



Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks  
 Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church – Asheville, NC  
 Sunday November 6, 2022

*“Recount”*

**Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21**

*I will extol you, my God and Sovereign, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Yahweh, and greatly to be praised; there is no end to God’s greatness.*

*One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.*

*On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*

*Yahweh is near to all who call upon God, all who call upon God faithfully. God fulfills the desire of all who fear God; hearing their cry, and saving them.*

*God watches over all who love God, but all the wicked God will destroy. My mouth will speak the praise of the Yahweh, and all flesh will bless God’s holy Name forever and ever.*

### ***Prayer for the Morning- Audette Fulbright***

Did you rise this morning,  
 broken and hung over  
 with weariness and pain  
 and rage tattered from waving too long in a brutal wind?

Get up, child.

Pull your bones upright  
 gather your skin and muscle into a patch of sun.

Draw breath deep into your lungs;  
 you will need it

for another day calls to you.

I know you ache.

I know you wish the work were done

and you

with everyone you have ever loved

were on a distant shore

safe, and unafraid.

But remember this,

tired as you are:

you are not alone.

Here

and here

and here also

there are others weeping

and rising

and gathering their courage.

You belong to them

and they to you

and together,

we will break through

and bend the arc of justice

all the way down

into our lives.

This is poem...do you feel it? Down deep? The weight of our world and the week of this election lingers in the air and in my heart. The everyday challenge to hold on to hope when so much is so disconnected and so many people are hurting. This poet speaks to the weariness I feel and to the call for each of us to keep showing up.

We got an extra hour of sleep last night. Praise God.

This psalm is a testimonial psalm. This Psalm not only praises the character of God it also recounts and gives reasons for that praise.

This psalm is written as an acrostic with the Hebrew alphabet - a way for the faithful to recall the words by using the familiar order to memorize or rather internalize and repeat the story of the goodness of God that was passed from generation to generation.

I was thinking about any acrostic kind of memorization that I have learned over the years. All I could come up with KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid and L is for the way you look at me..... Not really the story of God's Faithfulness to me and those who have come before me... - I digress.

This Psalm is a reminder that this weary and disjointed space we find ourselves in is not all that different from those who had been in exile, suffered atrocities, lost loved ones and yet were still able to recount the history and the presence of God in and through it all. This recall was what helped them hold on. It provided hope in the midst of despair.

As a people of faith, many times we yield testimony to siblings in the faith who we deem overly emotional. When we override the emotion of our experience and trade it for intellectual fodder and control we miss so much of how God's movement moves inside of us.

We need to make sure that we don't leave the history storytelling to the scholars. We need to place ourselves - our whole selves - in the story of God's providence and reign. The override or bypassing of our emotions is a defense mechanism that can make it very difficult to hold on to hope when things feel hopeless. Our individual and collective stories of faith repeated over and over again from our hearts can be, and are, a life raft in the flood of chaos all around.

What is your testimony? Is there a story you hold onto from your family of birth or family of choice? A story of God's faithfulness or a glimpse into God's presence? One that is so valuable you repeat it so that it doesn't get forgotten?

Many times, when people die, their stories, their histories die with them; our opportunity to connect to the wider story of our ancestors disconnects us. The grief of this can feel so hopeless.

I come from a culture in this country that puts a lot of value in family history. Growing up in Utah, family history is a cornerstone in the faith of my Mormon Siblings. They have invested in creating and maintaining arguably the largest worldwide database on family ancestry. Ancestry.com published in march of 2022 findings that *“more than half (53%) of Americans can’t name all four grandparents – demonstrating a knowledge gap in key information about more recent family history”* let alone generational knowledge and origin stories. Technology is affording us the opportunity to discover, uncover and reclaim the stories from generations before us. My cousin Dennis, along with his wife Deborah, have been tenacious about our family history and have helped us uncover some invaluable treasures relating to the Archuleta and Valdez arm of our family.

## ARCHULETA PHOTOS

Here are some amazing photos of my mom’s family...One of my favorites is the last one that is my grandfather’s handwriting from minutes he took when he was the Clerk of Session at their Presbyterian Church. These photos are treasured and being able to put faces with the incredible stories of life and faith are a source of strength for me and so many others.

Today we celebrate the saints of our lives who have passed on. We light candles in memory of them and celebrate the mark they have made on us individually and collectively. Part of the Latine understanding of death is that there are three deaths: one when your heart stops beating, one when you are buried in the ground, and the last when you are forgotten. This day of remembrance is more than just lighting candles. It is a day to remember and talk about these saints.

## COCO SLIDES

Many of you have seen COCO (**SLIDES**)- an animated movie that includes a song about remembrance...the call from the past to the future to keep the stories alive...even if it uncovers difficult truths... it is a part of who we are.

One of the angels and saints of my family is my aunt Emilie. (**SLIDE**) She was my mom's older sister. She and I shared a unique sense of humor, the love of hair dying, laughing as much as possible, and cooking for those we love.

As one of ten children growing up, most items of clothing were passed down. The one item that was new once a year was shoes. Each child received a new pair of shoes that would hopefully last for a full year. One year, in her younger years, those shoes were my aunt Emilie's prized possession. She loved them so much she spent more time hugging them than wearing them. In fact, she did not wear them. Instead, she wanted to keep them safe, sleeping with them and eventually finding a spot to bury them – yes, bury them. She wanted to make them last as long as possible. Instead, she buried them so well it took some time for everyone to find them when everyone found out they had been buried.

This is one of hundreds of stories from our family. It speaks to so many layers of the experience of my family of origin. That story, its context, and who my aunt was in the world, are so revealing. She came from a home of little means, family everywhere and lots of faith. Her most prized possession was one that I take for granted and yet I have a pair of her shoes I wear often and find joy in the shared steps beyond our earthly experience together. My aunt was fiercely protective of anyone and anything she loved, working hard for everything she had. She never thought of herself any better or any less than others even when she constantly shared her experience of discrimination for her lack of social status and for her race.

I had already decided to include this remembrance of my Aunt Emilie when I was talking to Natalily, our daughter, on Friday about the sermon. Without knowing this she suggested I consider including it. She remembers the story because she has heard it over and over again... generation to generation.

Generational testimony is a powerful way to connect the story of people to their faith. I am so thankful to have this as a part of my family of origin. BUT we are all connected. You may not have a family of origin that is known or that has a history of faith that you can recall. BUT we have one another. We have the opportunity to share our testimonies and the testimony of God's faithfulness over time. Like the Psalmist, we can share over and over again the experience and transformational power of God's Collective Testimony including all the details..

The kind of hope we need is the kind of hope that can actually pull us up out of despair....giving us air in our lungs to stay above the flow of all that is coming at us.

What is your testimony? Who can you share this with? How can we double down on sharing testimonies as a vehicle to move us through these trying times? How can we remember and remind one another of this love and faithfulness that is present in the midst of every struggle and every joy?

Hear these words from the Prophet Amanda Gorman

When our fire can no longer be fueled by fury,

We will be fortified by this faith

Found in the vow, the anthem:

All black lives matter, no matter what!

Black lives are worth living,

Worth defending,

Worth every struggle.

We must stand up for all of us and our aims,

United through protest and pain,

Amplifying women, the LGBTQ community,

and people with disabilities.

Because none of us are free

Until all of us break our chains.

We owe it to the fallen to fight,

But we owe it to ourselves

To never stay kneeling

When the day calls us to stand together.

We envision a land

That is liberated, not lawless;

We create a future

That is free, not flawless.

Over and over, again and again,

We will stride up every mountain side,

Magnanimous and modest.

We will be protected and served

By a force that is honored and honest.

This is more than protest —

It's a promise!

-Fury and Faith



**SHANE SINGS:** *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me*

*I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*All along my pilgrim journey,*

*Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*In my trials, Lord, walk with me.*

*In my trials, Lord, walk with me.*

*When my heart is almost breaking,*

*Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*I want Jesus to walk with me.*

*All along my pilgrim journey,*

*Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*