wonder that God loves you and that He would stoop to bring you back to Himself?















IN AWE

Monday, December 24, 2018  
Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1-18

Wonder emerges from something that surprises us and fills us with admiration. Awe emerges from something that commands respect and reverence, filling us with fear and wonder. On Christmas Eve, we recognize that Jesus is not only “near and dear” as a human, but that Jesus is God and was with God in the beginning. That is why Peter, who had formerly been so cowardly, proclaimed the resurrected Christ with these words: *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12)

We all have a place in God’s story and among His creation. This is a wonder! The Living God has been made known to us. Jesus Christ made this possible. This is awesome. HE is awesome!

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**APPLICATION:** Jesus has given himself for us – how do you respond to this? Have you given yourself back to Him? In what ways? He is your Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Savior and Friend. The gift of your heart is the gift God most desires (John 3:16-17). Your reverence is what He deserves. Come let us adore Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. He is worthy of nothing less.

ADORE HIM

Tuesday, December 25, 2018

Matthew 2:1-12

If God created the heavens and the earth, and Jesus Christ is God and was *“in the beginning with God,”* and Jesus became a human being and came to earth to love us, die for our sins, was resurrected from the dead, ascended to heaven, gave us the Holy Spirit, and created His Church – then He is LORD. We should adore Him. We should be devoted to Him. Maybe the reason we have so many problems is that we are devoted to the wrong things. The wise men showed their wisdom in the object of their devotion. King Herod showed his folly in the object of his devotion. As Jesus said, *“What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?”* (Matthew 16:26) The early church was devoted to Christ. Paul gave advice about being devoted to one another in marriage, and about teaching and prayer.

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**APPLICATION:** The magi probably traveled 900 miles to worship the newborn King. Today, in countries closed to the gospel, believers risk imprisonment if they are caught worshipping in house churches. In the United States, where a majority claim to believe in God, only about half of those attend worship and their average attendance is less than twice per month. Jesus asked, *“When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”* (Luke 18:8) How is your devotion to God and your commitment to worship Him? A new year means a new start. We have a great opportunity before us.















# **ONE THING**

December 31, 2018 - January 27, 2019

ONE THING

Monday, December 31, 2018

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus did not just go around telling people, "Stay the way you are and you'll go far." He was an "equal opportunity corrector." The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8-11) as do the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We saw Peter's commendation at the "great confession" followed by a stinging rebuke (Matthew 16:16-23). He later corrected Martha when her brother, Lazarus, died (John 11:28-44). Jesus often did the unexpected. In today's text, Martha had a "*preposition problem*." She was so concerned about doing something FOR Jesus that she missed the opportunity to be WITH Jesus.

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**APPLICATION:** This happens often in our spiritual lives. It can certainly affect ministers, staff and volunteers. There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3). There is a time for work, a time for worship and a time for quiet devotion. Finding the right balance helps keep us from the sin (yes, it can be a sin) of busyness. Here are some questions to consider: Are you or your family overscheduled? Are you too exhausted from the week to make worship a priority on Sunday? Is your service to the Lord bringing you joy or causing you stress? It's a new year. Go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him where you need to focus. Ask Him to help you order your days in the way that brings you closer together.















## DISTRACTED BY COMPETITION

Monday, January 7, 2019

John 3:25-30

Jesus claimed His cousin, John, was the greatest person ever (Matthew 11:1-19). John accepted his role. There was “a new kid in town” and John was NOT the Messiah. Though a dynamic speaker and a man of profound holiness, John COULD sit in the 2nd chair (often the hardest spot in the orchestra). Great people have confident humility (Philippians 2:1-11). Though Jesus would increase while John would decrease, he did not try to usurp the #1 guy. John’s faithfulness to his call resulted in imprisonment and death. John’s disciples had to choose: compete or cooperate with Jesus’ ministry? Their loyalty had to switch. Could they make a painful and emotional decision?

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**APPLICATION:** Competition can help us grow, improve and get better. Competition can also fill us with envy, resentment and hatred. Competition can nurture us or poison us. Who are your competitors? Is it in business, work, school, neighborhood, family or at church? I love this quote: “*If I could kick in the seat of the pants the person who gives me the most trouble, I'd not be able to sit down for a week.*” Our biggest competition is usually ourselves, not someone else. We have more than one option. John didn’t see Jesus as competition but saw Him as a teammate. John knew his role and found satisfaction in it.













ONE THING

Monday, January 14, 2019

Philippians 3:12-16

The older we get, the more regrets we may have. In fact, our mistakes, errors, miscalculations, bobbles, goofs, addictions, infractions, failures, breakdowns, divorces, fear, anxiety, grief and sin may shut us down. "Been there - done that" is a common lament. It takes courage to enter the game. One of my favorite speeches is Teddy Roosevelt's "It's Not the Critic Who Counts." [www.theodore-roosevelt.com/trsorbonnespeech.html](http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/trsorbonnespeech.html) If we try to do anything of substance, we will fail. We must get back up, re-enter the ring, and try again. It is easy to lose heart. Jesus warned the disciples about this reality. Paul experienced it, too (Romans 7).

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**APPLICATION:** Is there something from your past that is preventing you from doing your best? Peter betrayed Jesus. Paul persecuted Christians. John Mark quit on a missionary journey. God forgives us. God empowers us. Is there something from your past you need to be forgiven from? Confess it (1 John 1:9). As Don Henley sang, "Get Over It." The devil delights when Christians are paralyzed. God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind. Get in the game again. It's a new year. You are forgiven. You are loved.















## DISTRACTED BY STUFF

Monday, January 21, 2019

Mark 10:17-22

The rich young man who encountered Jesus in our story today “had great possessions.” The truth is, the great possessions actually owned him. The love of money is a huge issue. People will miss heaven because they love money and stuff more than God. Look at Mark 10:23-31. What is least in our world (children, generosity, kindness, etc.) is first in the Kingdom of God. Jesus spoke most often about the Kingdom of God. His second most popular topic was the use of money. He told many parables about wealth. He encountered many people who were trying to find life in it. Jesus knows it is a great temptation to worship things over God. We are to seek first the Kingdom of God — and all the other “stuff” is thrown in afterward. If we seek the other stuff, we will miss both the Kingdom of God and the joy that comes from the other things. We are not “owners;” we are stewards. We take care of what has been entrusted to us.

We seldom feel we have enough money. We are tempted to believe that if we had more money we could buy more stuff and that would make us happy. We often pursue things that get us off track (Matthew 6:33-34). We live better when we live for the Kingdom of God: *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”* (Romans 14:17)

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**APPLICATION:** Most all of us have too much stuff. Not only does it clutter our lives, our stuff can steal our affections. What is God speaking to you about that you need to get rid of or ways you need to simplify? It may be material. It may also be your time. Christians are easily distracted by (maybe even addicted to) social media and screens. Is God speaking to you about eliminating something? Turn it off, put it down and pray: *“Lord, what would you have me to do Help Others Follow Jesus?”*

















# **GOD IS GOOD**

*January 28 - March 6, 2019*

GOD IS GOOD

Monday, January 28, 2019

Genesis 37:1-11

People who have never read the Bible are shocked when they read the problems of people in the Scriptures. The patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (and Joseph) had all kinds of dysfunction. Because we have problems does not negate the reality of God. Problems are a part of life. Genesis 37 reveals parental favoritism, evidenced by a profound lack of emotional intelligence which let sibling rivalry bubble over into treacherous behavior. Jacob set his favorite son up with a target on his back. What a dumb thing for a parent to do! (Jacob had experienced parental favoritism – he was a momma’s boy.) The precocious teenager, Joseph, could have played his cards with humility. His brothers were ruthless (though not all of them). This is a shocking story, but God will redeem this tragedy.

The Psalms reference God’s control even when the wheels of life fall off. People and situations aren’t always good, but God is good—all the time. And all the time—God is good!

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**APPLICATION:** Every family has dysfunction to some degree. How has your family dynamic reflected this? How are you parenting (or grandparenting)? How are you doing, teenagers? How is your relationship with your siblings and your parents? Jesus gave both “The Golden Rule” (Matthew 7:12) and “The Platinum Rule” (“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you...” John 13:34-35). How are you living according to THIS standard of behavior?















EVEN IN INJUSTICE

Monday, February 4, 2019

Genesis 39:1-18

I do not understand how Joseph was not bitter! He was so unjustly treated. He did not choose the “I am a victim” mentality. We never have closure when we remain victims. We lose control over our lives. Joseph was a “type” of Christ. Joseph was unjustly treated but rose above the abuse that came from his own family and employers whom he served faithfully.

I am not there yet. I have a hard time just dealing with minor infractions, like someone cutting me off in traffic, let alone something of this magnitude. Joseph’s response is one of the most amazing in all of Scripture. He demonstrated the “mind of Christ” even before he knew Christ.

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**APPLICATION:** On the one hand, we resist injustice in every form. This is what people of the Christian faith do. On the other hand, we do not allow these injustices to make us bitter. I found the book, *Failure of Nerve* by Ed Friedman most helpful. It says we will not allow injustice to determine our worldview or our self-esteem. Instead, we retain warmth and compassion for those who oppose us. We can do this only by the power of the Holy Spirit















GOD IS GOOD

Monday, February 11, 2019

Genesis 39:19-23

Those who have been with me to Jerusalem have gone down to the “pit” at what may have been the site where Peter denied Jesus. Being cast into a pit feels like a hopeless place of depression. Honestly, if we live long enough, we will experience despair. It makes sense this would be part of the human existence. Life is not a never-ending series of wonderful, miraculous events. What happens when there is no miracle? What happens when we are thrown into the pit? Maybe it is our fault; maybe our choices have nothing to do with it. The “pit” is found 86x in the Bible (11x in the New Testament). Jesus may have been held in a pit after His arrest at Gethsemane. Is God still in control when we are in the pit? Even when God is in the pit? The best thing I can say is, the pit is the ultimate destination of the devil. (Revelation 20:1-3)

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**APPLICATION:** What are your experiences of life in “the pit?” How did it happen? How much of it was your fault? Are you in one now? How do you get out? Do you want to get out? Is there someone who can help you get out? When you are in the pit, seek the help you need and remember that God is bigger than your circumstances. And He’s good. Even when things don’t make sense, God is still good.































## GOD IS GOOD

Monday, February 25, 2019

Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph's story is amazing! He told his brothers that God was in control the whole time. Joseph suffered unjustly but did not surrender to hatred and bitterness. One of the great lines of Scripture is, *"God meant it for good."* (Genesis 50:19-20) Paul said, *"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) We have limitations in our understanding here and now. Paul described "then" as what happens when we go to heaven. We are somewhat like the distraught disciples on Saturday after the crucifixion. They were unable to see then what would happen on Resurrection Sunday. What we think is tragic today may turn out to be the source of great blessing. We confess our limitation in understanding. We also confess our faith in a sovereign God and that *"... all things will work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose."* (Romans 8:28) The long-suffering Job showed his trust in God, *"Though he slay me, I will hope in him."* (Job 13:15a) We should read the second part of the same verse, too, *"yet I will argue my ways to his face."* Job didn't understand what had happened. He trusted God, but he asked questions.

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**APPLICATION:** Our expectations often go unmet. Life is not fair. People let us down. We let others down, too. Joseph was a model of forgiveness. He saw God's purposes at work. We may not understand why things happen (good or bad) but God is with us and God is for us. He says, *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isaiah 55:9) Where are you today? In a pit or enjoying a reversal of fortune? Remember Joseph's story. Remember Jesus' story. Remember the Resurrection. Remember that God IS good, all the time and all the time, God is good.



















EVEN IN MORTALITY

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Genesis 50:15-21

There are three casts of characters in this text: (1) Jacob, his name means “grabby,” had a name change to “Israel”, which means “strives with God.” He wrestled with God (read the story in Genesis 32). He changed from a self-absorbed grabber to a man who found the value of God’s blessing. However, his struggle cost him something. It left him with a limp. (2) His favored son, Joseph, was a far better man than his dad. He suffered unjustly. But in the end, both men could see the hand of God. (3) Joseph’s brothers were in great peril. They had to live with the guilt of what they had done to their little brother and were now terrified as to what Joseph would do to them when dear old dad passed. Genesis 50:19-21 are among the greatest verses in the Bible.

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**APPLICATION:** Ash Wednesday calls us to two things: our mortality and our need for repentance. We see both themes in this text (Jacob dies; the brothers repent). Ironically, the one who suffered the most was not bitter. In fact, he became the source of salvation and comfort for his family. Where are you in the story? Are you dealing with issues of death and dying that serve to remind you of your own mortality? Are you grieving? Repent means “to turn away from.” Is there something you need to turn away from? On Ash Wednesday, we look at the dual themes of death and sin in light of God’s redeeming love in Jesus Christ. Remember our communion words: *“In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.”*



