

Worship on December 13, 2020

Announcements:

- . Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us through this video today. This worship is for Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020.
- . I will be away from pastoral care for two weeks. I will resume my home visit when I am back on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020.
- . Today's speaker is the Rev. Dr. Daniel Wong, my former professor from Tyndale, will share the love of God for us.
- . On December 20th, LIVE STREAMING @ 10:30AM
- . On Dec. 20 – please prepare your own elements: bread and wine or grape juice.
- . Bible study from Thursday, Jan. 21st, 2021 @ 7pm – via ZOOM – link will be sent through email.

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Daniel L. Wong
Psalm 16
Title: "Joy on the Journey"

How are you really feeling today? I asked a number of people recently and here are their replies, "I feel exhausted." "This online environment is challenging." "I just got diagnosed with cancer." "One of my relatives got Covid-19." "I have Zoom fatigue."

In the past we found joy in going out with friends, travel, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries with family and friends, and going to see a ball game. On the weekend that everything shut down I had a ticket to the Raptors and the Blue Jays games. Those disappeared, I got a refund but would have rather been at those games.

Where do we find joy in pandemic times? Where is there happiness that is not dependent on the external? How do we carry on? How do we make it through? In York Region, where your church is located and many of us live, will go into lockdown tomorrow. How does that make you feel?

We are plagued by the "job robbers." I can identify these as uncertainty (fears, changes, work safety). There are restrictions as travel and wearing masks indoors. There is stress in relationship and all the adjustments that we need to make.

Let us turn to David's advice in Psalm 16 as he experienced Joy on the Journey. This Psalm begins with a prayer but explodes into a good news testimony.
First let's look at...

1. Life's Challenges

"A miktam of David." This is in the superscription. It is the first verse in the Hebrew Bible of this Psalm. What is a "miktam"? It is an "unexplained, Davidic prayer association with great danger as in Psalms 56-60 (*New International Version Study Bible*).

David is pursued by King Saul, ducking the spear aimed at his head. He faced the rebellion of his own son Absalom to take his throne. He faced his own frailties and sin with his adultery with Bathsheba. Here we do not face an “out of breath” David but a calm David.

He has a need for refuge, for safety. When it rains cats and dogs, we seek protection under an awning to find shelter. With groceries in hand, we make a mad dash to the car amidst the pouring rain. “You have been a refugee.” When seeking shelter or protection from enemies or unsafe situations.

We are shaken with earthquakes. The ground is shifting. There are the prospects of death – get older, hearing of rising Covid cases in Ontario, Canada, our neighbors to the south, and around the world

One thing that I learned in pastoral ministry and Christian ministries at Tyndale University. We’re all facing something. They are uniquely designed as James says to help us mature, to grow, to become Christlike

For us there is FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out): anxiety that an exciting or interesting event may currently be happening elsewhere, often aroused by posts seen on social media. Someone said, "I realized I was a lifelong sufferer of FOMO"

So what are your life's challenges? Is it personal health, the health of a family member? It is that you have “cabin fever”? You feel cooped up inside of the house and want to spend time socializing with others in the church or community. One of my students said that she was just angry all the time at the injustices in the world.

How do we find joy amidst all of these challenges that tend to drag us down?

2. God's Joys

Often people distinguish between happiness and joy. Here is how one person distinguishes the two: “Happiness is merely external, fleeting, and is only achievable on earth. Joy, on the other hand, is internal, selfless, sacrificial, and a spiritual connection with God. We need joy in our lives just as we need the Father and Jesus in our lives” (www.Christianity.com).

Let us look at God's joys, joy that truly comes from God.

Who is God to David? A refuge. “I run for dear life to you” is The Message's paraphrase. We find in God like the waiting father to welcome the prodigal son. “God at right hand” as the place of protection and open access (verse 8).

There is joy in relationship with God – “you are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing” (verse 2). “Lord” is a name that signifies relationship with God. He is our Lord. For the Lord, we receive counsel and instruction (verse 7). Anyone in need of God's direction. If anything, what we learned from these pandemic times is that our lives and church ministry cannot remain in

cruise control. We need to look to the Lord for wisdom to respond to the needs around as your Martha's Kitchen. You are seeking creative ways to meet needs, to conduct worship.

There is the joy of other believers – godly, noble ones, are my delight and community. Many have found the joy of fellowship with other believers, sharing stories of God at work, praying together. Of course, we long for the days that we can be back together in the church building. We can see each other, shake each other's hands, and give a hug. Many of us miss that human touch.

In this life and beyond the grave there is total security (*New International Version Study Bible*). We have fellowship with God in this life and the next. It looks ahead, fearless in the face of the challenge of death.

Post-resurrection Peter in Acts 2 quotes Psalm 16:8-11 to speak of Jesus, the one who would be resurrected, Paul in Acts 13:34-37 has a similar quotation. This is a Messianic Psalm.

At this time of Advent when we are on the cusp of Christmas, we hear the angel's declaration, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

We know this will be unusual Christmas. This Christmas may be a better Christmas. Let will be focused on buying and receiving gifts. There will be more time for reflection. The malls like Upper Canada Mall will not be brimming with people. There won't be a Santa to distract us. No doubt we will have more time for quiet meditation and to look up.

We are called to present faith and future firm hope

We experience God's joy as we fix our eyes on the Lord

Questions for application:

1. Where do I find my happiness and joy?
2. What challenges am I facing?
3. How may I deepen my faith?
4. How may I better fix my eyes on Jesus? (devotional time of the Word, prayer, connection with others)

Where do we look? In our Tyndale University Chapel, you enter and like many high ceiling places of worship, it constrains you to look upward. We keep looking up to the Lord. Looking on the ground, we may find a coin someone dropped. We look above our circumstances. We fix our eyes on Jesus.

Offering
Offering Prayer

Benediction

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