Teach Me Your Way, O Lord

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Psalm 86:1-13

[1] Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and
needy. [2] Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who
trusts in you. You are my God; [3]be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry
all day long. [4] Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my
soul. [5] For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to
all who call on you. [6] Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of
supplication. [7] In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.
[8] There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like
yours. [9] All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you,
O Lord, and shall glorify your name. [10] For you are great and do wondrous
things; you alone are God. [11] Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in
your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. [12] I give thanks to
you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name for
ever. [13] For great is your steadfast love towards me; you have delivered my
soul from the depths of Sheol.

1. The Lesson that I Learned

Today is a very special day for me because I began to worship the Lord with you on July 3 last year and today is the last Sunday in June. I can't believe that it has already been one year. Time certainly flies fast. I want to thank everyone for your support and love. I am also grateful for the lessons that I learned from you.

One of important lessons that I've learned from one of parishioners is the importance of family relationship. As you know, this year I was out of town a few times. I went to Guatemala, Los Angeles, and Fort Lauderdale, FL. I asked Christine whether she wanted to go with me. She said no. I am planning to go to Russia in October for a mission trip. Once again, I will go by myself. In the past, I insisted her to go with me, but now I consider her as my boss and follow her decision because someone taught me a lesson, "happy wife, happy life."

2. David Learned from the Lord

When we read Psalm 86, we find that David has learned a very important lesson from God. He has learned through his painful experiences that God's way allows him a happy life. Today's scripture Psalm 86 is entitled

"**A prayer of David**." The scripture does not say when David wrote this prayer nor what circumstance he was in. Yet, it is clear that he was in great need of God's help. David begins to pray, "**Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy**." The Living Bible translates it, "**Bend down and hear my prayer, O Lord, and answer me, for I am deep in trouble**." The Bible does not explain why David says such an urgent prayer.

One commentary suggests that this prayer was made when King David lost his son born to Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 12:15-16 says, "**After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground**." King David fasted and asked God for mercy and begged to save the baby's life. However, 2 Samuel chapter 12 says God struck the child and the baby died. We can imagine how David may have felt at the death of his baby.

How would you and I respond to this kind of situation? Personally, I would be depressed. When I heard about Gean Richards' passing two Sundays ago, I was so sad. Well, I would say I was upset. I felt like God had taken Gean from our hands. Gean was a very supportive person and I felt like God had taken her too soon. She would have been 81 years old this Friday. But in the case of David, even in the loss of his son, he does not complain at all. David trusts the Lord and affirms his faith by saying, "**For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you**." We know that God is forgiving and abounding in love, but how could David make sense of this kind of situation when he says God is good? Yet David concludes in verse 8, saying, "**There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours**." Even in the midst of his son's loss, David remembered that God was greater than even the most difficult situations and that God's favor was with him even in these suffering times.

3. My First Year at Swift Memorial

When I reflect on this past year, I can't thank God enough for all the blessings I've received at Swift Memorial. Although the Staff Parish Relations Committee gave me a lot of credit, I truly believe that God deserves all the credit for everything I have done this past year. Of course, many of you and Christine deserve part of the credit for all the good that we've been able to do. But without the Lord, we could not have done anything.

When we talk about miracles, we often think about extraordinary things happening. And yet, many times miracles come in all shapes and sizes. I realized that we have had many miracles this past year. According to the *Book of Discipline*, our church was supposed to go through training related to a cross racial and cross cultural appointment. But one year later, I can't think of one incident where we had a serious issue. Another miracle is in my daily routine. Every morning when I get up, I walk around the Activity Center and go to church to pray and then I walk the Canal. Throughout the past year, God has given me a lot of clarity and vision for my preaching and our church ministry. Even in the face of difficulty, God has consistently calmed me and helped me not to worry or fear.

My personality has also changed since coming to our church. As I told you before, I'm naturally very shy and introverted. But God has changed me to be outgoing and proactive in many of the areas that I wasn't before. People often say that our personalities do not change over time. But I truly feel like God has made me different over the course of this past year. I believe that it has been a miracle from God. When I reflect on this past year, I can see that God helped me to be passionate about our church and ministry. Another important thing was that I was able to do many things out of love and not out of a sense of obligation or duty. I was able to enjoy whatever I had to do and was able to keep a positive attitude. I felt a deep sense of community with our church families and our neighbors. These were all small miracles that I give thanks to God. As David says in verse 10, I want to say, "**You are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God**."

4. For My Second Year

From next Sunday, my second year will begin. I wonder what will be happening inside and outside the church. You may not have any expectations, but I am very excited about the unknown future. In verse 11, King David prays, "**Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth**." David realizes in the death of the baby that he had made a big mistake and turned his heart to follow after God. We see similar situations throughout the Bible. Moses prays in Exodus 33:13, "**If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people**." After finishing to build the temple King Solomon prays in 1 Kings 8:36, "**then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live**." Through all situations, these forefathers in the Bible show us that they really wanted to follow after the Lord. There are times when our

focus and hearts may go in the wrong direction. But God continues to follow after us and help us to turn around and follow after him once again.

5. Conclusion

When we make an important decision, we tend to think my way or your ways are the best choice. But after David lost his son, he learned God's way is the best and asked the Lord to teach him God's way. When we reflect on our past, we see the miracles and times when we followed God's ways and we were really happy. As we continue to follow after God, we are reminded to seek to know God better and to understand God's ways for our lives.

6. Application

It is a miracle to think that about 2 million people lived in the wilderness for 40 years during the Exodus. Despite all the trouble during that time, God continues to show through his faithfulness that nothing is impossible. Exodus 13:21-22 says, "**By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people**." Exodus 16 tells us God fed his people with manna and quail and took care of them in the wilderness for 40 years. Like the Israelites in the Exodus, we are reminded that we are also sojourners in this life as well. Our journey is unpredictable. However, as long as we follow God's way, God will continue to empower us and guide us to follow after Him and His kingdom.

How can we know God's way? Jesus teaches his disciples in Matthew 6:33-34, **"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."** Jesus teaches his disciples to seek God's will and His kingdom. If we put it in today's terms, we can say, "See everything from God's perspective." We do not know what challenges are waiting for us. But as today's scripture says, in all situations, God is our Lord. Despite difficult situations there is nothing to fear because God is in control. And although there may be many things that may come up, we are reminded that there is nothing to worry about. God goes before us, walks with us, and teaches us his ways. Our daily miracles and God's faithfulness throughout our lives remind us that God loves us and God wants us to give God the glory. We give thanks to God for his steadfast love and glorify His name. Amen.