

Message Reflection Questions

GIFTS

As preached on Sunday, January 23, 2022

Scripture: Psalm 19; Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Luke 4:14-21; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

1. Which of today's scripture readings is most familiar to you? When you are presented with a familiar passage of Scripture, what's the first thing that comes to mind as you read? How often do you read a different translation, a commentary or something else? If you do, do you find these helpful?
2. Which scripture setting from today's readings speaks most personally to you in your faith journey right now? For example, are you in a place of semi-private praise and petition like David, a wild and crazy celebration of identity like the Israelites, experiencing an earth-shaking moment like Jesus' congregation in Nazareth or part of a body of believers struggling to work together and needing guidance from a respected teacher? Or maybe you see something else in these 4 settings – consider how where you are personally affects what you see.
3. Do you think of the Law as a gift in your life today? Why or why not? Are there other God-given gifts that you have received or wish to receive?
4. Imagine yourself in that Nazareth synagogue the day Jesus read the Scripture of the day. Who's in the room? What do you expect to happen? What do you feel as you hear the prophecy of Isaiah again? What goes through your mind at the end of the reading? What do you think the topic of conversation was as the people headed home? How does this imagined situation relate to your experience of Sunday worship at FHPC?
5. Do you think of the Lectionary as a gift, a curse, unimportant, something other people use, unhelpful, interesting, a relic from an earlier time, _____ (fill in the blank)? Are you willing to try the type of study suggested in today's sermon?

(Here's a [link to the Revised Common Lectionary for 2022](#). FHPC has been following the Sunday/Festival readings schedule; there is also a daily lectionary schedule if you prefer a daily reading/study format. Want an overview of the why and wherefore of the Lectionary? This is a great little book: [A Three-Year Banquet by Gail Ramshaw](#).)

Lectionary Readings 01/23/22

(NIV translations)

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

³ They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

¹¹ By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

¹ all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel.

² So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. ³ He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

⁵ Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. ⁶ Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

⁸ They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read. ⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. ¹⁰ Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Luke 4:14-21

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. ¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”

²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.