



## **WEEKLY STUDY June 25- July 1, 2021**

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's sermon.)

### **My Story My Song – Week One.**

**For the past few years, for two weeks in the summer we hear from two of our church members. They witness through word and through their favorite hymn to how God has been present in their life.**

#### **Our scripture this week is Psalm 63**

“O God, you are my God; I seek you; my soul thirst for you;

My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

when I think of you on my bed and meditate on you in the watches of the night,

for you have been my help, and in the shadow of our wings I sing for you.

My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth;

They shall be given over to the power of the sword; they shall be prey for jackals.

But the king shall rejoice in God, all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped. (NRSV)

- 1) This week we were privileged to hear Lindsay Bridges' story and song as our second speaker for our annual 2-Sunday theme, “My Story. My Song.” Like Brij last week, Lindsay used one of the Psalms to frame her reflections. The Psalms help us understand that we can approach God - and voice to God – any emotion. Some are exuberant with joy and praise. Others are a litany of complaints. Others are full of sorrow and recount experiences of loss. Through the Psalms we are connected by prayer and song with those long ago in relationship to God. And we add our stories to the community of faith as well. Psalm 63 reflects our yearning for God. The psalmist likens the need for God like the need for water. In the words of Saint Augustine: “Our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.”

**Question: Does this psalm speak to your yearning for God? How would you describe your longing for God? What are the blessings in your life that move you – as the psalmist was moved – to sing for joy?**

- 2) In her reflections on Sunday, Lindsay told us she was sharing about a time in her life that she had spent years avoiding thinking about because it was such a hard time for her. She took us back to August 2005 when she, along with many of her extended family living in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, endured the battering of wind and rain from Hurricane Katrina. As Lindsay told her story, surviving the storm was one thing – but another was surviving the days following, dealing with destruction, no power, no water. She told of the rhythm of her days of getting water, ice, food, and gas for her family. She talked about the hours spent organizing, worrying, surviving. And she told about the effect of that stress on her and other family members. She talked about how this event – experienced as a young adult- impacted her life. Generational theorists tell us that big communal events that have the greatest impact on us are those that happen as we are coming into adulthood. And in sharing her story, Lindsay illustrated this for us.

**Question: If you were telling your story, what event or events that you experienced in your late teens or 20's would you tell about that impacted you in the way that Hurricane Katrina impacted Lindsay?**

- 3) Lindsay's relationship with her grandmother was special to her. At one point, she said her grandmother was her best friend. And she told of how her grandmother helped her when she fell apart after days of stress following Katrina. She told us of how her grandmother had her sing along with her the hymn, "In the Garden." She told of how this calmed her down and allowed her to continue what she needed to do. She stated this was her grandmother's favorite hymn and hers as well. The writer of this hymn, C. Austin Miles, was asked to write a hymn text that would bring hope to the hopeless and rest to the weary. In the Garden certainly did that for Lindsay and her grandmother.

**Question: Do you have a hymn or faith song that is loved by someone in your family and because of your relationship with that family member, you love it as well? Is there hymn or faith song that calms you and brings you hope?**

- 4) This Sunday we commissioned and sent out the youth and adults going on the mission trip to Guatemala. When people talk about faith-shaping events, mission experiences are often a part of their stories. And by extension the congregation that supports youth in these ventures is shaped and formed as well. Youth and Adults who attend with them, come back changed by the experience. Sometimes its in small ways because of community that was formed that then extends into the life of the congregation. Sometimes it's through dramatic realities of places and people living without the safety net of food, shelter, community. Sometimes it's the witness of the faith of those we think we've been sent to serve and the ways we end up being served ourselves.

**Question: What have been the faith-shaping events in your life? Do these include mission experiences? If so, what was the impact of those experiences?**

***Prayer: O God – creator of all and lover of all – you have created each of us with story and with song. On those days when we feel lost and alone, remind us that the story of our life is enveloped in your story. In those times when the melody of our soul is dim, reawaken all of our senses to the music that surrounds us. In the small moment of our lives, help us embrace joy. And in all ways, help us remember the story and songs are not for us alone but for all of your creation. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.***

**Weekly Challenge: At the end of each day this week, ask yourself: “What story did my words and actions tell others today of my faith in a God whose name is love?” Pray daily for the youth and adults on the mission trip to Guatemala.**

*(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)*