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October 5 - "Lean on Me" **A Message from Jim Everette**

I had just pronounced the benediction on a friend's life and was exiting Oleander Memorial Gardens earlier today when I turned on my radio and heard a familiar voice. He spoke a word of good news and hope to my spirit that I really needed to hear, the family I had just left needs to hear, and you may need it as well. The voice was that of Bill Withers crooning the familiar tune from his 1974 hit single. Lean on Me. I don't think I have heard it since John Kimbrough sung it in our sanctuary as part of the presentation of the Gospel back in April. It is not in our hymnal, but it is a word of encouragement we all need to hear. The song made Bill Withers famous and the words seem all too appropriate for us as we continue journeying together through the valley of COVID-19.

*Sometimes in our lives, we all have pain, we all have sorrow.
But, if we are wise, we know that there's always tomorrow.
Lean on me, when you're not strong, and I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on.
For, it won't be long 'til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on.
You just call on me, brother, when you need a hand. We all need somebody to lean on.
I just might have a problem that you'll understand. We all need somebody to lean on.*

Yes, we do, Bill. Every one of us needs a solid leaning post occasionally, and it is good to know we have plenty of them in our church family. Brothers and sisters of faith that we can depend on to provide us strength, comfort, encouragement, grace, a phone call, a meal... you fill in the blank. We have traversed many miles together that have included daybreaks of joy and mountain peaks of hope, as well as nights of despair and dark valleys of death. We have made new friends along the way and held hands with friends as we, and they, have celebrated the birth of babies and grieved the departure of loved ones. We may not always agree on everything but we are committed to the main thing, and that is that we are children of God, brothers and sisters with Christ and each other, and we are here for each other to lean on. COVID-19 restricts many of us from visiting in person like we would prefer, but if there is somebody you think might welcome a call from you right now, make the call. Let them hear your voice of encouragement. You may be the leaning post they need today.