

Sunday, May 21, 2023 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Bible Study
“Casting Your Cares”
Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 and 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, invite participants to respond, “When you hear ‘joy,’ what comes to mind?”

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35. Context. Like Psalm 47, this psalm is another “enthronement” psalm, praising God who is enthroned over all the earth. The psalm may have been used as a processional hymn in the Temple or sung as people processed through town. It speaks of God’s sovereignty over all the nations, the Kingdom of God – exactly what the apostles were anticipating after the resurrection.

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11. Context. The “first” letter of Peter was probably not written by the apostle, but rather by one of his followers in the next generation – perhaps Silvanus, mentioned in 5:12 – who was steeped in Peter’s teachings. He likely wrote from Rome, where Peter’s presence had had great influence. The letter is “first” only because it is the longer of the two letters written over Peter’s name. (In the Bible, letters were arranged primarily according to length, not chronology.) The letter is one of encouragement to Gentile Christians who now find themselves alienated from their pagan friends and neighbors. The author encourages them to lead upright lives, however much they may be ridiculed or persecuted. In this week’s reading, we hear yet again an echo of the reading from Acts, where the disciples were speculating about the coming of God’s kingdom, and Jesus reminded them of what their mission will be when they’ve received the power of the Holy Spirit - the kingdom will come in God’s good time.

Read Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 and 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

Read Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 and 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11 again -

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- 1 Peter 4:12 starts with “beloved.” To whom do you think Peter is writing? [Christians 2,000 years ago and/or us] What does it mean to be “beloved” of God?
- “Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.” (1 Peter 5:9, NRSV). Who are “your brothers and sisters in all the world”? What kinds of suffering are they going through?

How does your church address suffering in the community? How does being part of The United Methodist Church help address suffering in the wider world? What might be other ways you might address the needs in your area?

- *“He (Peter) isn’t saying the problems will go away. But he is inviting us to not let the suffering control us. Cast your inclination to worry away. Trust in the Lord because he cares for you.”* How have you experienced this? How might it look to trust God fully? In what area of your life do you need to work on trusting God?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Gracious and loving God, we cast all our anxiety on you because you care for us. Forgive us, we pray; we struggle to trust that you will take care of us, no matter what is happening around us. Help us to “Let go, and let God.” Lead us to joy; inspire us to share the joy with others. Use each of us as your instrument of peace. In your precious name, Jesus Christ, we pray. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.