

FIFTH SUNDAY after the EPIPHANY

Directions: Read the scripture selected from the Revised Common Lectionary, perhaps before bed, in the morning, or during a family meal. Move through the discussion questions in one sitting or answer one a day to help reflect on the scripture throughout the week. End your time in prayer. This could be a simple ritual to incorporate into the week.

ISAIAH 40:21-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
It is God who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when God blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
God who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because God is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.
Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
God does not faint or grow weary;
God’s understanding is unsearchable.
God gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does it feel to know God never grows weary (even though we often do)?
2. How have you found encouragement in God?
3. Why is it important God gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless?
4. Where have you seen God lift up those in need?
5. What can we do in our lives to empower those who lack power?

EMPOWERMENT COLLAGE

Materials: Paper, scissors, tape/glue, crayons/colored pencils, pictures (photos, drawings, magazine images, etc.)

We believe in a truly powerful and inspiring God. God cares for people, helping them and giving them strength even when society thinks they are powerless. Here's a project to remind you of what true power and strength look like:

1. Take one piece of paper and set it aside. Take a second piece of paper and write/draw words and images that feel empowering to you. Cut them out and set them aside.
2. Look through your pictures and search for ones that show people helping each other. Cut them out and set them aside.
3. Look through your pictures and search for ones that remind you of God's strength and love. Cut them out and set them aside.
4. Place your words and images onto the piece of paper you set aside and tape/glue them down.

Once your collage is complete, place it somewhere easy to see so you can be reminded of how God strengthens us and we can help strengthen others.

PRAYER

Uplifting God, you use your strength to strengthen others. You give power to the powerless and inspire us to do the same. Help us lift up those who need it most.
Amen.

HAVE YOU NOT
KNOWN?

HAVE YOU NOT HEARD?

the **LORD** is the ^{everlasting} **GOD,**

the **CREATOR** of the **ENDS** of the **EARTH.**

GOD does not ~~FAINT~~ or **GROW WEARY;**

GOD'S UNDERSTANDING IS

UNSEARCHABLE.

GOD gives **POWER** TO THE **FAINT,**

AND STRENGTHENS THE POWERLESS.