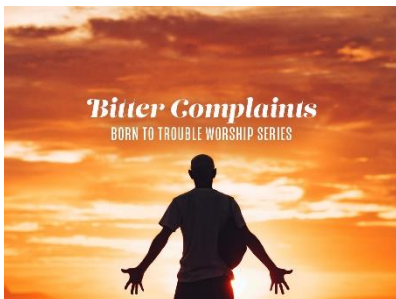


As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present. May we together experience the presence of God

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

**Prelude
Welcome**



“Born to Trouble”

Worship Series

Week 2

Compounding the experience of suffering is the feeling that one has been abandoned by God. In our text this week, Job gives voice to this pain. “Oh, that I knew where I might find him,” he declared in bitterness. Our tendency is to search for solutions, to proscribe actions that can bring us through this moment to a happier existence. Lament often makes us uncomfortable. We’d rather present a stoic face to the world, even in the face of extreme difficulties. “I’m all right,” we’ll declare, even when we clearly aren’t all right. Scripture provides plenty of opportunities for the people of God to lament, and plenty of reasons for that lamentation. Whether we focus on individual or corporate lament, we acknowledge that there really is suffering in the world and that we are often ill equipped to deal with it on our own. Crying out to God is one means we have of expressing our pain and our neediness, even as we gather in a supportive community who will hold us up. Today we gather and acknowledge this reality. We also commit ourselves to being the voice of God for those who find themselves in a moment of deep pain and we stand with those who are lost, those who doubt those who might be struggling. It is not the time to abandon them because of their doubt, but rather to acknowledge that even in the emptiness, they are not alone. You are not alone.

Let us pray

We have had a hard week at home, school, work, and even in our communities, and we come this day looking for refuge. All week long, we have longed to be in your presence. When we come forward, you seemed not to be there; when we reached backward, you could not be found. We looked to the left but could not see your face; we even groped to the right but because of the darkness all around us, we could not see you. In our time of worship together with you, O Lord, we seek the power of your presence. Amen.

A Call to Worship

Roger D. Shaw, in Flames of Spirit: Resources for Worship, Ruth Duck, ed, Pilgrim Press, 1985, 61.

Leader: Listen, for the voice of God comes near!

People: Listen, for God’s voice is not obtrusive.

Leader: We come to worship the God who became one of us,

People: Who calls us by name,

Leader: Who is Love Incarnate,

People: Who is!

Leader: Let us gather together in joy and hope –

People: Let us worship the God of Love!

CENTERING PRAYER: HELP US TO BE STILL

Written by Kate Compton.

When nothing is right,
when we are weary and lost,
when clouds dull the sky,
help us to be still.

When our cries are unheeded,
when no effort bears fruit,
when the sun sets,
help us to be still.

When love is over,
when hope is gone,
when darkness covers the land,
help us to be still.

For in being still,
in refusing to panic or despair,
we shall come to know that God is there,
suffering alongside and with us,
waiting to show us stepping-stones through the swirling waters,
and to help us sing a new song.

Praise Hymn UMH# 473 “Lead Me, Lord” (sing twice)

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**Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness;
make thy way plain before my face.
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord only,
that makest me dwell in safety.**

We Hear God’s Word

New Testament Reading..... Job 23:1-9, 16-17 (NRSV)

Job Replies: My Complaint Is Bitter

23 Then Job answered:

2 “Today also my complaint is bitter;[a]
his[b] hand is heavy despite my groaning.

3 Oh, that I knew where I might find him,
that I might come even to his dwelling!

4 I would lay my case before him,
and fill my mouth with arguments.

5 I would learn what he would answer me,
and understand what he would say to me.
6 Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
No; but he would give heed to me.
7 There an upright person could reason with him,
and I should be acquitted forever by my judge.

8 "If I go forward, he is not there;
or backward, I cannot perceive him;
9 on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him;
I turn[c] to the right, but I cannot see him.

16 God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty[a] has terrified me;
17 If only I could vanish in darkness,
and thick darkness would cover my face![b]

The word of God for the People of God, **Thanks Be to God**

Children's Message

Faith Hymn UMH #468 "Dear Jesus, in whose Life I See"

Author: John Hunter (1889) Publication Date: 1989 Source: Katholisches Gesangbuch, 1774; adapt. from Metrical Psalter, 1855

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1. Dear Jesus, in whose life I see
all that I would, but fail to be,
let thy clear light forever shine,
to shame and guide this life of mine.

2. Though what I dream and what I do
in my weak days are always two,
help me, oppressed by things undone,
O thou whose deeds and dreams were one!

Meditation

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Almighty God, you are holy and are enthroned upon our praises. In every time and place you have heard our cries; we have placed our trust in you, and we have never been disappointed. We rejoice in your holy Name and sing praises to your glory.

You meet every need and provide for us out of your abundance. You give us far more than we ask or deserve, by promising us the riches of eternal life. Yet we are easily led astray. We become very attached to the things of this earth and put our trust in them; then we are disappointed when they do not satisfy. For putting temporal things above heavenly things, forgive us, O Lord.

The things of heaven are put into our grasp for we have a high priest who leads us to the throne of grace. Send us out in the power of your Holy Spirit to proclaim that same grace to all the world, so all may know you and sing your praise.

Many people suffer and they know why. Others are straining under burdens which they do not understand, and the load seems heavier. Give rest for troubled minds; give release to hurting bodies; give hope to those in despair; and grant us all salvation.

Knowing that all things are possible with you, we ask all these things in the Name of the One who paid the price, we pray. Our Father...

Departing Hymn #130 "God will take Care of You"

Author: Civilla D. Martin (1904) Composer: W. Stillman Martin (1905)
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1. Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
beneath his wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

Refrain:

God will take care of you,
through every day, o'er all the way;
he will take care of you,
God will take care of you.

2. Through days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
when dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

3. All you may need he will provide,
God will take care of you;
nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

4. No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
lean, weary one, upon his breast,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

SENDING FORTH: Covenant God, sometimes we are tempted to believe because of our pain and suffering that we are alone. During such times, help us to recognize your abiding presence. As we go about our week, give us discerning eyes and ears to notice when others feel alone or are in pain as well and guide us to be their comforter. Amen