



Living Unashamed

Prayer:

Dear God we adore you and give thanks for the ways you have blessed our lives. Thank you for being a promise keeper and a covenant maker. Please help us to live faithfully as covenant people. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen

Connect to God:

Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?

Connect to Neighbor:

What good have you done for someone else this week?

Connect to Scripture: Joshua 4:19; 5:9-12

¹⁹ The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month. ^[a] They camped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

⁹ Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." So the place was called Gilgal, ^[a] as it is today.

Passover

¹⁰ The Israelites camped in Gilgal. They celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month^[b] on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the very next day after Passover, they ate food produced in the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. ¹² The manna stopped on that next day, when they ate food produced in the land. There was no longer any manna for the Israelites. So that year they ate the crops of the land of Canaan.

Connect Text in Context:

According to Numbers 20:14-16, The ancestors of Israelites "went down to Egypt and lived in Egypt a long time." The Egyptians oppressed the Israelites. The Israelites cried out to the Lord. God heard their cry. God told Moses to go way down into Egypt land to tell ole Pharoah to let his people go. Moses led the people out of Egypt. The people wandered for 40 years in the wilderness until a fearful and

disobedient generation died out. Now the new generation along with Joshua and Caleb were crossing the Jordan River. Joshua commanded a person from each of the twelve tribes to take a stone out of the Jordan River to create a monument.

At Gilgal, Joshua circumcised the men as part of the Abrahamic covenant with God. Gilgal is the place of the twelve stones. Those stones were a monument that reminded the people that God dried up the Jordan river so that Israelites could cross into the promised land just as God did for the Red Sea.

Connect to Practice: Remember & Celebrate

As we journey towards the cross during Lent, we are reminded of another symbol, the cross. The cross was a symbol of shame and guilt, but Jesus overcame the cross. Jesus transformed how we view the cross. When we survey the wondrous cross we are reminded of the depths of God's love. Jesus took the nails so that we could come up from whatever is holding us captive.

When you find yourself feeling down, look to the cross. When you feel yourself feeling down remember how God has brought you through troubled waters. Remember how God has divided the waters of life for you. As a sign of our covenant with God, we have the sacrament of baptism. In baptism, the

water is a sign of new life and the cleansing away of sin. We are reminded that God promises to bring us up!

The people of Israel were celebrating the Passover. "Passover is the Jewish commemoration of the "passing over" of the death angel prior to exodus from Egypt. The festival lasts 8 days."

There was no longer any manna. The bible says that they ate produce from the land. Now that they were in the promised land, they could enjoy the produce from the land. This marked a new era. During the first year in the promised land they were able to eat food that they did not plant, but after that period the people needed to work the land for themselves.

The early days of COVID led to isolation and alienation from our brothers and sisters in the church. Many of us began to feel down. We longed to worship together, to shake a hand, and to hug a neck. We were in the wilderness. We survived by the grace of God. God provided manna. Now it's time to eat the produce from the land. It's time to celebrate. There is enough to eat for all of God's children. After the celebration there is work to do. We must prepare to sow seeds this year that will not be ready to harvest until next year or years to come.

Connect Heads:

Define the word "Passover" in your own words.

If the Israelites did not sow the seeds that produced the harvest, where did the food come from?

Why did Joshua command a man from each tribe of the twelve tribes to take one stone out of the Jordan?

Is there a particular insight that you would like to share from the sermon, from the scripture, or from the small group curriculum?

Connect Heart:

Share a time when you shame caused you lose sight of what is important. What did you learn about God? Yourself? Others?

Share a time when you experienced manna (a gift from heaven that sustained you during a period of isolation or suffering) in your life.

Who you most identify with in the scripture? The people of Israel or Joshua? Why?

Who is missing from the celebration at Saginaw UMC? Who should we invite to experience the goodness of God?

Connect Hands:

Did you cause harm in word or deed to someone this week? (self-examination). If so, confess your sin to God, then seek to reconcile with your brother or sister.

Share your prayer concerns and celebrations.

Ask a member of the group to pray for the concerns and give thanks for the celebrations.

Notes Sections

Prayer Concerns:

Celebrations:

Daily Reflection Questions

Where have I seen God at work in my life today?

What is one thing that I am thankful for?

What is one thing that broke my heart today?

What is one good thing did I do for someone else today?