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*Rev. Dr. Frances "Toni" Draper, Pastor*

***LENTEN BIBLE STUDY***

**March 19-April 16, 2019**

*Based on the book, Plenty Good Room: A Lenten Bible Study Based  
on African American Spirituals by Lewis V. Baldwin*

**LESSON ONE**

**Every Time I Feel The Spirit: The Mountaintop Experience (Matthew 17:1-9)**

1. African American **spirituals** have been called the earliest sacred **music** of the United States.
2. A **spiritual** is a song that combines the **melodies, rhythms, and tones** of the **West African** culture with the **Christian** faith.
3. The **Lenten** season reminds us that Jesus' life was immersed in **prayer** and **meditation**.
4. The **disciples**, who were with Jesus on the mountaintop, experienced a **communal theophany**.
5. A **theophany** is a **manifestation** or **appearance** of God to a person.
6. The **transfiguration** of Jesus on the mountain revealed the **glory** of God.
7. Jesus was not just a **healer, teacher, or prophet**, He is the **Messiah**, the Son of God.  
(Matthew 16:16)
8. **Moses** and **Elijah** both had mountaintop experiences with God (Exodus 19:16-20; I Kings 19:11-18)
9. The voice of God declared three things to the disciples:
  - i. Who Jesus is and His **divine relationship** with God
  - ii. That He was **pleased** with Jesus
  - iii. The **command** to **listen** to Jesus
  - iv. Lent is a time to **pray, meditate**, and spend more time in **sacred spaces** to hear from the Lord and **draw closer** to Him. (John 15:1-10)
10. Transfiguration events **inform** and **facilitate** our transformation into more **disciplined** and **empowered** disciples of Jesus the Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

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*"Where lives are changed, hurts are healed, hope is restored, and Jesus is Lord!"*

## LESSON TWO

### **This Lonesome Valley: A Time of Temptation (Matthew 4:1-4)**

1. Geographically, **valleys** are extensive, flat and relatively low **regions** situated between uplands, hills, or mountains.
2. Figuratively, **valleys** may be periods or situations in our lives where we feel **gloom** or **lonely**. (Psalm 23:4)
3. The Hebrew word for “wilderness” or “desert” is **midbar**, meaning “**without word**,” a place where no other **human voice** can be heard.
4. A **wilderness** is an uncultivated region, as of a **forest** or **desert**, primarily inhabited only by **wild animals**.
5. The **Middle Passage** was a wilderness and lonesome valley for **Africans** stolen from their homelands and transported into **chattel slavery**.
6. Jesus was led into the **wilderness** by the **Holy Spirit** to be tempted of the **devil**. (Matthew 4:1)
7. Jesus’ **test** in the **wilderness** is also our example for how we should handle **wilderness** or **valley** experiences in **life**. (Matthew 4:1-11; James 1:2-4)
  - a. Jesus didn’t try to **justify** Himself (Romans 5:1; Romans 8:30)
  - b. He didn’t give into **temptation** (1 Corinthians 10:13)
  - c. He **resisted** and **refuted** the devil with the **Word of God** (James 4:7)
8. Some practical ways to resist **temptation**:
  - a. **Praise** and **worship** – focusing on God rather than on ourselves. (Psalm 95)
  - b. **Scriptures** – **meditating** on, **memorizing**, and **speaking** them aloud. (Psalm 119:11)
  - c. **Prayer** – **humbling** ourselves and **crying out** to the Lord (Mark 14:38)
  - d. **Accountability** – **sharing** with others who are **spiritually mature** (Proverbs 27:17; James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

## LESSON THREE

### **Bow Down on Your Knees: A Time of Repentance**

1. The Greek word for **repentance** is **metanoia**: a change of **mind** and a change of **heart**.
2. **Humbling** ourselves before God with a **broken** spirit and a **contrite** heart leads to repentance. (Psalm 51)
3. Even in the **wilderness**, the devil **tempted** Jesus to **prove** Himself to be the **Son** of God, instead Jesus **humbled** Himself. (Matthew 4:1-11)
4. It is at the **high** points in our lives, where we can be **tempted** to take the **credit** for ourselves, but all of the **glory** belongs to **God**. (Matthew 4:5-6; Romans 12:3)
5. God’s **decisions** are not based on what the current **circumstances** might be, but on His eternal **omniscience**. (Isaiah 55:8-9)
6. We shouldn’t try to **test** God by participating in **risky** behavior. (Matthew 4:7)
7. We should seek to do **justly**, love **mercy**, and walk **humbly** with our God. (Micah 6:8)

**LESSON FOUR**  
**Plenty of Good Room: Preparing the Guest Room**  
**(Mark 14:12-16)**

1. The spiritual, “**Plenty Good Room**,” spoke of the anticipated **blessings** in Heaven, however it was also a song of **protest** over the **unequal** and **segregated** treatment of Africans in the U.S.
2. Although Jesus knew that **Judas** was His **betrayal**, He still made **room** at the table and shared the **Passover** meal with him. (**Mark 14:17-21**)
3. **Passover** and the Festival of **Unleavened Bread** combine to make an eight-day event, commemorating the **escape** of the **Israelites** from the **oppression** of slavery in Egypt. (**Leviticus 23:4-8**)
4. God makes **room** for us despite our daily **betrayal**. His desire is that we would make room in our **heart** and in our **lives** for Him. (**Revelation 3:20**)
5. A heart that is full of **unforgiveness**, **hatred**, or **anger** cannot make room for God.
6. Rather than just having a seat at the table, **transformation** and a new **dispensation** are the goals. (**Mark 14:22-26**)
7. **Transformation** is changing in **form**, **appearance**, **nature**, or **character**.
8. **Dispensation** is a system of **divine order**, **appointed** or **arranged** by God.
9. No longer was the Passover meal just a ceremony of **remembrance** of freedom from **enslavement**, it is now **Holy Communion** for the Christian, a meal of **remembrance** of the **sacrifice** Jesus Christ made for us on the **cross**, and a **promise** of things to come in the **Kingdom** of **Heaven**. (**I Corinthians 11:23-25**)

**LESSON FIVE:**  
**Ain't a Dat Good News? Shouldering the Cross**

*Rev. Nicole Batey, Instructor*

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ is not:
  - a. a list of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to be followed.
  - b. a religious \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to be managed.
  - c. for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_: (Luke 4:16-21 NIV)
  - a. is proclaimed to the \_\_\_\_\_;
  - b. is \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_;
  - c. is recovery of \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_;
  - d. sets the \_\_\_\_\_ free;
  - e. is the proclamation of the acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. the \_\_\_\_\_ of scripture by \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Wherever Jesus went, He proclaimed the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Luke 4:42-44)
4. Some of the places where Jesus taught and preached:
  - a. From a \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 13:1-2)
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ – His hometown (Matthew 13:53-58)
  - c. Someone's \_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 3:20-21)
  - d. Around \_\_\_\_\_ and the surrounding \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 7:11-17)
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ (John 4)
5. Because of Jesus the Christ, we now have \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.  
(John 14:12-14; Ephesians 1:3-13)
6. Every \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus is called to the \_\_\_\_\_. (Matthew 28:16-20)
7. Whoever wants to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ must be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Matthew 16:24)
8. \_\_\_\_\_, a man from \_\_\_\_\_, had to \_\_\_\_\_ the cross for Jesus.  
(Matthew 27:32)
9. Shouldering our cross refers to the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ we face, as well as the personal \_\_\_\_\_ we make for the sake of the Good News.
10. How should we shoulder our cross?
  - a. With \_\_\_\_\_ (John 16:33; James 1:2-4)
  - b. With \_\_\_\_\_ (I Thessalonians 5:18)
  - c. With the \_\_\_\_\_ in mind (James 1:12)
  - d. With \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 4:11-13)