

Micah & Rocks

3/7/21

Today we will hear a little bit about the prophet Micah in Lydia's sermon.

Micah draws our attention to the power of living a life that embrace's God's just, loving kindness - and for the good of not just ourselves but for all humanity. And yet he calls out quite forcefully the ways by which our world and ourselves transgress this call - and cause grief and hurt - at the intersections of arrogance, power and oppression.

For our spiritual practices each week during the Lenten season we invite you to engage with the objects from your Lent in a Bag or using common objects you're likely to have in and around your homes to help you reflect and engage. For today, we will be using the **rock** from your bag, if you'd like to grab that now and have it handy. (or run outside and grab one!)

You can find today's spiritual practice on page 28 of your bible guide or the first card in your Lenten card deck - for the week of Micah - that has a tiny 3.1 in the right hand corner. (for week 3, day1).

We are approaching a mass pandemic anniversary.

In just a few days we'll all be walking into memories of this time, last year ... Our memories will entail the particulars of where we were the first time we heard about this virus that was spreading across the globe, where we were/who we were with on March 10th when the Massachusetts state of emergency was declared...how and when we took on the integration of new rituals - hand-washing, and wearing masks - 6-ft apart, and staying home. When it was we integrated the word, "pandemic" as a regular part of our vocabulary. And when it was that we realized that oh, this isn't just going to be a 2 week thing - or a 2 month thing - but a long, long, unknown amount of time -thing.

The specifics of our memories are personal to each of us in different ways... but the overriding sense of loss - after loss - after loss - of this past year, is collective.

These losses range in impact and scope of debilitation - but we are walking into a week that marks one of the few times in history that every person in this country is experiencing some kind of loss at the same time - a phenomenon some psychologists are calling "collective grief."

"And for many of us the weight of this grief - has been compounded again and again with overlapping tragedies and loss - to the point where we find ourselves in "grief debt" - where we have depleted our energy to the point where there's no more to withdraw from our emotional bank." (Emily Laurence wellandgood.com)

So here we are here - Sunday, March 7th 2021.

I don't know how you are feeling - emotionally, spiritually, physically.

And you might not even know how you are doing emotionally, spiritually, physically.

That is o.k.

But I want to give us a spiritual practice that will afford us an opportunity to know and encounter a living God - even in the midst of such weighty grief.

*spiritual practices give us this expansive way of knowing of God. And I've heard from so many of you that your prayers have grown shadows instead of light during this year - and that your body and heart have taken on weight, not relief this year... and you *know that God is love* - but it seems hard to reconcile w/ what you feel and experience.

These spiritual practices invite you into a kind of knowledge of God - that is so intimate and so vulnerable - because it's not the kind of knowledge that we can possess first - it's the kind of knowledge that WE gain by encountering God - WHERE WE HIDE NO FEELING, NO EMOTION - where we are HONEST about where we are at. **This "is the kind of knowledge that possesses us and infuses a knowing within us" (Richard Rohr), that can't be compromised... that is like a firm foundation, a rock that grounds us.**

We have intersected with so much this year - grief, hurt, loss - uncertainty - and we find that our grief over this viral pandemic has exposed the compounded grief and hurt that lay deep in our national landscape - where intersections of arrogance, oppression and power has riddled us and our country for so long.... This is what Micah warns the southern region of Judah about, and still warns us of today.....

REFLECTION:

So why don't you take your rock in your hand... just hold it for now - acquaint with it's weight if you want... and Reflect on this question...

HOW have you intersected with arrogance, oppression and power this past year?

*You aren't going to be prompted to put this in the chat - this is just a reflection for you and God.

***I'll give you a few moments here...**

**a disclaimer before we get going if you realize - I don't want to process this today, it's too much - it is active trauma.. I invite you to just take your rock and hold it in your hand.. Let it absorb the heat of your body... and be a grounding source of God's warmth and love for you right now.*

HOW have you intersected with arrogance, oppression and power this past year?

You might find yourself a perpetrator of this - or you might find yourself lying under the weight of all this...

**wait one full minute...*

Our stepping stones to work through so much grief - is to feel the weight of our feelings. And name these feelings.

This rock that you have - I realize is a small-ish rock. Maybe in your mind's eye - you wish this was a boulder-sized rock... maybe then it could start to touch the weight of this year. I get it.

OBJECT:

For now, allow the rock to represent the weight of your feelings at this intersection of arrogance, oppression and power.

Maybe there's a primary feeling that rises up - or maybe it's a whole mashup of feelings.

BUT take a moment to notice what it is **YOU DO FEEL**. *this I will ask you to put in the chat*

“WHAT IS IT THAT YOU FEEL AT THIS INTERSECTION?”

CHAT THIS FEELING(s) in the chat....

When you have time today write your feelings on one side of this rock.

**Perhaps “i don't know”, numbness, frustration, weariness - - perhaps you are circling back to week #1 and it's anger/rage/*

As a way to close - let's incorporate that feeling that you can recognize into a breath prayer. This way of reminding our body/mind/spirit that God is as close as our breath... a constant source of life, with us in all we feel.

With your Rock in your Hand - invite God's hands to hold it with you...

PRAYER: Inhale: [*Your feeling] | Exhale: Help, God | *repeat 3 times*

As you need throughout the week, use this rock and the weight of your feelings to anchor you to here and now.. It's what will help keep you from being washed away in grief or fractured into a million shards of rage. All the while honoring your feelings and holding tight to the presence of God.... it's the holiest of prayers. Formed from both sorrow and joy.

Amen.