**Empower Your Lenten Journey and Beyond**

Intro.: Think of the journeys you’ve taken – vacations / jobs / relationships – each journey takes empowerment, doesn’t it? [Share one of your own humorous journeys]

1. This is the 1st Sunday of Lent, an appropriate time to think about empowering your life
2. 40-day journey starts with Ash Wed. & ends at Christ’s empty tomb
3. Today is also known as *Legacy Sunday* – a time to think about the financial resources you have as a result of your journey through life so far
4. We’re going to combine these two emphases and consider that even though the pandemic continues, you can receive empowerment . . . and give empowerment

I. Empowerment from the O.T. – Genesis 9:12-15 (NRSV)

A. Rainbow = sign of God’s promise – a whole “spectrum” of applications; you remember the promise and so does God (v. 15a)

1. God also remembers your situation – cloudy days, personal storms

2. You may sometimes feel overwhelmed even in these coming days of Lent

B. You can be empowered

1. Hear these few sample promises of God from the O.T. – Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV), Joshua 1:9b, Isaiah 41:10

2. American Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson, 1st missionary from U.S., said: “The future is as bright as the promises of God.”

C. Receive & give empowerment

1. Receive empowerment from God’s Word

2. Give empowerment by your decisions; we are blessed to have the American Baptist Foundation to help us “Inspire Today, Empower Tomorrow”

3. *Illus*.: [donor’s story here]

II. Empowerment from the N.T. – Mark 1:9-11

A. Empowerment for life comes from Jesus, identified here as God’s Son (vs. 11)

B. Compare the disciples immediately after Christ’s death on the cross and then after Easter

1. They who were frightened 🡪 fearless / cowering inaction 🡪 courageous witnessing / their fear answered by the fact of the resurrection

2. Jesus proved he was alive (Luke 24:36b-48)

C. Verse 48 is spoken to you as well

1. How did you hear the Good News? How have you grown in your discipleship?

2. You can ensure others have such a journey by using the services of the American Baptist Foundation

2. *Illus*.: [donor’s story here]

Conclusion:

1. The pandemic may be worldwide, but it will not last.
2. You can empower the spread of the gospel locally, regionally, nationally and around the globe by your decisions … and the results of those are, and will be, eternal!