

Weekly Messenger

NOVEMBER 8, 2019

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Finding Strength To Overcome - By Joseph Woo

There seems to be a persistent narrative within the church that everything is supposed to be fine and dandy after you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. Is it true? I have heard so many stories of people surprised by how difficult life still is after they became a Christian.

The funny thing is Jesus never said that life becomes easier. He actually warned us of the difficulties that lie ahead because of knowing Jesus. That's why he promised us the Comforter.

“AND I WILL ASK THE FATHER, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER ADVOCATE, TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER.”
[JESUS, IN JOHN 14:16]

Which begs the question — why would Jesus send us an Advocate or Comforter if we were to always be comfortable?

Jesus never promises an easy life. Jesus does promise a life that will have meaning, significance, power and purpose.

That means trials will come.

Our lives don't gain power, purpose or significance by the avoidance of trials or by always seeking the easy way out or pursuing the life that provides the most comfort. No, our lives will have power because of the trials we've walked through and overcome.

There is precedent for this: Jacob being one. Jacob's story is recorded in the book of Genesis. Most of the obstacles Jacob faced were due to his own

choices. Yet God never abandoned him. Circumstances led Jacob to go back home where he would have to confront his older brother, Esau, who once threatened to kill Jacob (that's because Jacob stole Esau's birthright blessing). Jacob was absolutely terrified to face his past. On the eve of his reunion with Esau, Jacob lingered behind as his family got a head start. And the Bible tells us a man appeared and they wrestled until daybreak (totally normal). The man asked Jacob to let go and Jacob refused to let go until this man gave Jacob a blessing. The man then told Jacob that his name will no longer be "Jacob" but "Israel," which means "struggled with God and with men and won" (Genesis 32:28). Struggling (and overcoming struggle) is embedded in the ethos of God's people.

No one escapes life scot-free of loss; of troubles; of struggles; of pain. Perhaps this is where you find yourself this season. Maybe you're finding yourself in the middle of the wilderness with no idea where to go and a growing sense of abandonment, hopelessness and helplessness.

Would it help to know that you're not the only one to experience the vastness, the dryness or the loneliness of the wilderness? Many of the heroes and heroines of the Bible have experienced the wilderness—even Jesus.

Article continues on page 3.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Thanksgiving Pies for

BALDWIN CENTER

Feed, Clothe, Educate, Empower

You may recall the previous article posted in October 18th's Weekly Messenger that tells about Baldwin Center. In short, the center feeds, clothes, educates and empowers those in need.

Every year, Baldwin Center hosts a Thanksgiving Meal at their Soup Kitchen. Our church has been providing the dessert for the Thanksgiving Meal for almost thirty years. We are the sole provider of pies to the Soup Kitchen!

Please help us continue this tradition by bringing in a pie (or 2) to the church on Saturday, November 23rd or Sunday, November 24th.

There is no refrigeration available, so please bring fruit or pumpkin pies -no cream pies.

Pies will be taken to the Soup Kitchen in the afternoon of November 24th.

Fresh Foods for Families in Need

On Sunday, November 24th, please consider bringing in fresh fruits and vegetables to donate to families in need for their Thanksgiving meals.

Suggested items are:

- *Onions*
- *Celery*
- *Potatoes*
- *Squash*
- *Cabbage*
- *Lettuce*
- *Carrots*
- *Apples*

Thank you in advance!



Monthly Meeting

All women are invited to attend the United Methodist Women's monthly meeting.

**Potluck luncheon at 12pm
Wednesday, November 13
in Fellowship Hall**

**Speaker: David Clayton
Families Against Narcotics/
Hope Not Handcuffs**

Bring a dish to pass, your own place-setting and anything you may have to donate to the food pantry.



Annual Craft & Vendor Show

November 9th
10am-2pm

\$2 Admission Fee



Poinsettia Sale

by
Boy Scout Troop 80

Nov. 24th
&
Dec. 1st



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Finding Strength to Overcome - By Joseph Yoo

Continued from page 1

Right after Jesus was baptized, Mark tells us that the Spirit forced Jesus into the wilderness. That's right, "forced" (which I find comforting). Jesus didn't schedule a trip into the wilderness. He didn't purposefully go seeking out to be in the wilderness. It was forced upon him like it's often forced upon us.

Who chooses to go into the wilderness? Who willingly volunteers to experience pain, loss, terror, tragedy, suffering, danger, etc.?

Yet, we can't escape the barrenness of the wilderness. It forces its way onto us.

Like when we're in the waiting room of a hospital offering prayers we have no way of knowing will be answered;

Like when receiving terrible news from the doctor;

Like when told that after a lifetime of service, we're being let go;

Like when a relationship we've given everything to just... ends;

Like when our children consistently and constantly make the worst decisions;

Like when we have to parent our parents;

We rarely choose those options; they're forced on us.

And then we begin to wonder where God is in all this. Does God cause these horrible things to happen to us? Does God want us to suffer?

There are Christians who teach

that suffering is the only way — in the 'if-you-ain't-suffering-you-ain't-doing-it-right' type of way. They teach that God gives us pain and suffering for some greater cause only God can see because God won't give you more than you can handle.

Maybe that does help you frame your pain. Maybe knowing that everything happens for a reason actually helps you through the healing process.

I, personally, have a hard time wrapping my mind around that line of thinking.

I am reminded of Romans 8:28: We know that God works all things together for good for the ones who love God.

I've never read that as "God causes the suffering in our lives but that God can redeem even the darkest of moments; that God can bring life into the most barren and unfruitful seasons of our lives." Because, as King David writes: Where could I go to get away from your spirit? Where could I go to escape your presence? (Psalm 139:7).

As cold, dark, lonely, dangerous and terrifying as the wilderness can be — God is there, too. God has not abandoned you in your moments of despair. Neither has God forgotten you. Even if God's silence is deafening — it does not mean you're forgotten and/or abandoned. God is with you, even though you feel like you're hiking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

God is with you.

It's worth noting that Mark tells us Jesus "was among the wild animals, and the angels took

care of him" while in the wilderness. There were dangerous things that could have harmed Jesus, yet there were also angels who took care of him. Wild animals may abound in your wilderness right now.

But so do angels.

We're rarely left alone. We're surrounded by a cloud of God's witnesses and angels abound as well.

You're not alone. God's not the only one who walks with you.

May you remember that:

“NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD: NOT DEATH OR LIFE, NOT ANGELS OR RULERS, NOT PRESENT THINGS OR FUTURE THINGS, NOT POWERS OR HEIGHT OR DEPTH, OR ANY OTHER THING THAT IS CREATED. [ROMANS 8:38-39]

Joseph Yoo is a West Coaster at heart contently living in Houston, Texas with his wife and son. He serves at Mosaic Church in Houston. Find more of his writing at josephyoo.com.

[Posted October 18, 2019]

<http://www.rethinkchurch.org/articles/recent-posts/finding-strength-to-overcome>

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Grace's Weekly Devotional

"Lessons From The Saints"



In the sermon last Sunday, Pastor Don talked about the saints who have touched our lives. I thought about all the people who have influenced me with their actions and with their faith. When I went to church for the first time, there was a woman who sat beside me and showed me how to follow the service and how to use the hymnal. There was another woman who would take me on her errands to Port Huron and we would talk. I was 15 and she would tell me to value myself and to love others. They showed me Christian caring. Then there was the Pastor that would later come to that church; he told me of my responsibility to the church and to always

uphold that responsibility. He showed me the duty of putting faith into action. Then there was another pastor who, while speaking about communion, made me realize that Christ died for my sins and loved even me. He brought me closer to Christ.

Years later there was a woman who had voted against a change in the church. When she was outvoted, she was the first to step up to help implement the change. She taught me the lesson of being part of the community of believers and our responsibility to that community. Then there was the Pastor who asked me to undertake a position that was embroiled in division and controversy. When I said I didn't think I was capable, he reaffirmed his belief that I was. I prayed about it and took the position. With God's help I accomplished the job. He taught me to trust that God was with me in all things.

I have been blessed with a lot of saints in my life and I thank God for each one. Some are still influencing me daily as they do God's work. As the list of saints who have passed was read on Sunday. A lot of them were friends -some from years past, some I had ushered with, some I had been in classes with, some who I had served with, some that I loved to listen to their stories, some that I just knew from the pews. All had touched my life with their presence and their faith. I thank God for their lives, and for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:16-18 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Thank you, Lord, for those saints that have touched our lives, may they be wrapped in your heavenly love. Be with those who are seeking you, may they know that you have not moved, that you are waiting for them to realize you are right there with them. Be with our church, may we be the hands and feet of Christ. Be with our Pastor, our Staff and our Leaders, may they feel your presence and protection. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

This Week's Calendar

Sunday, November 10th

- 8:15am Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 9:00am Fellowship Time - Parlor
- 9:30am Traditional Worship Service - Sanctuary
- 9:30am Youth/Teen Sunday School - Room 106
- 9:45am Children's Sunday School - Rooms 304 & 305
- 10:30am Fellowship & Coffee - Parlor
- 11:00am Contemporary Worship Service - Fellowship Hall

Monday, November 11th

- 10:00am Commit To Be Fit - Room 301
- 1:00pm Prayer Quilting - Conference Room
- 5:00pm Women's Emmaus 4th Day Meeting - Library
- 6:45pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Music Room
- 7:00pm "Into The Word" Bible Study - Conference Room
- 7:45pm Gosbells Rehearsal - Music Room

Tuesday, November 12th

- 6:30pm MOPS Group - Library
- 7:00pm Finance Committee - Board Room
- 7:00pm ALS Support - Parlor
- 7:30pm Adult Children of Alcoholics - Room 104

Wednesday, November 13th

- 11:00am UUMW Executive Committee Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- 12:00pm UUMW Monthly Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- 4:30pm K.I.D.S. Club & H.E.C.T.I.C. Youth**
- 6:30pm Men & Women's Step Studies - Library & Room 105
- 6:30pm Wednesday Adult Study - Board Room
- 7:30pm Worship Band Practice - Fellowship Hall

Thursday, November 14th

- 10:00am Commit to be Fit - Room 301
- 11:00am Emmaus 4th Day - Library
- 12:00pm Food For Body & Soul - Conference Room
- 6:30pm Stephen Ministry - Board Room
- 6:30pm Celebrate Recovery - Fellowship Hall
- 7:00pm Thursday Adult Bible Study - Room 302

Friday, November 15th

- 1:00pm Genealogy Studies Group - Library

Saturday, November 16th

- 8:30am UM Men's Breakfast - Fellowship Hall**
- 9:00am Ruth's Knit & Stitch - Conference Room
- 10:00am Gosbell Rehearsal - Music Room

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Ministry Team:

Rev. Don Gotham
srpastor@uticaumc.org

Music Ministry

David Fox, Organist, Bell, & Chancel
Choirs Director
FoxDavidL@sbcglobal.net

Christopher Heldt, Contemporary
Worship Leader
chris.heldt@uticaumc.org

Youth Leader

Suzy Palmer
suzy.palmer@uticaumc.org

Communications Director

Beth Miller
bmiller@uticaumc.org

Secretary/Bookkeeper

Charlotte Ramsey
charlotte@uticaumc.org

Custodian

Rachelle Heldt

Child Care

Caitlyn Wilson

Sunday Worship Times:

9:30 AM
with Organ, Choir and
Handbells
in the Sanctuary

11:00 AM
with our Worship Band
in Fellowship Hall



Our Mission:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for
the transformation of the world.

Our Vision:

To reach and nurture our community
with the love of Christ.

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday
8:00am - 4:00pm

Friday
8:00am - 2:00pm

Phone: (586)731-7667

Like us on Facebook!

Utica United
Methodist Church
8650 Canal Road,
Sterling Heights, MI
(586) 731-7667
www.UticaUMC.org

Classes/Studies

Food For Body & Soul

Thursdays

12:00pm in the Conf. Room

Bring your lunch and study the
word of the bible with others! The
current focus will be the book of
John.

Wednesday Night Study

Wednesdays

at 6:30pm in the Conf. Room

This class will be all about prayer
- what is prayer, how to pray, etc...
Join at any time!

Thursday Night Study

Thursdays

7:00pm in Room 302

Join this class for a study of the
book of Hebrews. Have some
good fellowship, a bit of fun and a
better understanding of Bible
times and the teachings of our
Lord. All are welcome regardless
of bible knowledge!

"Into The Word" Bible Study

Mondays

7:00pm in the Conf. Room

This study will focus on the book
of Isaiah. Contact Sharon Van
Tuyl or the office for questions.

Commit To Be Fit

Mondays & Thursdays

10am-11am in room 301

Follow along to fitness videos with
others. Includes variety of chair
aerobics, strength training, and
stretching.

Celebrate Recovery Step Studies

Wednesdays

6:30pm in room 104

This is a Celebrate Recovery
class. Speak with Bob or Patsy
Clark if you are interested.

Genealogy Study:

Fridays at 1pm in the Library

Learn how to study genealogy
with Ray Lake. Bring your own
pens and notebooks! If you
missed the first class, you are still
welcome to join!



Can't make it to church or just
looking for a fast and easy
way to give your? Donate
online with a one time gift or
set up automatic donations!

Visit our website to give now!

www.uticaumc.org/e-giving

If you need assistance, feel
free to call the office!

Deadline Information:

Items for The Weekly Messenger,
The Weekly Prayer List, or
Announcements must be submitted
by the **Sunday prior to posting**.
Submit to bmiller@uticaumc.org,
contact the office, or complete a
form in the office.