**Worship Devotions for August 9, 2020**

*Set aside some time and space for this worship time. You can light a candle or be outside or find a comfortable space. Do what you can to make it a sacred space and time. A suggestion: find a way to play some music during this time to begin this worship time and/or to end it. You can also go to our webpage* [*www.umchapelvalley.org*](http://www.umchapelvalley.org) *where there is a link to the Facebook page or go to the devotion page and there will be the recorded message of the week there or you can see it on You Tube that goes along with the devotion included here or you can go directly to our Facebook page,* [*www.facebook.com/chapelofthevalleyumc*](http://www.facebook.com/chapelofthevalleyumc)*. These are just aids to help you take some time to spend with God.*

**Lion King Week**

**Call to Worship**

As we step out into the sun, knowing there is more to see that can ever be seen, more to do than can ever be done and far more to take in, more to find than can ever be found…..guide us through this time of worship. Welcome us all into the circle of life….in the midst of our despair and hope, in faith and love. May we find our place during this time. Let us worship!

**Song** sing or read the words *Come, Let Us Worship*

Come, let us worship. Come let us worship. Come let us worship our God. (repeat 3 x)

Welcome my sister, welcome my brother. Come let us worship our God.

There’s bread for the journey and friends for the way.

There’s hope for tomorrow and love for today.

The cup of forgiveness, all blessings release

To heal and renew us and bring us God’s peace.

O Holy Spirit, bind us together now. O Holy Spirit bring us your peace. (repeat)

Come, let us worship. Come let us worship. Come let us worship our God.

Welcome my sister, welcome my brother. Come let us worship our God.

Come, let us worship. Come let us worship. Come let us worship our God. (repeat 2 x)

*Words and Music by Jim Strathdee ©2005 Desert Flower Music*

**Prayer**

God of all peoples, we come into this place to worship you. We come into this place to be counted among all your children. We come into this place to offer our prayers and lives to you. We know that that our lives rise and fall like the setting of the sun. Help us to step into the light and find our place. We often want to forget our past, change our future but at the same time we continue to live in the past and not change anything. We want to live with no worries, no rules, no responsibilities. We want to control all the light touches but don’t want to have to protect it or take care of it. God help us remember who we are and whose we are. Through despair and hope, through faith and love, help us to find our path and place in the circle of life. God, guide us to widen the circle to include all of your beloved children …the great and the small that are included in that circle. Empower us to find the delicate balance and understand it. Help us to respect and care for all of your creatures and children because we are all interconnected. Help us to see the world and all who are on it as you see it and them. Let us look at each other with your eyes of love and compassion and respect. There is a season, a time for everything. Help us to not only live in the season we are in but to thrive in it. Help us to find our place using our gifts to do our part. Help us to, instead of searching for what we can take, search for what we can give.

We continue to pray for all who are hurting on this day. We pray for those who have lost loved ones. We pray for those working so hard to keep us all safe. We pray for those who are worried about not being able to work. We pray for our church and those who want to gather with their family and friends again.

Help us to find ways to be in compassionate dialogue on the many issues of the day. Let us listen to each other and open our minds to new ideas and possibilities. We differ on how to handle the pandemic that is with us. We differ on how to move forward when talking about racism, poverty, and other various political and ethical issues. We ask that you guide us and challenge us. Ease our fears and our pain.

Let these words reach you, as we pray them from our lips, our hearts and our souls as we say the pray Jesus taught us…(The Lord’s Prayer) Amen.

**Scriptures**

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-15*

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.

*1 John 3:1-3*

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

**Devotion** *Finding Balance in the Circle of Life*

In the beginning of the movie, both the original version and the 2019 version, the sun rises as we hear the call of a single voice. It is a call using Zulu language translated to “Here comes a lion, father” but more specifically “Behold here comes the (future) king, father. And father is a term of respect for distinguished persons elevated to a higher regard or status.

The animals of all kinds wake up and make way to Pride Rock where they witness the blessing, dedication of the future king of Pride rock. All of this while the award winning song *The Circle of Life* plays. It is a breathtaking opening. And a moment in time that everything seems idyllic. Then real life happens. There are several themes and storylines that could be a direction to go in this devotion.

First, there is the story of two brothers. One is the leader and is shown to be compassionate…the other is selfish and jealous and wants everything for himself. He wants to be king and is not happy when Mufasa has a son who will be king. He works it so Mufasa is killed and even makes it seem, at least to Simba, that it is Simba’s fault. He takes over the kingdom and leads it into the ground because he takes without thinking of consequences. There are Biblical stories of brothers killing each other or taking birthrights away over jealousy…Caine and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers just to name a few.

Then there is the theme of Hakuna Matata…After Scar convinces Simba to run away because he is at fault for Mufasa’s death. Simba is barely alive and is found by a warthog and a meerkat, both outcasts as well. They take the cub in and teach them their way of Hakuna Matata. It means no worries. They take him to a place where they and others are outside of the regular pride land and live with no worries, no rules, no responsibilities. He grows up and becomes one of them, forgetting who he really is. In the book of Matthew, Jesus tells us not to worry. Just look to the flowers and birds, they don’t worry about what they wear or what they eat. God takes care of them. We are to seek first the Kingdom of God and not worry…because worry does not add to our days. It seems that Jesus was saying Hakuna Matata. Yet, one can take it too far….which is what happens in the movie. No worries, no rules, no responsibilities. Simba is running away from his past and he buys in completely. No worries, no rules, no responsibilities. Instead of dealing with his fear of being responsible as the future king…instead of dealing with the guilt of possibly being at fault with his dad’s death (although we know that is not true). Are there times when we run away from things and want to take no responsibility. We want to have a “don’t worry, be happy” kind of attitude. Mufasa was starting to teach Simba before his death about finding the balance between no worries and responsibility for ourselves and others. Finding that delicate balance in the circle of life.

Which leads us to the main idea of this devotion….finding the balance in the circle of life. In the first part of the movie, Mufasa shows Simba, “Everything the light touches is part of our kingdom.” Simba asks,” So all this is going to belong to me?” Mufasa begins a lesson sharing that no one owns it…it is yours, ours, to protect. It is a great responsibility. There is a delicate balance that must work together to work. We are interconnected. He then later shares that some search for what they can take, while great leaders, a true king, searches for what he can give. When Scar takes over the pride lands along with the hyenas, they start taking and overkilling which upsets the delicate balance. They don’t understand that in taking and taking, it is in essence killing the pride lands and the balance. They don’t want to give back at all. Nala, Simba’s best friend, goes to find a solution and runs into Simba. She begs him to come back and be the king he is supposed to be. He states the Hakuna Matata philosophy. They get in a fight and Nala leaves. Then Simba, with the help of Rafiki, has an epiphany. He again hears the call of who he really is. He has to forgive his perceived fear and guilt and move into a future he was destined for. Finding balance in being who you are, who you want to be, and who you are called to be. That is sometimes a hard path and sometimes it seems to just fall in place.

In our first scripture, from Ecclesiastes, it is talking about there is a time for everything. Further in the text it says*, He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live*; To find balance in everything, because there is a time for everything. And God has put a sense of past and future for us. God’s desire for us is to be happy and to know that there is a time and place for everything. There are seasons, cycles. Eternity is long and it is difficult if not impossible for us to be able to understand. And we worry and have fear about the unknown. So God put the cycles, the seasons in place for us. To help us find balance and our place in the circle of life.

Our second Scripture directly tells us who we are and whose we are. **See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are**.

When Simba realized who he was and whose he was, he was able to face his past and move to the future with a renewed vision of hope and faith. Rafiki shows him that his father lives within him. God is our parent and we have the Spirit of God within us. We too can remember who we are and whose we are. We can face our past, and move towards our future with a renewed vision of faith and hope. The scripture says when we remember we will be like him for we will see him as he is. And what is he? God is love.

We are all a part of the circle of life. We need to be a part of the delicate balance. Not take whatever we want but find ways to give and keep the circle continuing. May our path move forward with faith and hope and love.

**A Blessing for Offerings**

*We invite you to take time to give thanks for offerings made. Again, you can make your tithes and offerings to the church by sending them in the mail, you can also drop it at the church during office hours or through Pastor office mailbox slot. You can also make a donation online at* [*www.umchapelvalley.org*](http://www.umchapelvalley.org)*. There are instructions for each method*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Thank you, extravagant God, for your blessings in our lives. We offer ourselves in grateful response, seeking to live with such compassion toward others that your blessings will flow through us to bless our community and our world. For the sake of Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Song of Thanksgiving** (*sung to tune of Amazing Grace*)

Give thanks to God who blesses us,

And Jesus God’s Beloved,

And thank the Holy Spirit too, who guides us on our way.

**Song** Read or sing the *Dance with Spirit*

Dance with the Spirit early in the morning

Walk with the Spirit throughout the long day

Work and hope for the new life abornin’

Listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

*Words and Music by Jim Strathdee © 1995 Desert Flower Music*

**Closing Prayer**

As we step out into the sun, knowing there is more to see that can ever be seen, more to do than can ever be done and far more to take in, more to find than can ever be found…..guide us through our week. Welcome us all into the circle of life….in the midst of our despair and hope, in faith and love. May we find our place during this time. Let us go out in peace and hope and love!