

**Sunday, June 14th, 2020**  
**Mantua Center Christian Church**  
**MCCC Home Worship**

**You will need:**

*A candle and match*

*Bible*

*Paper*

*Bread and Juice (if desiring communion)*

**Order of Worship**

**WELCOME PANEL on the Video**

- Welcome to Worship
- Today you can gather
  - *A candle and match*
  - *Bible*
  - *Bread and Juice (if desiring communion)*

**GREETING & CALL to WORSHIP - CHAD**

The Peace of the Risen Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit be with you. Welcome to worship this week with the Mantua Center Christian Church. Together...we are seeking to have Open Minds, Open Hearts, and Open Arms to live and love like Jesus.

We are starting today a short series on the Book of Job. Job's story is found in the Hebrew Scriptures and has influenced people's understanding of suffering, grief, and how we wrestle with God's place in all of it. Job encountered a great deal of suffering and provides an example of how to be faithful through it. Just maybe not in the way we've always thought...

Family in Christ, gathering near and far, together but separate let's set aside this time to grow and nurture our faith. To discover what it means to be faithful to the call of Jesus Christ in our lives. Let's remember who we are and whose we are.

Let's light a candle reminding us God with us here and will always remain.

*Let's worship the Lord...*

## **OPENING SCRIPTURE - Romans 5:1-5 - Julien Russo**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

## **HYMN - Be Still My Soul**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER - Chad**

*Psalm 130*

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?*

*But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.*

God, you are the God who hears our cries. Hear us now as we cry out in repentance, in fear, in joy, and in sorrow.

We lift to you in these days those who grieve for lost loved ones, for lost community, for a lost sense of "normal." *Out of the depths, we cry to you.*

We pray for those this day whose world has been turned upside down. Who are trapped in a reality they didn't choose. Who are wondering when what they are facing will end. *Out of the depths, we cry to you, O Lord.*

Whether we are grieving the pandemic or rampant racism in our country. Whether grieving lost jobs or lost opportunities...*Out of the depths, we cry to you.*

God of Hope and Redemption, we wait for you. We wait for your dynamic and moving presence to breathe life in our lives and hurts. We wait for you to give hope and

consolation to the weariness in our bones and in our souls. We wait for your love, which has great power to redeem, great power to enliven and embolden us to live in the ways you have called us. *Out of the depths, we cry to you.*

As we cry out, Lord, we pray too that you might move our feet. That we might reach out in care and compassion. Seek justice for those who are hurting. Do our part to be salt and light, your shining lights in a world of pain and sorrow. Meet us in the depths and call us forth to your redeeming presence.

In this hour, each of us have pain and grief, joys and gratitude we carry with us. We give them to you now in silent prayer.....

And now unite us as a family in the prayer Jesus taught us saying...

## **SCRIPTURE & SERMON - Chad Delaney**

Job 1:13-22

<sup>13</sup> One day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the eldest brother's house, <sup>14a</sup> a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, <sup>15</sup> and the Sabeans fell on them and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you.'

<sup>16</sup> While he was still speaking, another came and said, 'The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; I alone have escaped to tell you.' <sup>17</sup> While he was still speaking, another came and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three columns, made a raid on the camels and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you.' <sup>18</sup> While he was still speaking, another came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup> and suddenly a great wind came across the desert, struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; I alone have escaped to tell you.' <sup>20</sup> Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshipped. <sup>21</sup> He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' <sup>22</sup> In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.

Job 7:11-21

<sup>11</sup> 'Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. <sup>12</sup> Am I the Sea, or the Dragon, that you set a guard over me? <sup>13</sup> When I say, "My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my

complaint”,<sup>14</sup> then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions,<sup>15</sup> so that I would choose strangling and death rather than this body.<sup>16</sup> I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath.<sup>17</sup> What are human beings, that you make so much of them, that you set your mind on them,<sup>18</sup> visit them every morning, test them every moment?<sup>19</sup> Will you not look away from me for a while, let me alone until I swallow my spittle?<sup>20</sup> If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of humanity? Why have you made me your target? Why have I become a burden to you?<sup>21</sup> Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I shall lie in the earth; you will seek me, but I shall not be.’

The last several months have been a roller coaster ride for all of us. There is a lot in the world to be anxious about. There is a pandemic, the brave conversations our country is having around race, a contentious and divided country politically in an election year. There is so much.

What has helped me some in this time is recognizing there is a lot of grief and loss floating around and everyone deals with it differently. Early on in the pandemic I was sent an article called “That Discomfort Your Feeling is Grief” written by Scott Berinato in the Harvard Business Review. He interviews the great grief specialist David Kessler who worked closely with the legendary and late Elizabeth Kubler-Ross who greatly advanced our understanding of the human experience of grief.

He says,

“Understanding the stages of grief is a start...the stages aren’t linear and may not happen in this order. It’s not a map but it provides some scaffolding for this unknown world. There’s denial, which we see a lot of early on: *This virus won’t affect us*. There’s anger: *You’re making me stay home and taking away my activities*. There’s bargaining: *Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?* There’s sadness: *I don’t know when this will end*. And finally there’s acceptance. *This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed.*”

All around us in so many different ways we see all of this coming out. So many people feeling the weight of things. Some of us embracing the realities, others not. Some lashing out in anger, some turning inward. Maybe we noticed our fuse is a little shorter, we’re wound a little tighter. All of it affects what is going on inside of us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. And its helpful for me to think...”that discomfort I am

feeling and so many are feeling is grief. So...What does it mean to be faithful through it? How is God expecting of us?

Now the Book of Job might be one of the first places we would turn in the biblical tradition. One of the oldest books in the Bible and a story which addresses some of life's deepest questions. BUT...We might be tempted to only read and remember the very first part of the story of Job. We might remember that first part of job and believe it to be a template for how we should respond to suffering. Job's grief "how-to-manual". If you remember, Job is the pristine picture of resilience and endurance and faithfulness. Job was an upright and blameless man who loved and honored God in everything. Even when he loses his livelihood--his livestock, his sheep, his camels. Even when he loses his servants. Even when a house collapses on his sons and daughters. Even when his health is destroyed--sores all over his body. Upright and blameless. Just when you thought any normal person would be broken and destroyed...Job says, "the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing."

Job seems to be the poster child for acceptance. One who has absorbed the tragic circumstances of his life, yet accepted the good with the bad with nary a complaint to utter from his lips. Is this God's expectation for how to handle the suffering and pain in our lives?

On the one hand this is inspiring --- Biblical superhero kind of stuff. Yet also...inaccessible. Not as human. If this is what God expects from us, most of us will not look like the model of faithfulness. Does that make us unfaithful? Should we be ashamed of ourselves if we don't handle it this way? Suffering to Acceptance lickity split? Maybe even try to fake it, put on the good face and pretend?

But that is really not the whole picture of Job. The book is actually 42 chapters long and, in truth, Job wrestles with a lot. That second passage I read is Job as well. Its the same guy, but with a way different vibe. We see there that Job is clearly NOT thrilled with God and is struggling as he processes everything. He is, in fact, **not** afraid to speak his mind, to complain, and offer lament to God. "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." He accuses God of giving him night terrors and He says he "loathes his own life."

He tears his clothes and sits in ashes. He contends fiercely with his friends who have come to console but also to question him, blame him, and trouble him. He struggles with himself as he feels deepest loss and pain. He even confronts God. Job is hurting and he is not afraid to express it.

Celebrate the Job of chapters 1 & 2 if you must, but don't forget that the same blameless and upright Job is the same guy from chapter 7 too.

Throughout my ministry I've seen many folks struggling with this. Is it ok to be hurt to our core? Is it ok to not understand how life can be so cruel? Is it ok to be angry with God? Is it ok to feel depressed, angry, and sad? Yes. Yes it is.

Our world today, seems much more inclined to avoid or shame or dismiss grief. But we do so at our own peril. If our grief and pain is not acknowledged and addressed it can vomit it out in toxic and even violent ways towards ourselves, our family, our friends, our social media...in all different ways. .

In truth, faithfulness through suffering in grief isn't about our quick arrival to acceptance or avoiding things. It isn't even about being content or happy with God and ourselves. Faithfulness can look like sitting in ashes, yelling at God, and crying our eyes out. Faithfulness can look like Recognizing, naming, and laying bare before God and each other our hopes, dreams, disappointments, and pain. Faithfulness is trying to find ways to struggle in healthy ways, finding ways to make meaning out of what has happened, finding ways to hold space for others and ourselves to be where we are. Faithfulness is reminding each other and ourselves along the way that God knows us, walks with us, and hears us right where we are. God can take our joys and thanksgivings, our hurts and sadness.

And yes... some of us may need a bit of extra help. Don't be afraid to talk to professionals who are ready to walk with you too.

Family in Christ,

If you are at a loss for words...let God hear you in the silence. If you are ready to give God an earful...let God hear your pain. If you are stubbornly stuck or aching for change...let God hear the cry of your heart. Whatever stage you're in or state of your spirit...be not afraid. You are beloved and God is listening. Remember that nothing in all the creation can separate you from the Love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Be

kind, be compassionate to yourself and others and even in the midst of the struggle may you find glimpses of joy, life, and hope. May it be so...

**SPECIAL MUSIC -- Shelter Me by Fr. Michael Joncas sung by Jon Secaur**

**COMMUNION**

Meditation and Prayer - Ryann Kuchenbecker

Words of Institution - Sarah Smith

**BENEDICTION - Sarah Smith**

Thank you so much for your time worshipping with us this morning. In this hectic era that we find ourselves living in, it is a blessing to get to indulge in this moment of community with you. Speaking of community engagement, keep an eye on your emails over this next few weeks to see how you can connect both online and in super small in person groups if you so choose. We thank you for your patience as we discern the best ways to go about this. If you are not on our email list and would like to see how you can connect and support Mantua Center, I invite you to check out our website which I will put in the description below. Don't forget to leave a comment or like on this video if we did something that really moved you! We love to hear from you. If you want to hear more from us, feel free to subscribe to this channel as we will be putting out services every Sunday from now into the future.

To close us out, hear these words from *Enfleshed: Liturgy that Matters*, April 19, 2020 - "Beloveds, God sends us as witnesses.

The presence of Christ rises again wherever healing is sought.

This is a hope that does not minimize pain, but honors it.

This hope does not erase the past, but knows it transforms our collective future.

This hope does not cower under that which wounds, but builds community to rise before it.

In the company of the Spirit, let us go and live what we believe."

**BENEDICTION SONG -**