

## **DAILY REFLECTIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES FOR OLDER ADULT SUNDAY “WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE”**

By Rev. June Begany

**Monday, April 29, 2019**

Scripture: Acts 9:1-6

### SEEING CLEARLY

*Now as he (Saul) was ... approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. Acts 9:3*

In John Newton's hymn *Amazing Grace* we read these words: "... I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see." Newton had been blind to the evils he participated in as captain of a slave ship. But God's grace broke through and helped him see that in Christ all are equals.

Saul literally experienced blindness. Setting off from Jerusalem, Saul saw his duty clearly: Go capture those followers of The Way. They were corrupting Judaism with talk that Jesus was God's promised Messiah.

Saul believed he was doing God's will in rooting out this heresy. But God knew that Paul did not see clearly, did not understand God's message of grace. Three days' blindness housed with a follower of The Way opened the eyes of Saul's heart.

*God of grace, keep our eyes open to new expressions of your grace for the world.  
Amen.*

**Tuesday, April 30, 2019**

Scripture: Acts 9:1-6 (7-20)

### LIIVING UNAWARE

*He (Saul) asked, "Who are you Lord?" Acts 9:5*

After completing my time of student teaching in inner city Cleveland, I returned to campus. During my final history course I read a book on African-American history. It opened my eyes to the injustice rampant in our society, our unwillingness to see all people as God's children equally, and the need for change.

Saul /Paul believes he is doing God's will. He is unaware that God has moved beyond the Law to grace. His training as a Pharisee oriented him to the Law and the codes of holiness and purity. He was not expecting God to break into the world in a new way.

On that road to Damascus, God began to open Saul's eyes to a new world around him. God also opened the eyes of those in Damascus. Now a former enemy of The Way was becoming an instrument of God.

*Lord, show us who you are and who you want us to be. Amen.*

**Wednesday, May 1, 2019**

Scripture: Psalm 30

A REVERSAL

*You have turned my mourning into dancing...*” Psalm 30:11a

Grief comes to all of us. Yet we can be surprised by the roller coaster of emotions it produces or the sense of despair that can come. The psalmist had known grief, yet had somehow come through that experience to again find joy.

One of the challenges for those trying to respond to people who are grieving is to know when to allow them space and when to gently help them begin the process of moving on. We know that it can take a while to get over the initial shock of grief. But it is also not good for an individual to continue grieving as a way of life. Granger Westberg's book *Good Grief* offers suggestions for ways to help move mourning towards joy if not dancing in oneself and others. Our challenge is to trust God to bring us through all the days.

*Lord, walk with us in our grief. Return us to joy of your salvation. Amen.*

**Thursday, May 2, 2019**

Scripture: Psalm 30

A WIDER VISION

*Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.* Psalm 30:5b

During the summer after my first year of teaching two friends and I set out on a cross country trip. During the trip I saw for the first time the Pacific Ocean, the redwoods and sequoias, the snow capped Rockies, magnificent canyons and the oldest continuously occupied dwelling, Taos Pueblo. This was a much vaster, grander and diverse country than I knew.

The psalmist, in the midst of distress, had lost sight of the greatness of God's creation. Being so certain of God's favor, the writer was dismayed by illness and an unwanted change in life circumstance. But then a greater vision of God's grace came. The sweep of God's care granted the writer a wider vision of how God may be at work and that God would always be present.

*Gracious God, grant to each of us a larger vision of your love and grace. Amen.*

**Friday, May 3, 2019**

Scripture: Revelation 5:11-14

HEARING MORE THAN SEEING

*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne...and singing. Revelation 5:1-2a*

Some of the challenges many face as they age are the challenges associated with vision. A person begins to rely on sound to guide them rather than their sight. Reading can make worship a challenge. Familiar hymns help those with dimmed vision continue to join in praise.

In John's vision the angels and myriad of others are singing around the throne. Sometimes in our sightedness we forget to listen for the voice of God and the voices of praise. Do we truly hear the bird's morning hymns? Is the laughter of a child lost, because we are looking rather than hearing? Do we sometimes not hear the other voices joining with us? Sometimes sight blinds us to God in our midst. Let us open our ears as well as our eyes.

*Creator God, tune our hearts to sing your praise. Open all our senses to your presence around us. Amen.*

**Saturday, May 4, 2019**

Scripture: John 21:1-10

TRUSTING MORE THAN SEEING

*Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. John 21:4*

Tired. Discouraged. The disciples had seen the risen Lord in Jerusalem, but are unsure of the next steps. Now they are back to the familiar task of fishing. They've caught nothing all night. In the dawn they see a figure on the shore. They recognize the voice that calls them. They hurry to obey Jesus' directions, then come to shore.

As some age, reverting to familiar behaviors and patterns may be a comfort. It is a challenge to move in a new direction, even as it is difficult to move from one's home of many years. But Jesus calls us forward, into the future, even as we age. Jesus uses our past to prepare us for a new day. We trust Jesus to guide us into the future.

*O God, may your Spirit fill us with grace and courage as we move into your future. Amen.*

## **Sunday, May 5, 2019**

Scripture: John 21:9 -19

### PREPARATION FOR TOMORROW

*“when you grow old you will stretch out your hands....”* John 21:18b

Sunday, May 5 is designated Older Adult Sunday. It is also communion Sunday for many. At communion we all hold out our hands to receive bread and wine or juice. It reminds us that we all need to receive God's help for our lives.

One of the challenges of aging is to know when to ask for help – hold out our hands - and when to try to remain independent. That becomes a challenge for helpers, too. To know when to step in, when to offer help and when to allow another to be independent, even if slower than before, takes discernment and grace. We prepare for tomorrow through communion and through the practice of learning to adjust to changes rather than resisting them. We receive help from others and God as we continue to share our gifts.

*God of all our years, remind us that you are always with us, guiding and sustaining.  
Amen.*

Excerpted from ***These Days***, © 2019 Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Used by permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

***Rev. June Begany*** served as an Associate Pastor for 24 years at a downtown Cleveland church, as an interim pastor for 2 years and is now retired. She is also a licensed social worker, has taught history in the Cleveland school district, and is certified to administer the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. She completed her capstone project for certification in the Older Adult Ministry program in 2014. She has recently served as secretary to the POAMN Executive Committee.