Love God
Love Others
Share the Good News

SUMMIT CHURCH

Being Jesus Christ to the World

Theme: What is God Thinking?
Making Sense of Suffering and Grief
"Struggling with Suicide"

If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts or the death of a loved one by suicide, please reach out to Pastor Jeff Huber, jeff@summitdurango.org or Jake Forsythe, jake@summitdurango.org and we can connect you with resources and support. You can also call or text 988 or live chat at www.988colorado.com for the suicide support line. You can find our list of recommended counselors at the bottom of our Caring Ministries webpage.

We have a great new way for you to get these Meditation Moments each day directly to your phone. Just text "**med moments**" to **970-426-0700** to receive the **daily Meditation Moment** each morning and start your day grounded in faith and peace.

Weekly Memory Verse:

5 But I trust in your unfailing love.
I will rejoice because you have rescued me. – Psalm 13:5

Meditation Moments for Monday, November 9 – Read **Psalm 31:9-24 and Numbers 11:10-15**. More than 50 psalms are "laments," Hebrew poems that express sadness, depression or fear. These emotions are part of being human, not some shameful sin. For a deeper study, you might read Christian counselor Dwight Carlson's book *Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded? Helping (Not Hurting) Those with Complicated Emotions*. The psalmist described depression, limited vision, humiliation, anger at foes, and panic. The psalmist chose a wise way of handling these feelings, by clinging to trust in a God who is bigger than our pain and hurt.

- In Numbers, we read that Moses asked God to end his life when Israel's constant complaining felt like too much for him to bear—but God didn't grant his wish and had much more for Moses to do. What spiritual choices can you make that will make it easier for you to trust God with your future when things seem to be spinning out of your control?
- In verse 17, the psalmist also prayed, "Lord, don't let me be put to shame." What are some of the internal messages that, perhaps under the pressure of external events, trigger feelings of shame in you? How can you build an identity as God's beloved child that can minimize the destructive effects of shame on your life? This is hard work and may require help from a wise counselor or spiritual director. You can find a link to those recommended by our church in the opening paragraph of today's Meditation Moments.

Prayer: *Lord God, like the psalmist, I want to "be strong and let my heart take courage." Teach me your kind of honest strength. Guide me to build my trust in you as I respond to your call. Amen.*

Tuesday, November 10 – Read **Lamentations 3:16-26 and 31-33.** Lamentations records the feelings of an Israelite, probably the prophet Jeremiah, who was left in Judah (southern Israel) after Babylon's army destroyed Jerusalem and exiled many leading citizens in 586 B.C. You can read about Jerusalem's fall in 2 Kings 25:1-21. The writer was facing "suffering and homelessness," and found it hard to imagine how things would get better in the future.

- One of the great words of the Old Testament, the Hebrew word "*hesed*" in verse 22, is translated as "the faithful love of the Lord." Other English translations use expressions like "steadfast love" or "unfailing love." The writer somehow recalled God's unending love even surrounded by the rubble and smells of a burned, ruined city. Some of the areas around Durango that were hardest hit by the floods of the past two weeks might feel this way. How have you found and held to God's steadfast, unfailing love during awful circumstances?
- Commentator H. L. Ellison wrote in his book *The Old Testament Prophets*, "The 'hope' that the writer expresses here does not spring from denying or minimizing suffering and misery. Rather, these are transformed when the mind is turned to God ... The very fact of awakening to a new day is renewal of God's mercy. Humans have passed safely through the night, a foreshadowing of death." How do you start your day as you come awake? Consider forming a habit of "turning your mind to God" and expressing gratitude for awakening to a new day.

Prayer: *Creator God, thank you for the gift of this new day. Whatever trials or hardships I may face today, let the morning light remind me that your mercies are ever-present with me. Amen.*

Wednesday, November 11 – Read **Romans 8:31-39 and 1 Kings 19:1-4**. In 1 Kings we read that Elijah, great prophet that he was, was so terrified by Queen Jezebel's threats that he asked God to take his life. He felt cut off from the divine love and power that

had upheld him for so long. The apostle Paul, too, knew how our feelings can ebb and flow. God's love, he said, was not just a feeling, but a settled fact: "Who will separate us from Christ's love? ...I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- The *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* says, "'Height' and 'depth' may simply personify the heavens above and Hades (the realm of death) below. Other scholars suggest that they are astrological terms ... most first-century Greeks feared the inevitable power of Fate working through the stars. For Paul, it is not fate, the stars, or angelic powers that determines believers' lives; rather, he writes in verses 31 to 34, it is Jesus' faithfulness that does." In a world where we often feel "out of control," how can trusting that God is ultimately in control give you the peace and security to live a contented life?
- Scholar N. T. Wright wrote in his commentary *Romans for Everyone*, "Look around at the many things that threaten to separate you from the powerful love seen through the cross and resurrection, and learn that they are all beaten foes. Learn to dance and sing for joy to celebrate God's victory. The end of Romans 8 deserves to be written in letters of fire on the living tablets of our hearts." Why not print today's text and put it somewhere (bathroom mirror, over your desk, refrigerator door) where you'll see it often? Spend time learning these powerful words by memory.

Prayer: *Gracious God, after trying to explain your goodness, Paul just broke into this great exclamation of praise. There's lots I struggle to understand, but I ask you to give me a heart of praise anyway. Amen.*

Thursday, November 12 – Read **2 Corinthians 4:6-9 and 16-18**. One reason Paul wrote 2 Corinthians was that many of the church members had turned against him in a church that he himself had started! It was a big disappointment, on top of years of other struggles he wrote about in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 as he traveled and shared Jesus in the Roman world. Yet he was sure that, as long as he stayed focused on God's eternal world, nothing in this world could crush or destroy him.

- Paul's description of himself as a "clay pot" in verse 7 did not show a lack of self-worth. It merely recognized the abiding truth for all of us that God is God and we are not. How can learning to see yourself as a "clay pot" help to put you in a better position to avoid the blows to your ego that can feel so crushing?
- In today's text, Paul spoke of focusing on things unseen rather than things seen, on things eternal rather than things that don't last. Similarly, in Colossians 3:2-3, he wrote, "Think about the things above and not things on earth. You died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." That wasn't abstract theology. Paul saw himself as already, though not yet fully, a citizen of God's world. How much do you focus only on the "here and now"? What helps you grow toward seeing that your real life is safe, hidden with Christ in God?

Prayer: *Lord God, some days all I can see are my failures, my setbacks, and my pain. On those days especially, I really need your grace to show me life as you see it, to show me your reality. Amen.*

Friday, November 6 – Read **Isaiah 40:26-31**. This passage spoke to Israelites weary from years of exile and who now faced a long, hard trip on foot from Babylon back to Israel. They were tempted to think God didn't see their hardships. The prophet directing his readers to their God, who created and whose understanding is beyond human reach. He invited them, and us, to trust where we don't understand, to "hope in the Lord" for renewed strength, and through faith to "fly up on wings like eagles," to "walk and not be weary."


Can you recall times when you have felt like the Israelites in Isaiah 40:27: "My way is hidden from the Lord; my God ignores my predicament"? Are there areas of your life that feel that way to you right now? In what ways can you reconnect with the Creator who "doesn't grow tired or weary" of caring for you? If you ever feel desperate, that "ending it" is the only answer, get help! You can call or text 988 anytime for support, or chat at www.988colorado.com.


Isaiah wrote in verse 28, "His understanding is beyond human reach." Our need to control, our challenge with "letting go," can keep us stuck in the very problems we seek to escape. God calls us to "let go" and trust him because "his understanding is beyond human reach." How can trusting, really trusting, in a God who's vastly wiser than you are renew your strength by setting you free from the need to know all the answers?

Prayer: *Lord God, when I feel you are absent from my life, that you don't care, help me trust you—and wait. When I can't seem to love myself in a healthy way, help me trust that you love and value me. Amen.*

Saturday, November 14 – Read **Psalm 46:1-7.** Disasters like floods, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and tornados painfully remind us that what we call "solid ground" can, in fact, fall apart. Every day, health problems, broken relationships, financial crises, and tragic deaths cause the "world" of individuals and families to fall apart. How do we "hold things together" when our world is falling apart? The psalmist knew how: "God is our refuge and strength, a help always near in times of great trouble."


Verse 4 might sound like a travel guide, until we realize that no river flows through the earthly Jerusalem. Then we sense that "God's city" isn't one limited to earthly location, but an image of all God's people. The river points us back to the creation story in Genesis 2:10 and forward to God's ultimate victory in Revelation 22:1-3. What ways have you found helpful in letting the river of God's steadfast love pour energy, comfort and power into your life? How can you ground your spiritual life firmly in the world of this psalm, where "God is in that city ... it will never crumble ... where God will help ... when the morning dawns"?

Prayer: *Lord God, when my heart fills with joy, please, receive my praise (Psalm 100). When I'm in the valley of the shadow and my heart breaks, please, be ever near*

me (Psalm 23). When I'm anxious and afraid, please, protect me and cover me with your wings (Psalm 91). When I stumble, please, forgive and restore me (Psalm 51). When I'm angry at your perceived neglect, please, remind me to trust your steadfast love (Psalm 13). Amen.