



Wednesday Prayer

12th Sunday after Pentecost – Listen

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. Isaiah 51:1-4

Listen. Look to the past. Listen.

The prophet Isaiah is speaking to the faithful people who are trying, who are seeking to do what is right and just. He encourages them to look back to the promises fulfilled through Abraham and Sarah, the rock and quarry from which they came. And to go forward listening.

It's a very noisy time we're in right now. Racial trauma illuminated for many who have been unaware and heightened for many who live this reality every day. Political divisions loudly played out in the news and on social media 24/7. And daily briefings of the worldwide pain of a pandemic and the uncertainty we have a hard time living with.

I like to think I pursue righteousness and seek the Lord's help each step of the way. But sometimes I may get self-righteous in my conversations with people and forget to really listen. I have a t-shirt I've worn for years that shows an old-fashioned microphone and the words "Speak out." This has been one of my go-to social justice shirts. And then I realized my voice may not be what is needed in many situations. Maybe I'm being called to listen. To listen and learn from those with lived history of racial trauma, those with lived history of the trauma of sexual violence, those who differ from me politically. What will my listening reveal? Last week I listened as a survivor of sexual violence shared her story with me. She shared about all the work she's done toward healing – working with a psychologist, starting her own non-profit to prevent her trauma from happening to others – and she shared that there was still something missing in her healing. And she realized she had rejected God for many years and has now reconnected with her church. We're talking about how we can partner to bring training to the Confirmation students and adults at her church. And, I'll be connecting with the pastor about learning how to be a trauma-informed congregation*, taking steps to help prevent sexual violence and provide healing. Step 1: Listen.

God of healing, quiet the noise around us so that we may listen attentively and seek to do your will, not our own. Guide our work together as your faithful people seeking justice and healing for all those in need. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

*To learn about trauma-informed congregations, see Session II of [My Neighbor is Not for Sale](#).