LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH Garner, NC 6318

No Napping God

In the name…

Let us pray…

There is a book called
The Napping House” which I read to my students. It is the typical grandma is sleeping in the rocking chair I the napping house, a child is on her lap sleeping, a dog is on his lap sleeping a cat is on the dog sleeping, and a mouse is on the cat and a flea is on the mouse. Everyone is sleeping in the Napping House. Well, God is not a Napping God, even though He has been around a long time. He was anything but Napping when He brought the Israelites out of Egypt. He was not Napping when the man with the withered hand encountered Jesus and his hand was healed even though it was the Sabbath, the day designated for God to rest.

The second half of the Napping House story has the flea bite the mouse who bit the cat, who scratched the dog who jumped off the boy who frightened grandma who broke the bed, so not one was sleeping now in the empty house. The flea was the wake up call

God does not need a wake up call. He is never napping and He is there for His people even if it is His day off and was the case for the man with the withered hand. St. Paul in Corinthians describes this as extraordinary power that belongs to God and comes from God. So we can be afflicted. Afflicted means to have pain or suffering. This does not have to be simply physical pain. It could be emotional pain. Miguel’s family in the film Coco were still feeling the effects of pain and suffering from generations before because a hot shot superstar performer suddenly left his family behind. It afflicted Miguel two generations. Yet through the film, we see his family did not abandon their faith nor did God abandon them. He was not napping when the affliction originally occurred, nor was He napping as Miguel pursues his dream. The family was afflicted but not crushed. You may think of times when you were afflicted physically, mentally, or emotionally; and reflecting upon that you realize you were not crushed

We can be perplexed. Completely baffled, very puzzled. She gave him a perplexed look. Many of you know when I have that perplexed look. It usually has something to do with computers or technology. Somehow I will get through it, either just shrug it off, not that important to get all worked up over or seek out expert advice, often from a child or young person. I have the best view during worship or sermonizing and I can see your perplexed looks at times. Hopefully that perplexity is erased by clarity maybe not here, maybe in the car on the drive home, maybe not all and your let it go because it is not worth fretting about. The perplexity the children may have felt may not have been resolved by hearing about gravity. It might come later when they are working as physicists sending rockets into space and defying that same gravity. Miguel was perplexed when he found his musical hero was not the hero he thought he was, but he embraced the one who was the real hero and he was not driven to despair but empowered. Through any of these perplexities know that God was not Napping, He was very much awake and with those who are perplexed. We do not often see ourselves as persecuted. Harassing or oppressive treatment. So we know that children and even adults can bullied which is a form of persecution. We could be harassed when someone wonders why we might not to take advantage of something going on on a Sunday morning, but would rather spend Sunday in worship. On a more worldwide basis we know where Christians still are oppressed. Miguel felt “Oppressed” by his families response to his great great grandfather’s abandonment banning music. Through all forms of harassment and oppression, God is not Napping but very much alive.

We are struck down. That can be physical, an ailment knocks us down, but it can also be indicated by such synonyms as invalidate, annul, disallow. It tells us we need to listen when someone refers to his or her ailments which are very really for her and validate them, not invalidate them. We need to listen to someone’s ideas which might be important and very valid if we would only listen. Miguel felt he was struck down by his family when they forbade music thereby banishing his dream. The disciples thought they were struck down by the death of their Lord and Saviour, were in great affliction over it, perplexed by it, even persecuted by it, but God the very awake God overrode their despair of Christ’s death, took His death and helped them realize the life of Jesus and the Life He gives to them.

As I was watching the morning news today, a celebration of Juneteenth and they said it was a way of bringing out the light in the midst of the darkness of slavery. June 19th 1865 was when the state of Texas abolished slavery and it should be celebrated.

So whether we are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down all are times of darkness. Paul says it is God Who said, “let light shine out of darkness” and we can take this to the bank, “He has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the name…