

Weekly Lenten Devotional – Week 5: Am I prioritizing wholeness?

Hello Church Family,

I pray the peace of our Savior Jesus Christ meets you this day just as you are. I hope as you enter into the fifth week of Lent you have encountered God's presence in meaningful ways. Our scripture for this week, Psalm 126 reminds us about the Holy One's powerful ability to restore our lives.

Psalm 126 points us to remember when God has "restored [our] fortunes," and encountered our "mouth[s] filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy" (Psalm 126:1-2). Do you have a memory like this where you saw God restore your life in such a transformative way? Perhaps take a few minutes to think of a memory and write it down.

A time I experienced God's restoration was about six years ago, around this time of year. My mother had a serious medical problem and we weren't sure if she was going to make it or not. It took many doctors visits, trips to specialists, and weeks of discovery, to figure out what we needed to do to get my mother well.

Unfortunately, the care my mother needed wasn't available where she lived and due to the nature of her treatments, she couldn't drive herself. So, I spent many days driving my mom back and forth from appointments. This was a difficult time for everyone in my family, but especially my mom. Many tears were shed.

I knew God had my mom in the palm of God's hands no matter the outcome of her treatments, but I was not ready to let go of her yet. I was pregnant with my first child and hoped desperately my mom would get to be a part of my daughter's life. Miraculously – with the help of some wonderful doctors who God gifted with amazing talents – my mother got well. She was healing and being restored to us.

In August of 2018 she got to meet her first grandchild and my dreams of restoration became a reality. "The Lord [had] done great things for us" (Psalm 126:3). I felt like I was dreaming as our family's fortunes were "restored" (Psalm 126:1) and I enjoyed many moments of laughter and joy watching my mom enjoy time with her granddaughter.

I pray over this next week of Lent you can remember a time when God “restored [your] fortunes,” just like you were “dream[ing]” (Psalm 126:1). These memories are important to bring up from time to time because they can help us trust God will restore our fortunes in the future too. I don’t know how you need restoration in your life today, where you need a little more joy or laughter, but I do know we worship a God who will turn “tears” into “shouts of joy” (Psalm 126:5).

So, I encourage you to bring up a memory or two, but also ponder these Lenten questions: Are you prioritizing the things that will bring you healing and wholeness in your life? Are you open to God’s restoration and making room for it in your life? Reflect on a time where you have seen God’s active restoration, then think about if there was any practice or ritual which encouraged that restoration in your life.

May you be able to see the places in your life where God has brought healing as you seek to remember where God has restored your fortunes. May you witness the Holy One’s grace in your life, who turns our weeping into laughter and laughter into joy that plants seeds of restoration, justice, and abundance for all. Amen.

Still growing in grace,

Rev. Kristen Perkins Glover