



## GENERAL COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

of The United Methodist Church

### Session 6: The Day is Coming

*The lands in longing call out your name  
The tongues are different, the prayer the same  
With humble [willing] spirits can we believe  
That God is bigger than we conceive?*

*The day is coming, the Lord will move  
With the hand of justice and the heart of love  
The will of heaven on this earth be done  
The day is coming  
O let it come.*

By Laurie Zelman

#### Watch the Video Clip (5 – 7 minutes)

Listen to Mark's words of introduction and listen to the song. Listen to the song a second time. Feel free to sing along, joining in with "the day is coming, oh let it come." If you have purchased the songbook *Roll Down, Justice!*, a reproducible congregational box of the song is found on page 100.

#### Mark Miller's Reflection

My longtime collaborator and friend, Laurie Zelman, penned these words. They speak of the hope that people of different faith traditions can unite across lines of religious difference in peace and prayer. When people utter the prayer, "please", or "have mercy", "thank you," these transcend our particularities and connect us together in a larger community. When we recognize our common humanity, we begin to see our Muslim neighbors not as a threat but as people struggling with the same issues as everyone else.

I envision this song challenging us to come together to live out the values that make meaning in our lives. Working for peace with justice, valuing children and families, caring and nurturing the environment, promoting education, seeking out forgiveness and reconciliation. These are just a few of the critical pieces that can help bring us together and create a brighter future for all who live on this sacred blue marble we call home.

The day is coming, the Lord will move  
With the hand of justice and the heart of love  
The will of heaven on this earth be done  
The day is coming  
O let it come.

### Moment of Meditation (2 – 3 minutes)

Using a notebook or a sheet of paper, respond individually and silently – to the video, the song and Mark’s introduction. Jot down responses to one or more of these questions:

- What day do you long to see? [Return of a soldier from war? Pay raise? Job? Healing of a fractured relationship?]
- Are there places where you feel agreement and/or disagreement with the words that you heard?
- What does working for “peace with justice” mean to you?

### Discuss the Scripture - Isaiah 35:1-3 (10 minutes)

Have the scripture read aloud in two or three translations. Invite members to share with the group any experience they have with the text. Has someone had a desert experience and then began to experience moments of joy and rejoicing again?

### Connect with the Justice Challenges (20 minutes)

Give Witness: Invite two persons to share what they feel that God is challenging her or him to do as a result of being the study or through revelation in other experiences.

Work on Issues: Divide participants in three groups as quickly and easily as possible. Assign a focus area to each group: community, church, and government. Ask the group to make a list of what life would look like if peace with justice came to their area. Feel free to seed the discussion by sharing an idea:

- Community: Everyone’s roads would be without potholes, not just those in wealthier neighborhoods.
- Church: The budget would reflect a greater amount for providing child care and resources for vacation Bible study even for children not in our church.
- Government: People with the best ideas would get elected, not just the ones who have or are able to raise the most money.

### Confession (2 – 3 minutes)

Encourage the group to observe a moment of silence as they remember the words of the Scripture, the song, and Mark’s introduction. Tell them that during the time of confession they are free to speak aloud a sentence of confession of how they (their family, church, or community) have “fallen short of the glory of God.” However, as in the previous session, confession is a time of commitment (not sorrow).

Lead the group in this prayer:

Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to be your people. Yet there are boundaries that we dare not reach across. There are people whom we fear, whom we just cannot trust. Forgive us. In this moment, we confess that we will be your witnesses and be your purveyors of justice.

Invite persons to confess using this or a similar statement:

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge anew to work for peace with justice by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Prayer of Intercession (2 – 3 minutes)**

Lead the group in this prayer (or one from the heart):

Lord Jesus, bind us together with cords of love that cannot be broken. Lord God, move in our world to bring about justice. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Please bring about justice for children and families. Please bring about justice for our environment. Break the hearts of stones that live in some of our leaders and give them hearts for love alone. We pray in your name, Amen.

### **Closing (2 - 3 minutes)**

Play the video one more time and sing along. Offer a prayer of benediction and an invitation to see God in every face that we meet in the coming week.

### **Extending the Study**

Invite a person from another faith tradition to share—in worship or at a fellowship time—about ways in which her or his community is working on equality and justice issues.

Hear the testimony of someone who is struggling as a result of injustice (someone who believes that a spouse or child is falsely accused).

Hold a “justice and joy” singalong in the group, in Sunday school or in congregational worship. Use justice songs from United Methodist hymnals such as *The Faith We Sing*, *Global Praise*, and *Songs of Zion*. Peruse hymn and song collections used at General Conferences, United Methodist Women’s Assembly and Mission U and Global Gatherings. (Look from your home or church office for worship books from past district, conference and churchwide events.)

Observe the Peace with Justice Sunday on June 11, 2017, and learn more about how The United Methodist Church is building bridges and collaborations for a just peace.