

## Mennonite Heritage Sunday, October 25, 2015

July/August 2015, *Equipping* #158

HWB - *Hymnal Worship Book*, SJ - *Sing the Journey*, SS - *Sing the Story*\*

\* Song book abbreviations match those used for corresponding worship resources in *Leader Magazine*

**Theme:** *Restoration - Take heart; get up,  
He is calling you!*

### Introduction

This worship resource is brought to Mennonite congregations as an aid in preparing for Heritage Sunday.

Each year we are intentional about remembering our past, for our history is foundational to our Mennonite faith. We look back, seeking to discern spiritual truths from past efforts to live as faithful people, looking for ways they can guide us in the present and as we look ahead to the future.

'Restoration' as individuals and as a people is an ongoing process throughout our lives. Moving toward and away from God in our journeys, we sometimes find ourselves living in a foreign land or on the outside of the in-group. Whether through prophets who call for communal repentance and a return to prosperity, or through a saviour who heals and mediates on our behalf, a relationship with God is always at hand. God is able to heal and to restore.

Restoration comes in many forms – for some it is through land and status. For others, restoration consists of healing from sickness, and inclusion in community. Restoration may mean a return to employment, to an estranged family, or to a welcoming church community.

This worship resource, developed by Korey Dyck, director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, focuses on how God restores – the land, God's blessing, a permanent priest in Jesus, and sight/insight to the blind. What is God restoring to the church today? How have we prepared ourselves to accept it? Live in God's way and restoration is assured.

### Texts

- Jeremiah 31: 7-9
- Psalm 126
- Hebrews 7: 23-28
- Mark 10: 46-52

### We Gather

#### Gathering/Call to Worship

- HWB 427 - You shall go out with joy

Leader: Sing aloud with gladness.  
Proclaim and give praise!

**People: We come before God, a people struggling  
to live lives of faithfulness.**

Leader: The Lord our God has gathered us.  
With weeping we draw near, and with  
wonder we sing God's praise.

**People: Let our mouths be filled with laughter  
and our tongues shout with joy.  
For the Lord does great things!**

#### Hymns of Praise:

- HWB 102 - To God be the Glory
- HWB 86 - Now Thank we all our God

#### Prayer of Confession:

- HWB 692 or the prayer below:

Forgiving and ever-present God,  
we confess our human arrogance  
and the blind spots in our faith  
where we fail to put our trust in you.  
We acknowledge our tendencies to quiet those  
who respond to Jesus differently from ourselves.

Forgive us as we sing your praises,  
while failing to listen to the heartbreak of our neighbours.  
Help us, O God,  
to remember your peoples' story in our everyday living;  
to apply the wisdom of our spiritual ancestors to the  
problems of today.  
Create in us hearts that are always open to others.  
Amen.

## Affirmation of Faith:

- HWB 323 - Beyond a dying sun
- HWB 344 - I will sing of my Redeemer

## *We Hear God's Word*

### Story, Testimony, or Children's Time:

Johnny Appleseed by Jodie Shepherd is a helpful book to explain how a land and people can prosper again. When people live in God's way, new life and fruit will begin to appear now and in the future.

Alternatively, invite someone to tell a story of when God's favour fell on their lives after instances of hardship. How did their faith sustain them when things were bad?

With either option, conclude with a brief prayer of thanks that God will always be with us, will sustain us in times of hardship and doubt, and will help us make the world a better place.

### Sermon Notes:

- **Psalm 126**  
The psalmist looks to the past in order to give hope for the future. In a prayer for 'deliverance from national misfortune', the people of Israel cry out to God to return God's favour to them. This is a song of trust and confidence in a God who delivers from evil. Calling for their communal dream to come true, the people look forward to a time where joy will come out of sorrow, and laughter will again come out of tears.
- **Jeremiah 31: 7-9**  
The theme of homecoming best illustrates the passage in Jeremiah. From scattered places, the faithful remnant of Israel returns home with God restoring their land to them. Implicit in the text is a focus on the inclusiveness of the Father of Israel who leads and accepts all those who call on God's name, including the blind, the lame, and expectant mothers. Everyone on the edges of communal life will be accepted. Jeremiah is announcing God's promise of the joyful restoration of all Israel through those returning home.
- **Mark 10: 46-52**  
On the outskirts of Jericho, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, begins to shout when he hears Jesus is walking by, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" When told to be silent, Bartimaeus just shouts louder until Jesus stops and calls for him. The crowd then calls for Bartimaeus saying, "Take heart; get up, he is calling

for you." Both restoration of sight and inclusion back into community life return when Jesus heals him, as Bartimaeus consequently follows Jesus on the way.

- **Hebrews 7:23-28**

The author of Hebrews argues for the finality of salvation through Jesus. As a permanent priest, Jesus, the Christ, is able to save those for all time who approach God through him. Jesus, who is holy and blameless, becomes the only sacrifice needed. Through Christ, who mediates with God the Father for us, we are restored to a new humanity.

## *We Respond*

### Hymn of Response

- HWB 585 - In your sickness

### Offering Prayer

#### Spoken Prayers

- HWB 744

#### Sung Prayer

- HWB 384 - We give thee but thine own

#### Prayer of the Church

- HWB 745

### Closing Hymn

- HWB 483 - O God, who gives us life
- HWB 498 - He comes to us as one unknown
- HWB 434 - Thuma Mina

### Sending

**Leader:** Holy Spirit, walk with us each day as we encounter people striving for meaning.

**People:** **We stand before you with open hands ready to accept your wisdom.**

**Leader:** Send us to our neighbours, willing to share your good news.

**All:** *Dwell in us. Energize and renew us with your love so that we may take heart and share what Jesus is offering to all people. Amen.*

*Direct your comments about Special Sunday Worship Resources to Elsie Rempel at [erempel@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:erempel@mennonitechurch.ca)*