

“GOD ON THE MOVE”
“God Moves Us... to Empty Ourselves”

God has been on the move with us during Lent: God has moved through the desert, around obstacles, over the fence and down the road. This week, just one week before we begin the final journey to Jerusalem, God moves us....to empty ourselves. Martha offers herself at the table by serving dinner and Mary offers herself by anointing Jesus' feet with expensive anointment. Sometimes, emptying ourselves comes naturally and in ways that is more acceptable. Other times, emptying ourselves is a bit scandalous and shocking. And yet, the promise of God is that those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy. Joy comes in the morning after a night time of grief and pain. God is on the move and there will be times of grief before Easter, but in the midst of the grief, joy is also on the move. This week as we continue to fast, to pray and practice our spiritual disciplines, may we experience the joy of God moving us to share and offer ourselves to others. -- Pastor Cindy

This week we completed 1,604 miles! Just 835.5 to go until we reach Jerusalem!

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **“God Moves Us... to Empty Ourselves”**

Daily prayer: *O God, empty me of angry judgments and aching disappointments, and breathe into me something like quietness and confidence. Catch my pride and doubt off guard that, at least for the moment, I may sense your presence and your caring, and be surprised by a sudden joy rising in me now and always. Amen (adapted from a prayer by Ted Loder)*

This week's sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, April 8, 2019 Psalm 126: 1-3

This Psalm is one of fifteen Psalms of ascents in the third part of this book of songs. In the Jewish tradition this song/prayer is recited before the grace after meals on Shabbat (Sabbath) and Jewish holidays. It was probably written following the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian exile. This Psalm has been put to music again and again and it is a song of joy and hope. *“Our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy...The Lord has done great things!”* **Daily Challenge:** *Move Upward---Find ways to be filled with laughter and joy in your relationship with God. Give thanks for what God is doing and how God is moving in your life.*

Tuesday, April 9, 2019 John 12: 1-3

Jesus is at home with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, his friends. Jerusalem is looming before him, is it any wonder he is looking forward to spending time with his friends? Here, Martha and Mary are at peace with who they are and what they can share. Martha is cooking, but not distressed by it. She offers herself to Jesus, his disciples and her family in ways that suited her best. Mary, in another act of worship, anoints Jesus' feet with a very expensive oil. Both of them are emptying themselves with love. **Daily Challenge:** *Move Inward- Jesus does this by spending time with his friends. Martha does this by serving dinner, and Mary does this by pouring ointment on Jesus feet and ministering to him. How will you move inward? Today ponder what gifts you can offer to Jesus?*

Wednesday, April 10, 2019 John 12: 4-8

Not everyone responds well to people offering such extravagant gifts to God. The pure nard Mary used was incredibly expensive, almost a full years wages for a worker. Judas, one of Jesus' disciples was horrified and complained. Jesus' response sounds, *"the poor you will have with you always, leave her alone she is preparing me for my burial."* What Jesus was doing, was not uncaring toward the poor, he was quoting Deuteronomy 15: 7- 11, *"If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs... Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land"* Jesus reminded Judas and us that we are called to take care of those in need. **Daily Challenge:** *Move outward- Find ways to take care of the poor. Maybe you want to give a special offering to the United Methodist Committee on Relief for the floods in Nebraska, or collect food for United Methodist Open Door, or bring clothing to the clothes closet. Find a way to help those who need it today.*

Thursday, April 11, 2019 Psalm 126: 4-6

This beautiful story ends with a reminder that after grief comes joy, after tears, comes hope and faith and the promise that God is with us. Jesus in the midst of traveling toward Jerusalem found hope and joy and love in his time with his friends. Life is not always easy, but when we are one the move with God, God is inviting us to find joy in the midst of life. **Daily Challenge:** *Move ofward (of the church)! WE are invited to find ways to connect, plug into the church and become a more committed follower of Jesus. Have you signed up to walk, jog or run on Saturday for the Easter Egg 5K? A portion of the proceeds goes to help our school partnerships with Park and Washington Elementary school? You could volunteer and help with the race. Connect with the church in a way that helps you offer yourself to God.*

Friday, April 12, 2019 Isaiah 43: 16-21

God is on the move and on Sunday, Holy Week begins. We are still on our way to Jerusalem our hope is to be there by Easter with Jesus. We move physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Isaiah reminds us that during Holy Week, we may not know it, but God will be doing something new. By the end of the week, we will think that evil wins, but Sunday is always coming and God is on the move. **Daily Challenge:** *Moving into Holy Week- Throughout the week you have been challenged to move upward, inward, outward and ofward. Today, reflect on how each of these movements has helped you to welcome wholeness in life and relationships. As you journey throughout Lent, God will continue to purify you and put a new and right spirit within you.*