

## **Take Advice**

Take Care: Part 4 “Take Advice”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – June 20, 2021

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost / Father’s Day

**Readings:** Exodus 18:13-26

**Reflection:** Psalm 16:5-11

**Greeting:** Let your faithful love comfort me Lord. Let your compassion come to me so I can live again. Your word and your instructions are my joy! Your righteousness lasts forever! Praise the Lord!

**Prayer:** God our guardian, you know the worries in our hearts and the troubles that weigh on our minds. Refresh and renew us by your Holy Spirit, and give us a right heart, that we may be strengthened in faith so that we may more fully love and seek the paths you lay before us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 16

*The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:5-11 NRSV\*)*

We read the words of Psalm 16 and we hear of seeking the Lord’s instructions. That God supports us and guides us. That God’s presence in our lives is a joy and a pleasure. Do you find joy in being with God? Do you celebrate the peace of Christ in your heart? What is the hope that you have in God’s help? How do you share that hope with others?

**Prayer:** O God, help us to seek you as we care for ourselves. Let us always seek your council, Lord. Help us to listen for advice and to accept it willingly. Help us to seek out your love that you may strengthen us in our faith and our hope. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us Lord. May you always guide us and lead us by your righteous hand. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

## Sermon:

Our scripture reading for today comes from the Common English Bible. Our reading for today comes from Exodus chapter 18 verses 13 through 26.

*The next day Moses sat as a judge for the people, while the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What's this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people are standing around you from morning until evening?" Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When a conflict arises between them, they come to me and I judge between the two of them. I also teach them God's regulations and instructions." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing isn't good. You will end up totally wearing yourself out, both you and these people who are with you. The work is too difficult for you. You can't do it alone. Now listen to me and let me give you some advice. And may God be with you! Your role should be to represent the people before God. You should bring their disputes before God yourself. Explain the regulations and instructions to them. Let them know the way they are supposed to go and the things they are supposed to do. But you should also look among all the people for capable persons who respect God. They should be trustworthy and not corrupt. Set these persons over the people as officers of groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times. They should bring every major dispute to you, but they should decide all of the minor cases themselves. This will be much easier for you, and they will share your load. If you do this and God directs you, then you will be able to endure. And all these people will be able to go back to their homes much happier." Moses listened to his father-in-law's suggestions and did everything that he had said. Moses chose capable persons from all Israel and set them as leaders over the people, as officers over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They acted as judges for the people at all times. They would refer the hard cases to Moses, but all of the minor cases they decided themselves. (Exodus 18:13-26 CEB+)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

For Father's Day, we look at a story about a father giving advice. As we continue our series about self-care called "Take Care" we have today's message "Take Advice." Today's reading sees Moses, attempting to guide and lead the people. And we have his father-in-law, Jethro, sitting down and looking at what it is he's doing. And he starts to give Moses some sound advice. Moses explains that he's trying to take care of everything for the people so he's hearing everybody's problems and he's settling any dispute that arises between anybody. The problem is that this gets really old really fast. All day, he sits around and judges disputes. From morning until evening, he's sorting out people's problems both big and small. Moses' father-in-law tells him that this is not a good idea. He can see that this is going to lead to Moses getting run down. He can tell that it isn't going to be good for Moses and it isn't going to be good for the people. So, Jethro gives him some advice. Spread the responsibility around.

Now, one might wonder why this hadn't already occurred to Moses. Moses may have just been too strong willed. Maybe he was waiting for someone to tell him to do it differently. It's not like Moses had ever led a nation through the wilderness before so had no idea what to do

with everything. Maybe this is one of those instances where we're so busy sitting around waiting for God to tell us what to do that we don't notice the obvious. Now luckily, Jethro was around to be able to tell Moses he was going to wreck himself. It's good fatherly advice. These are the instances that I look to both because of how I hope to be a good father as well as recognizing the fathers in my life that have helped me along the way. But with today's reading I can't help but think of my dad, and that's because I still seek his advice about all sorts of things. I like that he always sits down, listens, and comes up with the most rational thing he can think of that would be helpful. And sometimes we just need that in our lives, somebody that can tell us when we are doing something wrong. But we have to be able to hear the advice we are given. That's part of the issue, we are often unwilling to take that advice when it comes because we often think it's criticism. We tend to overlook somebody having an insight by seeing things from the outside. That maybe somebody has seen a better way to do things because they've been watching and listening and paying attention. We see Moses received some very good advice. And he takes it well and he puts it into action. But we just as easily could have seen Moses get upset and say that only God can tell him what to do. That he's doing just fine with how he is doing things. Because that is the attitude that we often take. We may not say those words out right. But how often does somebody give us advice, and it rubs us the wrong way because we think that they're telling us how to do something that is our responsibility?

I think back to being a child at this point. I like to think about the way that I learned when I was willing to admit that there was a whole world out there that I barely understood. As a child, I was willing to learn. Too often we think we know how everything once we grow up. And once we get it into our heads that we know something, we stick to it, and we hold to it. And somebody could show us eight different ways that the job can be done better, and we stubbornly stick to our guns. We forget how to learn. We forget how to happily take advice from others, so that we can do better. Because often we think we are the expert when we really just have a basic understanding. One of the things that I often think back on is that, as a kid, I learned from my dad to have a certain amount of respect for knowledge. I learned it in different ways from different people, recognizing the knowledge others had that could benefit me if I would just listen. Growing up I understood that there was a whole world of people out there for me to take advice from. It wasn't about whether people were smarter, or better, it was about what knowledge they might share with me, with the hopes that at some point I may have knowledge they would want me to share with them.

God puts people in our lives to help us. I am convinced of this. I very much see that with Jethro and Moses. Jethro wasn't just his father-in-law who had no idea about anything. He was his father-in-law who was Midian's priest. I can only imagine all the things that he knew because he was Midian's priest and the responsibilities that entailed. Moses respects Jethro and takes his advice. He takes it to heart and as soon as he implements it, everything gets better. That's huge. Because Moses does something different. He listens to the wise advice

he's been given and makes a change. I can only imagine how much less stress Moses would have. He avoids being completely burned out and unable to lead the people. All because he took advice. Because he didn't close himself off. We need to be able to do that. I hope that, as a father, I can give advice to my kids the way that Jethro did to Moses. I hope that I'm still able to take advice the way that Moses did.

That's really the point today. That we need to be willing to take advice so that we can serve God the best that we can. That we haven't been put here alone to figure everything out ourselves. We are part of a community that is willing to help. We just have to be willing to listen. But when we do listen, we discover that God will help us to find the calm that we need and help us to do the things that we need to do. That we must be willing to listen so that we can become better. And we need to trust that God will help us to do all that we need to do. We need to trust that Christ will help us so that our burden is not heavy upon our hearts. That when we are willing to listen and take advice, we will find our journey easier and we will find ourselves in the peace and the comfort of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession and Pardon:** Have Mercy upon us, O God, according to your loving kindness. According to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sins. For we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us remission of all our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Offering:** If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Dismissal with Blessing:** May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Our Current Series – Take Care**

Our series is *Take Care* and each week we will look at different aspects of self-care and the ways God helps us to take care of ourselves.

May 30th – *Take a Step Back* - 1 Kings 19:1-16

June 6th – *Take Responsibility* – Acts 22:3-21

June 13th – *Take Alone Time* – Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 1:35-38; 6:30-32; Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13

June 20th – *Take Advice* – Exodus 18:13-26

June 27th – *Take a Friend* – Genesis 2:4b-22; Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

## **Prayer List**

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris	Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey
Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Nancy Hoke	Don Wells
Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart	Michael & Makenzie Reynolds	Ronnie Winstead
Annie McMorris	Dwight Parsons	Trinity Powers	Lauren Stewart
Charlie Henderson	Rosalee Chancellor	Phyllis Gable	Sage Martin
Dalton McFarland	Terri Kemper	Darrell Quick	Shelley Murphy
Jeff Davidson	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Nora Werner & Family
Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite
Donna Graham	Kevin Drum	Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Kim Hennes
Ruth Ann Finley	Randy Paul	Family of Patricia Taggart	

Rev Camron D St. Michael

<https://stmichael.pw>

[cdstmichael@outlook.com](mailto:cdstmichael@outlook.com)

(316)530-3182 (call or text)

PO Box 54, Charleston IL, 61920

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