



be still

- Psalm 46:10 -

*Five Week Lent Devotion &
Small Group Discussion Guide*



ST. JOHN'S

United Methodist Church

Glorifying God. Feeding People. Making Disciples.

“Be Still”

Our Lent Worship Series

Sundays at 8:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.

Life is full of movement. If we are moving, we are living. But sometimes we wonder, “Am I really getting anywhere?”

God says, “Be still.” The scriptures place an importance on intentional time taken to be still before God. It’s hard to stop, but it’s necessary if we hope to connect with God and if we hope to be moved where God want us to go.

Lent, the 40-day season before Easter, is about taking time to “Be Still,” to pray, read the Bible, think, reflect, listen and to be given hope and power to move in the direction that God intends. Join us each week for “Be Still,” our Lent worship series, focused simply on slowing down so we can connect with Christ for lasting change in our lives. We hope this daily devotion guide and the five-session small group discussion guide will deepen your journey this Lent.

March 10: “Be Still and Know” • Psalm 46

March 17: “Knowing and No-ing” • Mark 1:30-39

March 24: “Dismissing Distractions” • Luke 10:38-42

March 31: “Peace! Be Still!” • Mark 4:35-41

April 7: “When the Sun Stands Still” • Joshua 10:12-15

Holy Week Worship

April 14: Palm/Passion Sunday

April 18: Maundy Thursday Worship • 6 p.m.
With foot/hand washing and Holy Communion

April 19: Good Friday Tennebrae “It Is Finished” • 6 p.m.
Featuring the Chancel Choir

April 21: Easter Sunday

Week of March 10th

Sunday's Prayer: God, My life is full of movement, help me to be still. My life is full of people that demand my attention. My day is full of obligations that demand my allegiance. Help me to be still and know that you are God. You deserve my attention and my ultimate allegiance. As I open myself up to You in these next few moments, remind me that You are with me and You love me. Let that knowledge direct my steps today. Amen.

Monday, March 11th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 46

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 1 – “God is . . . an ever-present help in trouble.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: How does this Scripture intersect with your life right now? What trouble are you in? Where do you need God's help?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Tuesday, March 12th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 46

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 2 – “. . . we will not fear, though the earth give way.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: What are you afraid of? What seems to be giving way or falling apart?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Wednesday, March 13th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 46

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 7 – “The Lord Almighty is with us.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Have you ever felt like God was not with you? How does knowing “the Lord is with us” change the way you look at your life?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thursday, March 14th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 46

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 10– “Be still, and know that I am God”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Is it hard for you to be still? Why or why not? How does “being still” help you know God?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Friday, March 15th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Matthew 26:36-45

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 39– “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will”.

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: What would it mean for you to pray “not as I will, but as you will”? What would you have to give up?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Saturday, March 16th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 5

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 3– “. . . in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation”.

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: How does this Scripture intersect with your life right now? What requests to you need to lay before God? Do you find it hard to wait for God’s answer?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week of March 17th

Sunday's Prayer: God I know if Jesus needed intentional times of quiet and prayer, that I need it too. Help me to be like Him. Quiet the noise in my heart and mind so I can hear from you today. Guide me today as one who loves You and seeks to love like You. Amen.

Monday, March 18th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Mark 1:29-39

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 35 – “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed”.

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: How does this Scripture intersect with your life right now? Why do you think Jesus desired or needed some quiet time with God? Why do you think he went early in the morning?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Tuesday, March 19th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 130

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 5– “I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope”.

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Thankfully God does not keep a record of our sins. Is there anything you need to ask forgiveness for? What are you still waiting on God to do for you?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Wednesday, March 20th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Luke 5:12-16

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 16 – “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed”.

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: The man with leprosy asked Jesus if he was willing to heal him. Jesus was willing. Is there anything you need to ask Jesus today? Are you in need of healing?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thursday, March 21st

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: John 17:1-5

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 3 – “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Jesus prays that we might know God. How well do you feel that you know God? How would you like to know God better?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Friday, March 22nd

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: John 17:6-19

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 13 – “. . . I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Jesus prays that His disciples would know joy. Where are you experiencing joy in your life? How would more joy change your life?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Saturday, March 23rd

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: John 17:30-26

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 26– “I . . . will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: How does it make you feel to know that God’s love is in you? In fact, Christ is in you? What does that mean to you?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week of March 24th

Sunday's Prayer: God, I often can't hear your voice because of the sound of all the people and things that call out to me. I want to hear You. I want to be comforted by You, strengthened by You, led by You. Thank you for this quiet time, it is here that I seek to hear from You. Amen.

Monday, March 25th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Luke 10:38-42

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 48 – “One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part. It won't be taken away from her.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Jesus told Martha she was distracted and worried over too many things and only one thing is necessary. What things do you have in your life that distracts you from paying attention to Jesus? How does this change what you consider important in your life? What changes do you need to make to rid yourself of the distractions and listen to Jesus?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Tuesday, March 26th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Ezekiel 3:1-10

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 10– “. . . listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Why do you think Ezekiel talks of the word of God as something to be eaten? How did it taste to Ezekiel? How did it change his life? How might taking God's word in you, change your life?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Wednesday, March 27th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Acts 9:1-19

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 5– “Who are you Lord?” Saul asked”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Saul, like many of us, did not recognize God's voice when he heard it. Saul was given Ananias to help him make sense of this life-changing event of hearing God's voice. Who has helped you hear or make sense of God's voice? How can you be an “Ananias” to someone else?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thursday, March 28th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 1

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 3– “He is like a tree planted by streams of water”.

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: How does this Scripture intersect with your life right now? How are you planting yourself near God?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Friday, March 29th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Matthew 5:1-2

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 1– “He sat down and his disciples came to him .”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Jesus’s disciples came to Him to learn. Are you willing to listen to what Jesus has in store for your life. How do you plan to “go to Him”? Are you ready to sit and listen and learn at His feet?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Saturday, March 30th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Luke 7:44-47

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 47– “This is why I tell you that her many sins have been forgiven; so she has shown great love.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Simon thought Jesus could not have been a prophet or surely he would not have let that sinful woman anoint his feet. Do you feel that you show great love to others? How do you show your gratitude to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins? What could you do to better serve Him?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week of March 31st

Sunday's Prayer: God, teach us to run to You in the midst of trouble. Forgive us for trying to bail ourselves out, and lead us to the peace of trusting in you and your wisdom. We offer our thanks to you for your forgiveness of our weaknesses. Amen.

Monday, April 1st

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Mark 4:39-41

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 40 – Jesus asked them, “Why are you frightened? Don’t you have faith yet?”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: The storm that arose as Jesus and His disciples crossed the water was so intense that it caused the disciples to lose assurance in Jesus’ love for them. We often discover that amidst life’s troubles we, too, are prone to lose faith in God’s purposes and provisions. What are you frightened of? What do you think you can do to put your trust in Jesus?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Tuesday, April 2nd

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Matthew 27:32-50

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 46– “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: What strikes you about this verse? What does Jesus’ honesty with God lead you to say to God today?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Wednesday, April 3rd

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: 1 Kings 19:9-13

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 12 – “. . .but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Elijah could not hear God in the wind, earthquake, or fire. After the fire, when things quieted down, he heard God in a gentle whisper or still, small voice. How do you expect God to speak? What does this tell us about waiting to hear from God?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thursday, April 4th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Isaiah 6:1-8

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 8 – “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said, “Here I am. Send me!”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Isaiah heard God’s voice in a much more dramatic way than Elijah (angels with loud voices and smoke). How does this change your understanding of hearing from God? Where in your life have you heard God’s voice calling you? Are you ready to say “here I am, send me!”?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Friday, April 5th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read:: Joshua 1:1-9

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 9– “. . . do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: God told Joshua again and again to be strong and courageous. Where in your life do you need courage? Where do you need God to move you out of discouragement?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Saturday, April 6th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: : Luke 1:26-38

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 38– “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: How did Mary first respond to this news that she would have a child? What was her final response? How do you respond to the belief that God wants to do something miraculous in and through you?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Week of April 7th

Sunday's Prayer: God, You have the power to make the sun stand still in the sky. So, I know you have the power to still all that moves in me. Let our time together today remind me of your great power and your great desire to work in me. Amen.

Monday, April 8th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: 2 Samuel 16:13-25

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 16– “Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes!”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: It was only after the people were still before God that they could see the full extent of their sin. It was only when they stood still that they were able to be taught to do what is right and follow God. As you are still today, where do you still see the need for growth and repentance?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Tuesday, April 9th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 100

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 4– “. . . give thanks to him and praise his name”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Spend some time thanking God for all He means to you and all He has done for you. List your top 10 things you thank God for today.

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Wednesday, April 10th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 84

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 10– “Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Time in prayer and stillness before God allows us to be in the courts of the Lord. Describe some of the things you have found in taking intentional time with God.

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thursday, April 11th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Psalm 136

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 1– “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: Psalm 136 tells the story of God’s work among the Israelites interspersed with the phrase “His love endures forever”. Write a short summary of God’s presence in your life using the phrase “His love endures forever” to thank God for how far He has brought you.

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Friday, April 12th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Joshua 10:12-15

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 14– “There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man.”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: This story of Joshua is an incredible account of the power of God. It happened because God listened to Joshua. In these days we have spent much time considering how we can listen to God. But, God listens to us! What do you want to ask God for today?

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

Saturday, April 13th

Be Still: Take a moment to still yourself before God.

Read: Revelation 21:1-6

Focus Verse of the Day: Verse 3– “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God”

Reflect: Take a few moments to sit in silence and reflect on what you have read, your day, the concerns of your heart, etc.

Reflect: It is necessary for us to be intentional about spending time with God. We look forward to the day when we will all spend eternity in God’s presence. No more crying, no more pain! Reflect on your Lent journey and your plan for continued time with God.

Pray: Thank you God for this time that we could share together. May the stillness and peace of these moments carry over into the movement of my day. In Jesus name, Amen.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE FOR “BE STILL” LENT SERIES

Week of March 10th

Scripture: Psalm 46

Theme: “Be Still and Know”

Key Verse: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”
Psalm 46:10

Summary: We are always moving. So much so that our lives can seem tightly packed full of movement, with no room to be still, to rest, to stop. We are told in Psalm 46 that God is “ever-present.” In the midst of mountains shaking and waves crashing, we are called upon to “Be still” and quiet, so that we can become more attuned to the spirit of God.

We often think of still time or down time as unproductive. The reality is that in our stillness, God is productive. When we stop long enough, God will reveal God’s self to us. When we wait for God, we can truly know God.

Discuss: Look at some of the following definitions for the word “wait-” to remain inactive or in a state of repose, as until something expected happens; to be available or in readiness: to look forward to eagerly: to continue as one is in expectation of; to be in readiness for; be reserved for.

- Why is it so hard for us to wait? What does it mean to “wait” upon God?

Read: Jeremiah 29:11-14, Psalm 130:5-8, Lamentations 3:23-26, Micah 7:7

- According to these scriptures, what happens as a result of seeking and waiting upon God?
- When would be the best time for you to set aside your daily time with God? Why? Which time would definitely not work? Why?
- What is the biggest obstacle to spending time daily being still?
- In thinking upon our challenge to Be Still what are some ways that we can help each other be committed?

Closing Prayer: God, you are always with me. You want me to take time to be still and allow YOU to be productive in my life. Help us all to not take lightly the chance to wait before you. Help us to remember that we have an amazing opportunity to meet with the You - the creator of the entire universe and simply be in your presence. Thank you that in our stillness you make yourself known to us. Amen.

Week of March 17th

Scripture: Mark 1:30-39

Theme: "Knowing and Saying No"

Key Verse: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." - Mark 1:35

Summary: What we know of Jesus' ministry from the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) probably took place in a time period of only 3 years of his life. Those years must have been packed full. In fact, we can see from the first chapter of Mark how busy Jesus was. In the midst of all his movement, though, he took time regularly to be alone with the God and to pray, to clarify his mission and priorities. Jesus even said "no" to some things to do what he felt called to do (Mark 1:36-38).

Discuss: We have to be prepared to say "no" to some things, to be more intentional and aware of what we are doing and why.

- How can saying "no" to some things help us say "yes" to even better things?
- Why do we feel guilty if we say "no"? How can we look at saying "no" as an aspect of spiritual growth?
- Take some time individually to make a list of things that you need to let go of or say no to; now across from each item on that list write the thing that saying no would allow you to say yes to!

Read: Exodus 16:22-30, Mark 6:31-32, Luke 11:1-10, Philippians 4:6-8, Hebrews 10:24-25

- What spiritual disciplines or prayer practices are these texts inviting you to engage?
- Beneath your list of things you will say no/yes to, write down one spiritual discipline or prayer practice you will try this week.

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for showing us how to be still. If you needed to take time away to pray and gain strength from God, how much more do we? Help us to simplify by saying no, and open up new doors to which we can say yes! Amen.

Week of March 24th

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Theme: “Dismissing Distractions”

Key Verses: But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.” – Luke 10:41-42

Summary: Life is full of distractions and busyness. It can be hard to stop and take time to listen to Jesus. Like Martha, we are in constant motion. We find that our own hands are so full of so many things that we can't reach out and grasp the one or two things that our heart desires - the few things that God has really called us to. But Jesus says to stop and listen; kneel at the feet of your Savior, and you will find rest and renewal for your soul.

Discuss: In the passage from Luke, Martha is very busy with all the obligations of the house, but her sister Mary has chosen to sit listening at Jesus' feet.

- Are your hands so full with obligations (Martha) that you don't feel you even have a choice (Mary) to do what you want to do?
- What do you think the difference between Mary and Martha was?
- How can “being still” free up choices for you? What changes will need to happen?

Read: Psalm 27:4-5

Both today's passage and the Psalm passages talk about “one thing.” The psalmist says, “This one thing I desire...” How would you finish that sentence? *It may be helpful to look at the different parts of our lives to answer that question. For example, “in my job, the one thing I desire is... or in my spiritual life, or in my family...”* What would it take to make that happen?

- Revisit the lists you made last week and discuss how you did with saying no, saying yes, and engaging in a spiritual discipline or prayer practice.

Closing Prayer: Gracious Savior, thank you for your invitation to be still and abide with you. Open our eyes to the true passion you have placed on our hearts. Help us to discern the ways, places, and experiences that will lead us to a more abundant and fulfilling life. Amen.

Week of March 31st

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Theme: "Peace! Be Still!"

Key Verse: He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. – Mark 4:38

Summary: When we find ourselves in the storms of life, the presence of Jesus can still the raging sea. When we're out there in deep waters, where apparent or imagined danger awaits us, Jesus is already in the boat with us. He makes a way for us. Christ can calm our fears, and settle the storms we face on a daily basis. Peace comes when we trust in Jesus' calming presence in our lives.

Discuss: Are you ever annoyed when it looks like God is sleeping and ignoring the situation that has "swamped" you and threatens to drown you?

- Why do you think the disciples wake Jesus up? Did they want Jesus to calm the storm or to take cover?

Read: Psalm 65:5-8, Jeremiah 29:11-13

- How do these scriptures impact you? In other words, what different emotions might they cause you to feel?
- What's one of the storms you are facing right now?

Closing Prayer Poem

You who are weary
Sleepless
Tired
Depressed
Discouraged

Do not be afraid!

You who are fed up
Hopeless
Visionless
Fearful
Tearful

Do not be afraid!

God is present in your suffering.
God will calm the winds and waves of your soul!

(Prayer Poem by Junius Dotson, *The Africana Worship Book, Year B*)

Week of April 7th

Scripture: Joshua 10:12-15

Theme: “When the Sun Stands Still”

Key Verses: “The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!” - Joshua 10:13-14

Summary: We have talked a lot about time in our “Be Still” Series. In the Bible there are two Greek words for “time.” One being “chronos” (normal, chronological time), and the other being “kairos” (a special time, a set apart time). Jesus came to earth announcing, “The time (kairos) has come! The kingdom of God is here!” It was a time where the blind would be able to see, the prisoners released, good news would come to the poor, and a time for freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4).

Part of “being still” is capturing the moments of life, and to understand that we are living in “kairos” time. We can participate in the ministry that Jesus came to do. Now is the time! Today is the day! Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still. What miracles will we be bold enough to pray for and let God use us to accomplish? With God’s help, we can boldly “seize the day,” pray audacious prayers like Joshua’s, and take audacious action for God.

Discuss: Jesus has invited us to follow him in this kairos time. What do you think it means to “follow” Jesus? Another way to ask this question may be “what are the qualities of a Jesus follower?”

Read: Mark 8:34-35, John 12:25-26, Ephesians 5:1-2, James 2:14-17, 1 John 3:16-18

- According to these passages, what are the characteristics of one who follows Jesus?
- What do you think it means to “take up your cross?”
- When is a time you have seen someone “walk” in the way of love?
- What are some of the barriers that keep us from acting out our faith with good deeds?
- Is there a project your family or group would like to consider taking on in order to follow Jesus into the world?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you – to give ourselves and our lives for others. Give us the courage and strength to make sacrifices in order to show your love to those in need. May we honor you with our faith, our words, and our deeds. Amen.

A Night Prayer

Lord,
it is night.

The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.

The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives
rest in you.

The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.

In your name we pray.
Amen.



Ash Wednesday Worship

Wednesday March 6

7 a.m. • Drive-Thru Ashes • 6 p.m.



St. John's United Methodist Church

230 Renee Drive | Baton Rouge, LA 70810

Join us for Sunday worship at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

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