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Gen. 27:1-13, Mark 14:32-42

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Down in life’s valleys, we all need good songs stuck in our heads, rocks of truth, anchors to hold onto.

From this passage, I want to lift up two rocks that help us navigate life. Each are telling to our human condition of fear, revealing our lack of trust, enlightening us about our betrayal, but also about God’s pathway of hope.
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Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church  
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Rev. Mark Lampley  
March 15, 2020

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Gen. 27:1-13, Mark 14:32-42

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Rev. Mark Lampley
March 15, 2020

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Gen. 27:1-13, Mark 14:32-42

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Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church  
Knoxville, Tennessee  
Rev. Mark Lampley  
March 15, 2020  

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As our Good Shepherd, Jesus sets a table in the presence of our enemies, even airborne viral enemies. Through it all, God proves how faithful and sovereign He has been, He is, and He forever will be.

Lest we think that Jesus cannot relate in our valleys. He was fully human, so he understands our distress and what we are asleep to. Christ shared in every human condition. He shared in all that we face including: fear, alienation, isolation, loneliness, and death. As Paul said, “Christ became poor, so that through his poverty we might become rich.”

Jesus struggled with the possibility that he may resist the will of God. His obedience, like ours, was not automatic. His testing in that garden proves he distressed over the willingness to conform. In successfully making that higher calling choice, Jesus demonstrates that he is the Way, the one who goes before us, the gate. He is the gate to the heavenly Kingdom, and no one can enter except through Him (John 3:3, John 14:6).

Now, we’ve established that Jesus proves his faithfulness, overcomes our unfaithfulness, our slumber. And, we’ve been reminded Jesus brings hope through bringing in God’s kingdom. So, what are we to do about it?

Our response, our third rock of truth, is to remember we are called to conform to God’s strength through prayer. We need to wake up to God among us. We are to stay awake to always stay alert. The way of the cross is one of discipleship, of disciplines that start at our Baptism. God calls us to squeeze through the eye of needles, to pray without ceasing, to NOT worry.

Don’t get me wrong. It’s unrealistic to think we (on our own) can stay awake for long periods of time. Two weeks ago, I spent the better part of the week with my dad in intermediate ICU at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. He was trying to get through double-pneumonia complications. I was taking my shift as a family caregiver. Dad needed me because every hour even through the night there were physical matters to tend to. After 3 nights straight I wore down, I became weak. My own strength gave out, and I couldn’t stay awake even for an hour. (I even slept through a fire alarm that got accidentally pulled.) The unfortunate thing is not that I couldn’t remain eyes open, it’s that I was drawing too much on my own worldly fortitude.

As in many scenarios, Jesus did what we could not do for ourselves. In this case, Jesus stayed awake and alert, even though the disciples did not. We do not.
Although we are often asleep to God’s help, we are given second chances. But this grace doesn’t let us off the hook. We are called to remain tuned in, seeing with eyes not of this earth, not looking for a kingdom of brick and mortar, rather helping build a kingdom far greater! Something that helps us and others withstand the trials and storms and uncertainties of the future; to help others who seek desperately for guidance.

In this season of repentance, we can commit anew, with God’s help, to follow Christ, who loves us, who showed us the way. Remember the word Gethsemane. It means valley of decision. So, will we stay awake and choose to trust in God’s way?