

“In the Everlasting Arms” -Pastor Elizabeth Coleman Northwest Presbyterian Church

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 11:1-7 Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:24-34

Psalm 33:16-22: “A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save. Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield. Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.”

Sermonette: When God sent the plagues upon the Egyptians during Israel’s enslavement in Egypt, the Israelites felt no effect from the plagues. Although the Israelites were not very far from the blight caused by pestilence, blood and the death of the Egyptians’ firstborns, no harm came to the Israelites. God shielded and protected them, so that even the insects did not cross over into their community to harm them.

Today’s Old Testament reading says “But not a dog shall growl at any of the Israelites — not at people, not at animals, so that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.” (Exodus 11:7)

Do we give God credit for being the amazing God that God is? Our God delivered a multitude of enslaved people from their oppressors through signs and wonders that he enabled his humble servant, Moses, to perform with Aaron as designated speaker. The plagues and pestilence were allowed to go only so far, and they stopped at the border of the Israelite community, because God had promised them protection under the Abrahamic covenant.

We have an even better covenant with God, sealed in the blood of Jesus, whereby we are seated with him in heavenly places. We are enclosed in the “secret place” of the Most High, under the shadow of his everlasting arms. When the enemy comes in like a flood, then our God raises up a standard against him.

In these days, it is good to wash our hands often and to follow the guidelines issued by national and local healthcare experts by keeping some distance between oneself and others. It is appropriate to protect oneself from exposure to potentially infected people.

Once we have done our due diligence to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, we can trust in God’s faithfulness to watch over us and guide us to safety. Only God knows where the real safety is, so we rely on the One who alone is able to deliver us. Amen.