

Mar. 20 – Saturday

Read Philippians 3:4b-14

from Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bowman Thurston, Wheeling, WV

What a rich text! Paul gives his impressive *resume* in vv. 4b-6, then says it is “loss” and “rubbish” (using a *much* coarser word!) compared to knowing Christ, not knowing *about* Him, but knowing *Him*. Verse 9 is Pauline theology in a nutshell that is followed by a bombshell: Paul wants to be like Christ in suffering and death! Who among us prays for suffering and crucifixion? Paul knows they are essential to resurrection, to new life. “This one thing I do” (v. 13) is a key to Pauline spirituality. Multi-tasking may be o.k. for a computer, but it kills spiritual life. (Remember Martha “busy about many things”?) Forgetting the past, moving toward the future are central for Paul; he knows life is always ahead, never in the past. After the sacrifices and suffering of Lenten life comes the glory of Easter.

Lord of Life, in these days of Lent let me know you.

Give me courage to leave the past behind and move toward the life that is new each morning and the light of Easter’s empty tomb.

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Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
in West Virginia presents:

Prayerscapes for Lent

Reflections and Prayers from The Order of Ministry

Mar. 14: Fourth Sunday in Lent **Read Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

from Rev. Kevin Bowers, First Christian Church, Weirton

We know today’s Gospel lesson as the Story of the Prodigal Son. I can imagine that most of us have heard dozens of sermons and Sunday School lessons preached and taught from the angle of the father (or mother, for that matter) of the older brother and of the younger brother. Most of us can relate to one or all of the people in the parable at certain times in our life.

I hope wherever you are you hear the voice of home: the voice of a loving church, that has her problems, but has her arms open in love for you; the voice of a loving God that always has arms open for you. I pray that this Lenten season you find yourself resting in those arms. This is where home is. If you have left either for awhile, they’re waiting for your return. You are always welcome home!

*Welcoming God, help me to find my home in you
and among your dear people.*

Together, may we welcome your whole world.

Mar. 15 – Monday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, 16-19

from Rev. Mark Mills, First Christian Church, Moundsville

We worship God. The struggle of the human condition is, as Paul writes, that we wish to be further connected with creation and what we create so that life swallows us up. We hear people talk about what makes them feel alive, which rarely seems to involve pure connection with Spirit. Learning to fully live in the world without being attached to it is the process of becoming free of the human condition. As we do, the resurrection power of the living Christ sets us free.

If you released all of the “stuff” in your life and left yourself with nothing, how alive would you feel? This process of freedom moves

us from seeing Jesus as a person into seeing the living Christ in all truth of fullness and Spirit. This process of freedom is what it means to become reconciled with God. Is it the resurrecting power of reconciliation...or the reconciling power of resurrection? Maybe it's both.

*Great "I Am," reconcile my heart to yours.
Unbind me of the limitations of my material attachments,
and bring my heart into the truth of your power.*

Mar. 16 – Tuesday **Read 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10**
from Rev. Don Snyder, First Christian Church, Beckley

Paul understood the prosperity Gospel of his day. Namely, if we are faithful, then God will bless us in tangible ways. However, the journey of faith begins with the acknowledgement of sin, and the grace of God (the cross) that covers my sin. In bearing my affliction in His body, Jesus sets the example of affliction for his disciples. I may experience affliction from outside forces (beatings and imprisonment) that are beyond my control, or I may experience suffering because of inner turmoil (controlling speech and righteous living). Nevertheless, no matter how difficult the hardships I have to endure become, they pale in comparison to the unsurpassable grace of God in the salvation offered through Jesus.

*Help me, O God, to recognize your power at work in my life,
and trust your word that it is greater than the forces all around me.*

Mar. 17 – Wednesday **Read Isaiah 43:1-13**
from Rev. Judy Bennett, Island Christian Church, Wheeling

We live in a time when people need encouragement as never before. It is also a time when many are asking – ‘Where is God in all of this pain and tragedy?’ There is fear, uncertainty and lagging faith as new challenges arise in the lives of God’s children everywhere.

As we walk with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, we read the comforting words of this Isaiah passage often shared with those needing a large dose of God’s assurance. He who created us knows each of us by name. He is also present with us no matter what the circumstances.

Claim this assurance for yourself today. God is with you in the midst of your deepest need. Do not fear! God who created you is calling you by name — holding your hand – carrying you through the deepest of

waters. Have courage knowing you are loved beyond your wildest imaginings by the one in whose image you have been created.

Ever-Present One, help me to see you at work in all of life.

Mar. 18 – Thursday **Read Isaiah 43:16-21**
*from Rev. Jamie Gump,
Madison Avenue Christian Church, Huntington*

Ever been lost? As a child, I lost sight of Mom while in a store. At that age, a large store is a scary wilderness. I can feel now the initial fear and panic, and also the security and comfort after being reunited. The Lord says, “*I am about to do a new thing.*” If we are honest, that which is new, which stretches us and pulls us out of our comfortable faith routines, can be like a wilderness, like being lost. Still, God is always about to do a new thing. In a faith that is alive, we are daily called to something new, which can be challenging, even scary. Yet the good news is that the Lord “*will make a way through the wilderness.*” As we face the new, the Lord will guide us through the discomfort and uncertainty. Something new is springing forth at this moment. Can you perceive it?

Lord, may we trust that you will make a way for us.

Mar. 19 – Friday **Read Psalm 126**
from Rev. Thaddaeus B. Allen, Regional Minister

Sometimes we find ourselves in thankful postures. Groups can give thanks for restoration as well as individuals. And how sweet it is when groups of people become corporately aware of God’s watch-care over them. Some things are best said together. During Lent, the church will have more than one occasion to confess aloud that “the Lord has done great things for us.” And in doing so, may “we rejoice” *together*.

God has never left the church. God has never left us. May we return in new ways during this season that we hold so dear. May we return with shouts of joy.

*As we rejoice in your life-giving and redeeming presence, O God,
may we celebrate the love which draws us together in your name.*