

ALDRSGATE UMC OF BUTTE, MT

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June 19, 2022 – *Father's Day*

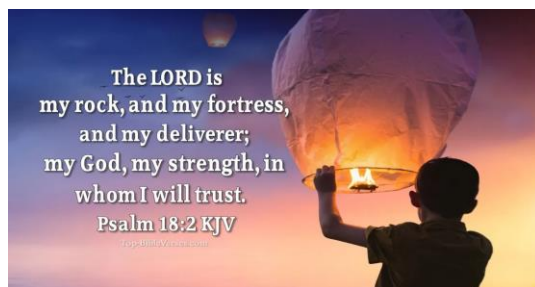
Pastor Matthias Krier

Living into a More Beloved Community

Through God, our **Rock**

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WORDS FOR REFLECTION



Background to Scripture

Our lectionary passage from our Hebrew Bible, Psalm 42, is a favorite of many because of how it speaks to the many aspects of our journey with God. This psalm is a psalm of lament as the author of this psalm is not able to go on his usual pilgrimage to Jerusalem due to illness, so he must wait on God since he is not able to go to the temple he loves. Keep in mind that at the time of this writing, illness was seen as evidence that God had forsaken the sufferer. Yet, while the author wrote this thousands of years ago, this Psalm still speaks to us today no matter where we are on the spiritual journey. Today, we will share in this scripture reading responsively:

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 42 from Psalms Anew (responsively)

As a deer craves running water,

I thirst for you, my God;

I thirst for God,

The living God.

When will I see your face?

Tears are my steady diet.

Day and night I hear,

“Where is your God?”

I cry my heart out,

I remember better days:

**When I entered the house of God,
I was caught in the joyful sound
Of pilgrims giving thanks.**

Why are you sad, my heart?

Why do you grieve?

Wait for the Lord.

I will yet praise God, my savior.

My heart is sad.

Even from Jordan and Hermon,

From the peak of Mizar,

I remember you.

There the deep roars to deep;

Your torrents crash over me.

The love of God summoned by day

Sustained my praise by night,

My prayer to the living God.

I complain to God,

Who I thought was rock:

“Why have you forgotten me?”

Why am I bent double

Under the weight of enemies?

“Their insults grind me to dust.

Day and night they say,

“Where is your God?”

Why are you sad, my heart?

Why do you grieve?

Wait for the Lord.

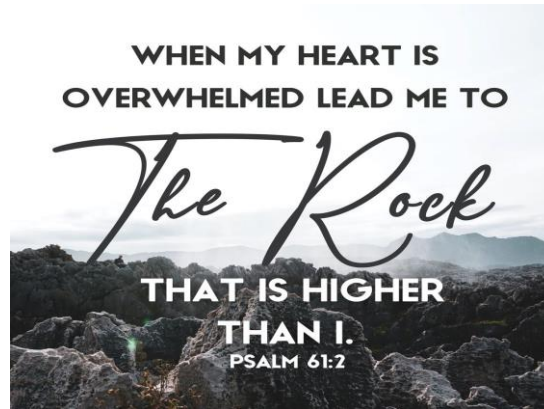
I will yet praise God, my Rock.

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Message

Who or What is Your Rock?

Pastor Matthias Krier



Let's be honest, there are times we all feel a bit overwhelmed, do we not? I know that this is true for me and I suspect that this may be true for you as well. Is there anyone here who has never felt overwhelmed at one time or another in your life?

I confess that these past two years have been a challenge in more ways than one. I do not think I have to go through the long litany of what is happening in our nation and in our world, except to say that during the pandemic everything seemed worse.

So who or what is it that keeps you centered and grounded when you feel overwhelmed? In other words, who or what is your *Rock* that keeps you grounded and centered in these troubling and chaotic times?

During these troubling times I have seen folks who have lost hope and courage turn to alcohol or drugs or antidepressants to cope with their anxiety and fear over all kinds of things: lost of loved ones to COVID 19; illness during this pandemic; job insecurity or being laid off; retirement insecurity; estrangement with family or friends due to politics or religion ... and the list goes on and on. For those who didn't turn to drugs or alcohol may have turned to anger and anger comes from fear.

I believe that unless we have a solid rock to stand on to keep us grounded and centered, we are susceptible to depression, deep sadness, grief and for some, they may turn to suicide as a way out.

For those with the gift of faith, they may have a little easier time dealing with all that is and can weather the evil stuff of this world. For those without the gift of

faith, it can be extremely depressing or even paralyzing trying to cope with all that is going on in this world.

The psalmist wrote in this beautiful but heart wrenching psalm these words we heard earlier, but this time, simply listen to a portion of the psalm and let the words and images sink in to your hearts and minds:

There the deep roars to deep;

Your torrents crash over me.

The love of God summoned by day

Sustained my praise by night,

My prayer to the living God.

I complain to God,

Who I thought was rock:

“Why have you forgotten me?

Why am I bent double

Under the weight of enemies?

“Their insults grind me to dust.

Day and night they say,

“Where is your God?”

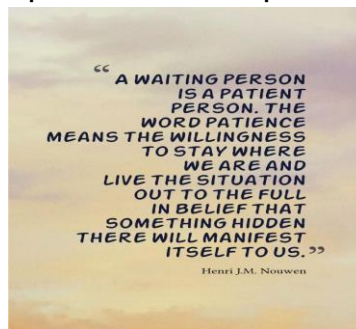
Why are you sad, my heart?

Why do you grieve?

Wait for the Lord.

I will yet praise God, my Rock.

The bottom line is in the last verse: *“Wait for the Lord. I will yet praise God, my Rock.”* Again and again in the psalms is this spirituality of waiting:



How many of you like to wait? Many of us may not like to wait, but good things can come from waiting patiently. Beautiful things can emerge in their own time, whether it be flowers, lilacs, apple blossoms or butterflies. Unfortunately, some do not have the patience to wait for things to emerge in their own time described in this story by Anthony De Mello:

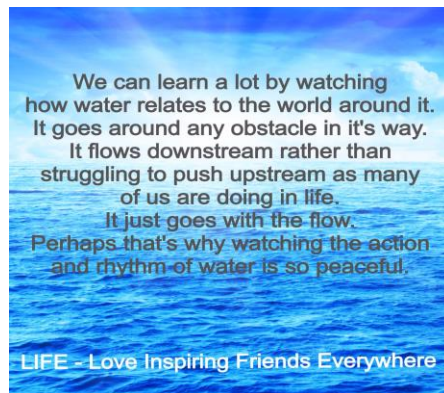
“A man once saw a butterfly struggling to emerge from its cocoon, too slowly for his taste, so he began to blow on it gently. The warmth of his breath speeded up the process all right. But what emerged was not a butterfly but a creature with mangled wings.” Anthony De Mello

In our efforts to speed up our spiritual growth or the spiritual growth of others, instead of being patient and simply waiting for things to unfold in its own time, we force the process unnaturally and we emerge as something else instead of waiting for the beauty to emerge on its own.

It seems so simple does it not? So why do we make things in our lives harder than what it needs to be?

IS IT A LACK OF TRUST? Is it because we need to be in control? Remember how to make God laugh? Make a plan!

If we are honest, we do not always understand how certain things in our lives unfold the way in which they did. It is a mystery and we can either fight it or learn to flow with it.



On this Father's Day we wish all Dads and Grandfathers a happy and joy filled Father's Day! But I have known men without children who served as surrogate dads because when a dad passes away or is simply gone out of a child's life, a miracle can take place where a child has a father figure or a big brother in their lives.

How many of you men out there have served as a surrogate dad or a "big brother" to a child? This may have been through a Big Brother program or maybe it just happened serendipitously.

Out of curiosity, how many of you females have served as a surrogate mom or as a big sister to a child whether it be through a Big Sister program or it just happened serendipitously?

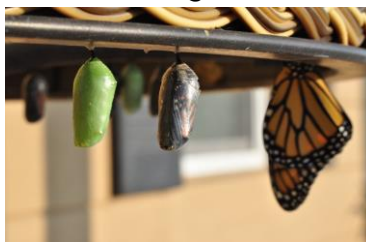
When I was in college I served as a Big Brother to a boy named Trevor. It was a very rich and meaningful relationship for the both of us and I highly recommend it as we strive to reach our young boys and girls where there is need.

Many children do not have a positive role model much less a foundation to build a life and a mentoring relationship which can be a rock for these young boys and girls to find hope and meaning where it may seem hopeless and lonely.

It is a challenge for these young boys and girls to develop a relationship with God as their Rock, if they do not have a relationship with someone right here, right now to help show them the way.

When Jesus called God, *Abba*, which is something akin to, “*Daddy*” it was something very different than a remote God somewhere in the universe. I realize that not all fathers were good fathers to their children and to call God Father or *Abba* is difficult for those especially who were abused by their dads or stepdads.

When this happens, we pray for healing and reconciliation whenever that is possible. True forgiveness and healing can be a difficult process taking whatever time is needed for the caterpillar to emerge as a butterfly.



We cannot hurry the process and we need to wait for whatever needs to happen, and allow for whatever it is to emerge in its own time. When we force things prematurely, it can cause irreparable damage instead of letting go and letting God.

So the 64,000 dollar question is, “What is it in your life, that you need to wait and trust that all shall be well? When things don’t always go our way we can rely on this verse to help us through from Romans 8:28: *“And we know that God causes*

all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to God's purpose."

May we learn to trust and to wait that all things work together for good for those who love God and to those who are called according to God's purpose. This is a promise if we simply trust and wait on God, who will keep us grounded and centered through troublesome and chaotic times.

Let us prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Communion with a favorite hymn for many of us, "Hymn of Promise". Take note that there is a waiting of one thing or another in each verse of this hymn, that makes this so fitting in our waiting on the things of God.

Hymn of Preparation # 707

"Hymn of Promise"

Final Note from Pastor Matthias:

It has been both a joy and a privilege to share in ministry with you all. Even in the midst of a pandemic, we found ways to connect even though I would have appreciated the opportunity to connect with more of you. These two years have flown by here at Aldersgate UMC and thank you from the bottom of my heart for your love, care and understanding as I return to my family in the Longmont, Colorado area. I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers as I hope I will be in yours as I take a ½ time appointment in retirement to Lyons, Colorado, just 12 to 15 minutes away from our house in Longmont. **Prayer:** Oh gracious God, may we continue to grow in grace and wisdom as we strive to be disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ. May we continue to dream like Jesus in bringing the *kingdom of God* to earth and we may do just that with God as our Rock!

Grace, peace & harmony,

Matthias