

February 21, 2021 Bulletin – 1st Sunday of Lent

*Between now and April 11, Pastor Drew will be doing a sermon series on the Gospel of John. We will examine some of the major themes and stories found in John, such as being "born again," the bread of heaven, light and darkness, washing his disciples' feet, and so forth. **Today's message addresses the one "falling rock" that Christians can expect from time to time—but especially early on in one's faith journey.***

Prelude

"Sing Praise to God"
Arranged by Edward Broughton

Welcome and Call to Worship

Hymn

"How Firm a Foundation"

UMH #529

1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?
2. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.
3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
4. "When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.
5. "The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Special Music

"Lord, Be With Us as We Praise"
By David Catherwood

Cathy Grattan, Ann Jacobs,
Steve Grattan, Tom Norager

Scripture Reading

John 8:2-11, 23-34

² Early in the morning Jesus returned to the temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and taught them. ³ The legal experts and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. Placing her in the center of the group, ⁴ they said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of

committing adultery. ⁵ In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone women like this. What do you say?" ⁶ They said this to test him, because they wanted a reason to bring an accusation against him. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.

⁷ They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, "Whoever hasn't sinned should throw the first stone." ⁸ Bending down again, he wrote on the ground. ⁹ Those who heard him went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. Finally, only Jesus and the woman were left in the middle of the crowd.

¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Is there no one to condemn you?"

¹¹ She said, "No one, sir."

Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, don't sin anymore."

²³ Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You are from below; I'm from above. You are from this world; I'm not from this world. ²⁴ This is why I told you that you would die in your sins. If you don't believe that I Am, you will die in your sins."

²⁵ "Who are you?" they asked.

Jesus replied, "I'm exactly who I have claimed to be from the beginning. ²⁶ I have many things to say in judgment concerning you. The one who sent me is true, and what I have heard from him I tell the world." ²⁷ They didn't know he was speaking about his Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "When the Human One^[a] is lifted up,^[b] then you will know that I Am.^[c] Then you will know that I do nothing on my own, but I say just what the Father has taught me. ²⁹ He who sent me is with me. He doesn't leave me by myself, because I always do what makes him happy." ³⁰ While Jesus was saying these things, many people came to believe in him.

³¹ Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teaching. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³ They responded, "We are Abraham's children; we've never been anyone's slaves. How can you say that we will be set free?"

³⁴ Jesus answered, "I assure you that everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Sermon

"The Unavoidable & Necessary Falling Rock"

Hymn

"When Our Confidence Is Shaken"

UMH #505 (tune: #626)

1. When our confidence is shaken in beliefs we thought secure,
when the spirit in its sickness seeks but cannot find a cure,
God is active in the tensions of a faith not yet mature.

2. Solar systems, void of meaning, freeze the spirit into stone;
always our researches lead us to the ultimate unknown.
Faith must die, or come full circle to its source in God alone.

3. In the discipline of praying, when it's hardest to believe;
in the drudgery of caring, when it's not enough to grieve;
faith, maturing, learns acceptance of the insights we receive.

4. God is love, and thus redeems us in the Christ we crucify;
this is God's eternal answer to the world's eternal why.
May we in this faith maturing be content to live and die!

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Give and Offertory

"In Every Song"
By Pepper Choplin

Cathy Grattan, Ann Jacobs,
Steve Grattan, Tom Norager

Hymn

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

UMH #519

1. Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
ring with the harmonies of liberty;
let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies;
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.

2. Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;
we have come, treading our path thru the blood of the slaughtered,
out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

3. God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
thou who hast by thy might led us into the light,
keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;
shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand,
true to our God, true to our native land.

Benediction

Postlude