



Sunday, September 29, 2019

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Marcus Cosby

Sermons & Scriptures:

Pastoral Priorities – Romans 8:28

Body Building – Ephesians 4:11-13

When Hope Is Gone – Ezekiel 37:11

Increase Our Faith – Luke 17:5



**CURRICULUM
GUIDE**



Sermon Summary

Saturday 6:00pm- "Pastoral Priorities"

Scripture: Romans 8:28

Even though we must deal with the 3 inescapable realities of life, we should not worry because God is working all of it out for our good.

1. The inescapable issue of sin - The spirit and the son make intercessions on our behalf giving us access to the throne of grace
2. The inescapable issue of suffering - The suffering of our *right now* can't be compared to the glory of our *not yet*
3. The inescapable issue of separation - The love of God can bring us back from any separation

Sunday 7:30am- "Bodybuilding"

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-13

God's people are called to operate in unity in the body of Christ. There are expectations that come with this unity.

1. The expectation of unity is the blessing of God
2. The expectation of unity is the obligation of humanity to help all mature
3. The expectation of unity is the participation of divinity

Sunday 9:30am- "When Hope Is Gone"

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:11

In exile, the people of Israel are so downcast that they say of themselves, "our hope is gone". Many of us have been in storms where it feels like all of our hope, "our confident expectation of future good," is no more. But God always knows how to meet us in those places to remind us to hold on to our hope. In seasons of hopelessness God gives us a:

1. Pragmatic Examination - We hear a question from God that challenges/convicts
2. Prophetic Proclamation - We hear a word from God that inspires
3. Prolific Restoration - We hear God speak restoration to counter hopelessness

Sunday 11:30am- "Increase Our Faith"

Scripture: Luke 17:5

The disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith and as a result, Jesus decides to teach them through parables and encounters with some people who display faith of their own. These experiences indicate that the disciples and us today ought to have:

1. Faith despite the severity of the predicament
2. Faith that is displayed in the strength of your persistence
3. Faith that is determined to see God's power

Notes for Facilitators:

As we move into the third week of this Village season be sure that your Village is making space for all to speak and share equally. You should begin to notice that people are feeling more comfortable as they share their personal experiences. We encourage you to go back to the facilitation tips in your handbook and in the training videos. Finally, one of the sermons this weekend raised the topics of hopelessness and suicide which are reflected in our “Can I Push It” question. Be sensitive to the temperature of your group when deciding if it is an appropriate question to discuss. If you or a Villager is struggling emotionally please contact the Village team and get connected with the [counseling resources](#) available at ASBC.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. In the “Pastoral Priorities” sermon, Rev. Cosby reminds us, “that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). What are ways that you encourage yourself and others with reminders of God’s eternal love?
2. In Rev. Cosby’s sermon “When Hope Is Gone,” we learn that God has a way of delivering a word that can turn your very specific situation around. In celebration of 11 years of Pastor and People, what is one of Pastor Wesley’s past sermons that spoke to your exact situation?
3. When you hear about what Jesus can do, every now and again you want to see it for yourself. Share a testimony of something that you’ve experienced recently that may bless someone in your group.



Into The Bible Questions:

1. Rev. Cosby says, “You can't read Romans 8 and stay mad—it will lift your heavy burden and let you know that everything will be okay.” What other scriptures lift up your spirit?
2. In the sermon “Increase My Faith,” Rev. Cosby alludes to the story in Mark 9:24 in which the father exclaimed to Jesus, “I believe, help my unbelief” (NIV). In what ways in your life do you find the intersection of both faith and doubt?
3. In Ezekiel 37, Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy to the wind in order to give life to dry bones. The word used here for “wind” is the same word for “spirit” found in Genesis 1 when it says the spirit was hovering over the waters and beginning to create life out of chaos. Seeing that the Holy Spirit is present in times of chaos, how may you reimagine your difficult circumstances to see how the Holy Spirit is actively working to create life?

Life Application Questions:

1. Romans 8 reminds us that all our sufferings will serve our future glory. Rev. Cosby’s message encourages us that no matter how bad your *right now* might be, your *not yet* will have more glory. Do you feel like you are in your *right now* or your *not yet*? Why?
2. Rev. Cosby says that in moments of storms in our lives where hope is hard, God raises up prophets to speak life into our lives. Looking back, who has God sent to speak an on time word into your life and what hope might that give you for expecting that he’ll do it again for where you are right now?
3. Rev. Cosby says in his “When Hope is Gone” sermon, Ezekiel had some things going for him in that the hand of God was on him and the Spirit of God was leading him. He was “set down in the middle of the valley” and instructed to walk around the dead bones in order to empathize with the people of Israel (Ezekiel 37:1). Do you see yourself more as *Ezekiel* or as *the valley of the dry bones*?
 - a. *If Ezekiel*, what valley might God be sending you into to share God’s word with someone who needs it?
 - b. *If the valley of dry bones*, how does that energize your expectation that God is sending encouragement your way?
4. Rev. Cosby says in his “Bodybuilding” sermon that the expectation of the body of Christ is that we live in unity. He uses a metaphor by referring to a combination of keys on a piano and reminds us that not every key combination leads to harmony. For instance, the notes C and C sharp create “dis-harmony;” whereas, the notes C, E and G create harmony. As an individual in the body, how can you contribute to its harmony?



"Can I Push It?"

In Ezekiel 37:11, the people of Israel lament, "our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off." Truthfully, during our Christian walks we have probably all faced moments of hopelessness and despair and thoughts of giving up. As Rev. Cosby references in his "When Hope is Gone" sermon, some of us may have also experienced moments of suicidal ideation. As Christians, how can we authentically talk about the realities of thoughts of suicide, but also be comforted by God's restoration?

Spirit Work:

In three columns titled "The Good", "The Bad", and "The Ugly", make a list of the good, the bad, and the ugly that have occurred in your life. Now look over the list and reflect on how God has been working in your life in every situation in each column. Prayerfully look for an opportunity to share your story with someone who may need encouragement during the week.



Activity:

Speak Life:

In Rev. Cosby's "When Hope is Gone" sermon, he speaks about the importance of speaking over situations that feel hopeless.

- A. For this activity, please take an index card and on one side, write about a situation that you are currently struggling with.
- B. On the other side of the card, write down all the promises that the Lord has told you about that situation (e.g. through God's word, through promises, etc.).
- C. Afterwards, pair up with a villager and place both of your index cards in front of you. Then share about the situations on each of your cards and pray over the situation (reminding yourself of the promises that the Lord stated).
- D. Use this index card as a reminder of God's promise about this situation.

Additional Question for Married Couples Villages:

Rev. Cosby explains that in Romans 8:28 Paul is not telling people that “all things are good,” but instead that God is at work in *all* things, so it eventuates to our good. Can you think of a specific time in your marriage when something happened that was not good in itself, but you can see now that God worked to bring about something good?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

As heirs of God we have direct access to everything God has. If we need joy, peace, or grace, God’s got it. How does your response to difficulty change as a result of knowing this?

Additional Question for Parents’ Villages:

Rev. Cosby explains that in Romans 8:28 Paul is not telling people that “all things are good,” but instead that God is at work in *all* things, so it eventuates to our good. Can you think of a specific time in your child’s life when something happened that was not good in itself, but you can see now that God worked to bring about something good?

Additional Question for Women Villages:

Everyday God grants us grace—the unmerited favor of God. As we mature spiritually, how must we build our beliefs and behaviors to lovingly extend his grace to others?