

July 26,2020

Psalm 105:1-11, 45b

I wanted to preach today about our lesson from Genesis. I wanted to continue telling the stories of the characters, just as Pastor Ann had been doing. Reading how Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah instead of Rachel, who he loved, had me digging out one of my favorite books, The Red Tent by Anita Diamant. This book is told from the point of view of Dinah, Leah and Jacob's daughter. The book does not claim to be biblically or historically accurate, but I really enjoyed a look into how daily life may have been then. It was a great read, and I recommend it, although the target audience is female.

Even though I originally planned to preach on Genesis, the Psalm for today was what really caught my attention. Let me start by saying that when we stopped worshipping together at the beginning of Covid, I REALLY missed worship. The first week that Pastor Ann led worship live on Facebook, I cried as soon as we began. I was so hungry for the Word and for the community of my fellow believers. I missed Eden and I missed you. Often during service, Pastor would remind us that even though we are experiencing times like we have never seen before, God is still with us. God loves us and God is in control. And, I hope you can understand when I say that I didn't like that. I didn't want to hear about Covid. I didn't want to hear about the fear, stress, inconveniences and even the real struggles it was causing. I just wanted one Covid free hour of regular worship. But

how could worship be regular? How could we ignore the reality of Covid? Sure, we were each dealing with it in different ways. And, truthfully, from day to day, and sometimes hour to hour-we each felt differently-one moment strong, the next angry, the following afraid. It was, and is, a time of changing emotions and circumstances.

The day that I received the worship bulletin for today had been kind of a crummy day. Nothing had particularly gone wrong, but nothing was quite the same as before Covid. As I walked home from work that day, I looked at Bob's IGA and I missed going there after work for just an item or two. I often would run into my oldest son, Zac, who was stopping at Bob's on his way home from work. We would laugh about how we always seemed to meet there, we would share the highlights of our day, our plans for dinner and I always would get an, "I love you, Mom" before we went our own way. Missing something as simple as seeing my son in the grocery store after work made me angry and I thought, "I really hate how things are now." And, immediately I heard, "This is the day the Lord has made, rejoice and be glad." That is right. God had made that day and given it to us. I needed to find the good.

Unlike when we first began worshipping through Facebook, I know now that I can't escape Covid. Covid has changed almost everything these last four months. There have been disappointments as so many of my favorite summer events have been cancelled. There have been little inconveniences-like having to wait for a haircut and big ones- like not being

allowed to go into the hospital with my mom when I took my mom for tests. Even how we worship has changed. Outside in good weather, with a virtually empty church in bad. There is no Communion, no singing and no handshakes or hugs. All this change left me often feeling that the days are something to just be endured. Get up, get through it, sleep and do it again. My joy was sometimes lacking and I worried that I am losing precious time in my life just getting by and not really living. I felt that by being so isolated from people I wasn't able to be a good servant to God. I believe that the most important thing that God teaches us is to love one another. How do we do that now?

Then I read this Psalm and I felt like I was hearing all the things Pastor Ann had been telling us. God is with us. God loves us. God IS in control. And I felt like I was being given clear instruction on how to love and serve Him. I went to my The Message Bible and read today's Psalm and really liked the ease and simplicity of the language. I am going to slowly read part of Psalm 105 to you now and I hope you hear God instructing you.

1-6 Hallelujah!

Thank God! Pray to him by name!

Tell everyone you meet what he has done!

Sing him songs, belt out hymns,

translate his wonders into music!

Honor his holy name with Hallelujahs,

you who seek God. Live a happy life!

Keep your eyes open for God, watch for his works;

be alert for signs of his presence.

Remember the world of wonders he has made,

his miracles.

He's God, our God,

in charge of the whole earth.

I am going to end by giving you a little homework. Sing. Sing to God.
Sing loud and sing joyfully. If we miss singing, just think how much God misses us singing to Him.

Amen.