

Open Your Heart

INTRODUCTION

“Open wide your hearts” pleads the apostle Paul in the first text for this series. And of course, that is how we want to live—wide open, embracing the possibilities, going for the gusto, seizing the day, and any other cliché that we can think of. Yet there is also a risk in living that way. We are vulnerable, might be taken advantage of, and liable to be hurt. Not to mention all the circumstances that get in the way of living with an open heart. Maybe closing off is a safer way to live in these tumultuous days. Maybe protecting ourselves is the smarter way to be.

Yet, there is that call, that invitation to go deeper, open wider, to taste and see that the Lord is good as the psalmist tells us (*Psalms 34:8 NRSV*). This Ordinary Time Worship Series invites us to consider how we live open-heartedly in a risky world and at a contentious time. Does opening our hearts mean being more naïve or wearing rose-colored glasses in the face of hard truths? Whether we’re talking about love of God or love of neighbor or even love of country (the US Independence Day celebration happens during this series), we are invited to live into reality with a hope for kin-dom values and the promise of eternity. It is not always easy to be a person of faith, but we come closer to Christ when we open our hearts.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – In Sorrow and Rejoicing

June 23, 2024

[2 Corinthians 6:1-13](#)

Color – Green

PLANNING NOTES

As we enter this three-week stretch focusing on Paul’s second letter to the church in Corinth, we also focus on what I think is one of the key questions of Ordinary Time; namely, how do we live our faith day after day after day? Paul certainly seems to address this question in his missive to the Corinthian Christians, but I would hazard a guess that the Corinthians found his answer as hard then as we do now. *Open your heart*. Please, Paul, anything but that!

I wonder how many of our congregants might be sitting in the pew thinking the same thing. Please, Pastor, anything but that! As Paul indicates, opening your heart means being open to all manner of censure, criticism, and persecution. Opening your heart means trusting God’s grace and maintaining integrity in a world of distrust and division. That’s some daunting, scary stuff to hand to congregants in the first century and today.

So, when planning worship, consider how you prepare the congregation to receive the proclamation of the Word with receptive and willing hearts. Sing the heart songs that have informed their faith for years or even generations. Fill the altar with familiar art and symbols that point to God at work among the gathered body. Invite a layperson to share a brief testimony about the impact maintaining an open heart has had on his/her life. Remind the church of God’s faithfulness to them and how they’ve witnessed God’s grace in their midst in the last year.

Moreover, consider incorporating a simple prayer practice following the sermon. You might invite those gathered to sit with a couple of questions that invite them to apply Paul's words to their own lives. Or you might supply paper hearts and pens and invite congregants to write one area of their lives where they want God to help them open their hearts. Perhaps they might fill the offering plates with those hearts as they're passed or come forward and attach the hearts to a poster or a piece of netting. Imagine what it might look like to add hearts of different colors over the three weeks of this series. However you choose to approach this Sunday and this series, find ways that are appropriate to your context to make Paul's call to open our hearts real and accessible and meaningful to your congregation.

PREACHING NOTES

How do you accept the grace of God in vain? That seems like an odd thing for Paul to ask, don't you think? I mean, grace is grace, right? All the power, all the effect, all the working is in God's hands and not ours. At least that is how we understand it. Our job is simply to receive. We just open up our hands and grace pours in. That's how it works, isn't it?

Well, Paul has a different understanding, at least when it comes to the Corinthian church. And we have to admit that this bunch is atypical when it comes to representing the church today. I mean, they were struggling to get along with one another; there were feelings of superiority; there were questionable intimate relationships and some challenging theology undergirding it all. Nothing like any churches today. ... Moving on.

What does he mean with this plea to not accept the grace of God in vain? The word he uses here – and elsewhere, even about his own ministry (Galatians 2:2, for example, or I Thessalonians 2:2 and 3:5) is *kenon*, which can be translated as *vain or empty*. "Don't let your faith be empty," Paul is saying to the Corinthian church. Don't let this gift not bear fruit. Let there be some evidence of your faith in how you live in community, how you engage with the world around you.

Note that he isn't saying you must earn faith; it is a gift. But it is a gift that works in you and works through you. There are signs; there is evidence, says Paul; there is fruit when faith is not empty. Accepting the gift in vain means nothing is done with it, nothing internal and nothing external. Just nothing. Emptiness. Grace is transforming. Grace is fruit-producing. But it is a partnership. That's the tricky part of this relationship. The giver of grace chooses to work with you rather than in spite of you. God chooses to invite you rather than overwhelm you. We can debate the cliché and whether God is the co-pilot or pilot, but either way, there is a seat for you too.

"Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. There is no need to wait," says Paul. Effort can be expended right now; hope can be lived; grace can be full. Right now. As evidence, Paul offers his own life, not as a boast, but as a sign that grace is at work in him and through him. But the road has not been easy. Grace does not make life simple or comfortable. If anything, it makes it more complicated and difficult. Yet, that is where grace is made full, where life is embraced. It is in the difficulties, in the heartaches, as well as in the joys and celebrations – in sorrow and in rejoicing – that grace is made manifest in individuals and the community of faith. When we rally around one another, when we enter into the hardships of another, when we endure, then grace abounds.

So, then, how do we activate this grace? How do we ensure that we have not accepted God's great gift of grace in vain? Paul's advice is simple and enormously difficult. We open our hearts. We risk loving and being vulnerable. We open ourselves to the possibility of being hurt so that we can approach the possibility of knowing joy. We reach out to connect with another person, risking being rejected so that we can also embrace the possibility of relationship. We share Christ, maybe with words, as we tell our story wrapped up in his story. But more often, and usually first, we share Christ by how we live in relationship with neighbors and strangers and loved ones all. We rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. The grace in our lives is most full when it comes out in relationship, when we open our hearts to those around us and trust in the abundance of God's grace.

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Call to Worship

Beloved, when sorrow and hardship abound and events across an ocean and down the block shake our resolve and make us question what good the good news is evening doing, God calls to us...

Open your heart.

When fear and misinformation infiltrate our relationships, and we don't know who to trust or how to do the next right thing, God calls to us...

Open your heart.

When joy overflows, and we witness the fruit of grace all around us, transforming our lives and our communities into places of connection and flourishing, God calls to us...

Open your heart.

May this time of worship be for each of us a time to listen to God's call to open our hearts and accept the divine invitation to say yes to the work of grace in us, among us, and all around us.

God, we open our hearts to receive your gift of grace, knowing you hold us securely in the palm of your hands that we might have the courage to live in vulnerable community with you and one another. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.

Opening Prayer

Holy God,

we extol and honor you for who you are.

We praise you for your faithfulness

and for your tender mercies

that are renewed every morning.

We exalt you, Sovereign One,
for every blessing of yesterday,
the gift of this day,
and the promises of our tomorrows.
Grant us an enduring faith
as we strive against oppression and despair.
Endow us with contagious joy
that uplifts the downtrodden
and inspires hope in you.
Increase in us
the faith and courage of the prophets,
the love of Jesus, and
the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

In your majestic name we pray, **Amen.**

Written by the Rev. Dr. Renee C. Jackson, Southeast Area Minister for the Michigan Conference, UCC, from "God of Awe and Glory." Posted on the United Church of Christ's Worship Ways website. http://www.ucc.org/worship_worship-ways. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/search/label/Proper%208%20B>.

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, hear our prayer. There is pain and there is sorrow, there are broken relationships and broken hearts. Sometimes we are the cause of those things. We have caused pain. We have broken the relationship. Sometimes we are simply a part of them – we are the ones who suffer, we are the ones who are broken. So we ask for your forgiveness, and we ask for your healing. Beyond that, we ask that you would help us turn from our former selves to the persons you have created us to be, full of mercy and grace and love. Through Christ, who is our example, we pray. Amen.

Written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, "Hold Fast to What Is Good." Used with permission. Posted at <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/prayer-of-confession/>.

Benediction

Children of God, today is the day of salvation! May you go from this place carried by the grace and peace of the Triune God who holds you, surrounds you, and keeps you as we learn to love God, neighbor, self, and all creation in our sorrow and in our rejoicing. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – In Need and Abundance

June 30, 2024

[2 Corinthians 8:7-15](#)

Color – Green

PLANNING NOTES

If last week was about the call to open our hearts, this week is about putting your money where your mouth is. Or more accurately, where your heart is. And it's not just about money. It's about resources—our time, talents, gifts, and, yes, money. But, in typical Paul fashion, we can't just give—our heart needs to be in the right place when we give. Giving is an expression of a heart open to grace and to loving God and neighbor.

In the final verses of this week's scripture, Paul talks about the present abundance of the Corinthians and the need of the Macedonian churches, as well as the balance and reciprocity between the communities. So often, we have no problem identifying our areas of need, but what if part of worship this week is naming your congregation's assets? Do you have someone who excels at baking pies, building ramps, or managing spreadsheets? Do you have a Sunday school class that loves to throw parties or volunteer with a local school? Where is your church located in the community? What kind of space does your church have? What connections does your church have in the neighborhood? These questions and more are part of asset-based community development, which is a fancy way of saying, "Lead with abundance instead of scarcity." (You can learn more about incorporating asset-based community development into your ministry here: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/good-neighbor-movement-offers-practical-steps-to-engage-with-your-community>).

Consider not just how you can name your assets together in worship, but also offer them up to God as a response to the proclamation. Invite the congregation to open their hearts to discerning their assets and using them to live the good news out in the neighborhood. If you engaged in a prayer exercise using paper hearts last week, do it again! This time, ask congregants to write down one asset—time, gifts, talents, or other resources—that they have to offer God and the community. Then use the sending forth as a moment to commit to supporting one another in offering up the church's abundance to God for God to use in the surrounding community. For as Paul demonstrates, we are called to shore one another up and encourage one another to complete the good work God puts in our hearts to do.

PREACHING NOTES

Wait. Shouldn't this be saved for a stewardship sermon? Isn't that usually when we read this text? And surely, we don't want to talk about giving here in June, do we? Well, Paul does. And come to think of it, so does Jesus. He talked about money all the time. So, a summer stewardship sermon would not be a bad thing. But let's not get ahead of ourselves here. What is Paul's text here in the second letter to the Corinthians really all about?

Well, it is really about taking up a collection. That is undeniable. He is raising money to be sent back to Jerusalem to support the Mother Church, to care for the poor in the capital city. But for Paul, and Jesus, it was never simply about the money. Instead, how followers of Jesus lived out their generosity was a reflection of their faith. This is how Carla Works, New Testament Professor at Wesley Theological Seminary, puts it:

How believers use their resources — time, money, talents, and attention — is a reflection of what they believe about God and God's actions in the world. Furthermore, how those resources are used preaches a message to others. Paul wants the Corinthians' actions to be a reflection of the gospel in which they believe.

Carla Works, "Commentary on 2 Corinthians 8:7-5," Working Preacher, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-13-2/commentary-on-2-corinthians-87-15#:~:text=How%20believers%20use%20their%20resources,gospel%20in%20which%20they%20believe.>

So, last week's text was an invitation to not receive the grace of God in vain. This week, Paul provides a way to let that grace be seen in their lives and announced to the church as a whole. Besides, this is something they are already doing. In verses 10 and 11 of our text today, Paul points out that they are already doing this, already taking up this collection, so why not complete it? Why not see it through?

You can't help but notice something that seems odd or maybe backward. Paul says to the Corinthian church that they "began ... not only to do something but even to desire to do something" (2 Corinthians 8:10). Don't we usually want to do something before we do something? Isn't our doing a result of our wanting to do something? OK, maybe Paul isn't talking about cause and effect, but about how grace works—or should work—or can work. We're back to that open-heart thing. Paul wants us to give, but he wants our hearts in it too, not that the value of our giving is measured by the depth of our desire to give, but that grace is at work in us, evidently at work in us, when our desires match our actions. Paul commended them for their giving, but also for their wanting to give. And he is encouraging them to keep both of them going to the utmost.

Yes, he does recognize the limitations of resources. That's what verse 13 is acknowledging. He is not asking them to bankrupt themselves, but to give what they can, a gift "according to what one has" (v.12). Then there is a hint that too much is too much. Your need in abundance is met by their need in lack. And maybe when the wheel turns and you are lacking, then their abundance will meet your need. Paul is asking for a relationship. We are one in the body of Christ. We share as one in the body of Christ. It's an ideal, we must admit. Yet we strive for it anytime we open our hearts. And whether we have

more than enough or whether we are lacking, we find help and hope in the body, hope in the relationship within the community of faith to whom we have opened our hearts.

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Call to Worship

Beloved, when hope is high, abundance surrounds us, and we bask in the goodness of God's provision, God calls to us...

Open your heart and your hands.

When disaster strikes, need overwhelms the senses, and we carry the weight and worry of a perilous present and unknown future, God calls to us...

Open your heart and your hands.

When we are moved with compassion, our hearts urging us to reach out to support our siblings in Christ, God calls to us...

Open your heart and your hands.

Children of God, as we gather for worship today, listen! God call us to open our hearts and our hands to one another in need and in abundance.

May our worship open our hearts and our hands to one another as we learn to share with one another in all seasons, for we are all one in the Body of Christ. Amen.

Written by Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.

Opening Prayer

Living and faithful Spirit,
the God in whom we live and move and have our being,
the God who is made known in Christ Jesus,
bless us one and all as we wait on you this day.
Please remove from our minds and hearts
whatever impediments hinder worship or dampen our joy.
Increase within us that holy longing for closeness
which can open our lives to fuller delight
and to a deeper commitment.

May our hymns and prayers,
our searching thoughts, and our hearing of the Scriptures,
be an exercise in the holiest love making.
By you, with you and for you, may our lives publish your praise.
In the name of Christ Jesus.

Amen!

Written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on Bruce Prewer's Homepage. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/06/call-to-worship-prayer-proper-8-b.html>.

Prayer of Confession

We fill our lives with the fear of scarcity,
assuming there is not enough money,
time, patience or love.
We turn away when a stranger asks for nourishment,
claiming there isn't enough even for ourselves.

**Forgive us when we doubt your abundance
and ignore the possibilities in what we have been given.**

We often sit with arms crossed and fists clenched,
crying out that you have turned away
and left us empty handed.

**Forgive us when we reject your abundance
and neglect the possibilities in what we have been given.**

We easily give thanks for the good things in life,
turning away from those
which lead us to deeper community
or second-guessing blessings as too good to be true.

Open our eyes to the wonders that surround us.

Help us surrender to the loving embrace that enfolds us.

(Individual prayers of confession)

Words of Assurance

Take comfort:

we, and the whole world with us,
are always embraced in Christ's love.

In Christ, there is always enough. Amen.

From Stone Soup, a liturgy from the Seekers Church: A Christian Community. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/09/confession-always-enough.html>.

Benediction

Children of God, may you go from this place carrying the genuineness of your love in your hearts, blessed by Christ who saves you to open your hands and pour out your love in generosity and compassion with and for your neighbors. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – In Weakness and Strength

July 7, 2024

[2 Corinthians 12:2-10](#)

Color – Green

PLANNING NOTES

“Show no weakness.” It’s a message we get from all sectors of life. From high school football games to courtrooms to closed-door arguments with people we love, we’re taught consciously and subconsciously to show no weakness, no cracks in our armor, no sign that we’re limited or incapable, no inkling that— heaven forbid—we realize we’ve been wrong. And then, here comes Paul writing letters that say things like, “So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Cor 12:9b NRSVUE).

In some ways, Paul invites us to plan worship around a fairly simple idea: opening our hearts to our weakness and God’s strength. And yet, simple as that is to say, what that requires of the worship planner is to invite the gathered body into a space where we practice humility. If you’ve engaged in a prayer practice using paper hearts throughout this series, invite congregants to consider how God is calling them to name and recognize their weaknesses. Have them write down their answers on a heart and bring them forward to the altar or place them in the offering plates. Help your congregation embody what it means to offer God our weaknesses, knowing that God loves us *in*—not *in spite of*—our weaknesses.

Despite how simple it sounds to open our hearts and offer God our weakness, we must also remember that what sounds simple in concept can be quite difficult in execution. *Knowing* what we must do and *actually doing it* are totally different realities. So, how might worship provide the space to be open about the barriers and hardships we face in trying to live as Jesus teaches and shows us to live? Perhaps confession might be a time to confess our sins, yes, but also to tell the truth about our fears and hesitations and the many ways we've been derailed in the journey of faith. Or maybe you can sing the story of faith, including all of the ups and downs so many of us have faced. Pull out a familiar hymn like "Amazing Grace" or "It Is Well With My Soul," and tell the story behind the words (*History of Hymns* articles for both hymns can be found [here](#) and [here](#), respectively). Remind those gathered that when we sing, we join our voices with others who have gone before us, opening their hearts as they lived the life of faith after the example of Christ.

PREACHING NOTES

Robert Fulghum made a bit of a splash some years ago with his book titled *All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. It may have begun as an internet forward, one of those emails that gets picked up and sent again and again. It was a poem of sorts, a list of proverbs about life in its simplest. It was a pretty good list, including things like "Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody." It was a poem that became a book and then became a series of books. Then it was picked up by all sorts of copyists who learned from all sorts of simple sources. Kind of a departure from the simple sayings that began it all.

This third week of our "Open Your Heart" series asks us to consider living with weakness and with strength. It takes an amazing amount of humility to recognize that some of the most important teachings of life are pretty basic and really simple—like faith.

Big leap? Sorry. But I don't think so. The truth is faith is really simple. It's not easy, unfortunately, but it is simple. Love God; love neighbor. Simple. Do as you would have others do to you. Simple. Let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe. Simple.

But not easy. And why is it not easy? Because we don't know how, or we think we know how and don't want to learn. Or we think we used to know and refuse to be taught again. Or we think we should just be able to do it, to live the kind of life we long for without effort, without training and discipline. And maybe we should be able to. But we aren't. We don't. We can't. We don't know enough. Or stuff gets in the way. Irritations distract us. Difficulties derail us. Suffering prevents us.

It is the human condition to suffer, to have things go wrong. How can we be expected to live the kind of life Jesus lived in front of us when stumbling blocks rise in front of us regularly? How can we expect to bask in the glory of God when our wrestling wounds cause us to limp with every step? If only we could live a life free from conflict, free from pain, then we could be the kind of Christian we see in others. Like Paul for instance.

Paul was pushed into a corner; his credentials were being questioned. "Who do you think you are?" That was the question bandied about. Well, actually, it was probably more like, "Who does he think he is?" Because it was done behind his back. His detractors showed up and were trying to tell the new

Christians that Paul wasn't worth listening to, that they were much better at this Christian life thing than he was. He had no special authority, no special powers, no insight into what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

In answer to all of this, Paul had to bandy about his experiences and his knowledge. He had to tell his own story, toot his own horn for a while. "I don't boast," he said, "but if I did, I'd tell you about this and that and the other thing. I don't brag, but if I did, I'd tell you about where I've been and what I've seen." He had to do it, didn't want to, but he did—for a chapter and a half. But just when you might think he had the detractors all cowed, all shamed for besmirching his character, he makes an abrupt shift here in verse seven of chapter twelve. "A thorn in the flesh," he writes, a weakness, a pain, a failing.

Humility was important to Paul, maybe because he struggled with it. Maybe because he knew how important it was. Maybe because he knew that the surest sign of getting off track was losing sight of who was in charge, even of your own life. "To keep from being too elated," too puffed up, too full of himself, "a thorn was given me in the flesh."

What was it? We don't know. Commentators speculate on it still to this day. Some assumed that the Corinthians knew what it was, so he didn't need to mention it. Others say it doesn't matter. Some say it was physical - a disability of some sort, a recurring disease; others claim it was psychological - bouts of depression; some think it was social - the messenger of Satan was a detractor who kept nipping at his heels wherever he went; still others think it was spiritual - a temptation he couldn't shake, a nagging doubt or fear. It doesn't really matter. Insert your own thorn here. Whatever it is that you struggle with, whatever it is that makes you fall short of even your own ideals.

Paul's point here, like his point earlier, is not really to draw attention to himself—despite what it might sound like as you read these verses. He is inviting us to see an opportunity for humility. When you are hurting, when you are weak, that's the moment when you might finally realize that you need help, that you need to learn, that you need something you can't supply for yourself. This thorn in the flesh is a tool, a teaching tool to keep Paul focused on the source of goodness and wholeness and joy in his life. And it isn't himself or his accomplishments. It is the God who saves him, the God he experiences in the life of the community of faith, the God who speaks to him through many voices and in many moments.

Notice too that this thorn doesn't come from God. God doesn't cause suffering to get us to pay attention or to change our ways or our thinking—despite what some loud voices in our world today are trying to tell us. Suffering isn't punishment. But God can use any occasion, any circumstance to help us grow and learn, if we pay attention, if we ask in humility what we could learn.

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Call to Worship

Beloved, when our bodies feel unable and incapable, and the voices all around us disparage and criticize our bodies as weak and worthless, God calls to us...

Open your heart to your weakness and my strength.

When we persist in the false belief that we should and must do everything on our own, never asking for help and persisting in our drive for full independence, God calls to us...

Open your heart to your weakness and my strength.

When we feel shame because we need help, and the deep vulnerability of our needs pierces our hearts, God calls to us...

Open your heart to your weakness and my strength.

Listen! Pay attention! God calls to us in our weakness, not to erase our frailties or bemoan all the things society may tell us we lack, but to empower us within the vulnerability of our humanness, naming us *Beloved* in the fullness of who we are.

May we open our hearts in worship to receive the goodness in our weakness and the power in the strength of God's love for all of God's vulnerable creation. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

Who opens our hearts

to the mysteries of faith in

ordinary and extraordinary moments,

come near to us today.

Make known among us

and within us your strength,

that we might experience

your power that uses what

the powers of this world call weakness

to demonstrate your Almighty love

to all creation.

Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, of what do we boast?

Can we truly say with Paul that we do not boast about ourselves
or our achievements?

Does the danger in such thinking lie in the next step—
the thought that we can do anything, or all things—by ourselves?

**Forgive us the times when we ignore you, O God,
and depend on our own strength to do things our own way.**

Paul talks about power being made perfect in weakness.

**Forgive us for believing
that we have to be hard and domineering
if we want to get ahead in life.**

Paul says that he boasts of his weaknesses
so that the power of Christ may dwell in him.

**Forgive us when we use our power selfishly or aggressively,
ignoring that indwelling, Christ-given power
which frees us to be vulnerable.**

Jesus says “My grace is sufficient for you,
for power is made perfect in weakness.”

Permeate our lives with your grace, Lord,
so that we can affirm with Paul
that we are content with weaknesses for your sake,
and fill us with the knowledge
that it is when we allow ourselves to be empowered by you,
that we are truly strong. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear again the good news: that Jesus’ grace is sufficient for us all—
sufficient for us to be forgiven in his name.

Receive that grace and rejoice in the power to live in his strength.

Thanks be to God!

*Written by Moira Laidlaw, on **Liturgies Online**. <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/06/confession-2-corinthians-12-2-10.html>.*

Benediction

Beloved, go from this place blessed with divine contentment in the deep and beautiful knowledge that in all things, the power of the crucified and resurrected Christ dwells in you. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2024.