

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 99; Numbers 16:41-50 & 1 Peter 4:7-11

Psalm 99 (NRSV)

The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
The Lord is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
Let them praise your great and awesome name.
Holy is he!
Mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established equity;
you have executed justice
and righteousness in Jacob.
Extol the Lord our God;
worship at his footstool.
Holy is he!
Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
Samuel also was among those who called on his name.
They cried to the Lord, and he answered them.
He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;
they kept his decrees,
and the statutes that he gave them.
O Lord our God, you answered them;
you were a forgiving God to them,
but an avenger of their wrongdoings.
Extol the Lord our God,
and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy.



Thought:

Moses and Aaron were his priests, Samuel also was among those who called on his name. When we read the scriptures, we learn events in their lives where they turned to God. At times, the people were against them. Samuel even went against the king, and anointed David to become king. As priests, they spent time in prayer with God. They did not see themselves as leaders with power, but leaders following God's word to them. They followed God's law and encouraged the people to follow God's decrees. In their lives, Moses, Aaron and Samuel, committed sins, they had not fully trusted in God. Yet, God was willing to forgive them after he called them to repentance.

Who are the priests in your life? Who are the men and women who give you guidance in following God? Give thanks to God for their witness in your lives. Then, think of the sins they have done that hurt you or your faith. In prayer, realize they too are human and need God's guidance and forgiveness. Maybe they need your forgiveness as well. In prayer, worship God for the gift of these people in your lives.

Numbers 16:41-50 (NRSV)

On the next day, however, the whole congregation of the Israelites rebelled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord." And when the congregation had assembled against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the tent of meeting; the cloud had covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, and the Lords poke to Moses, saying, "Get away from this congregation, so that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, put fire on it from the altar and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them. For wrath has gone out from the Lord; the plague has begun." So Aaron took it as Moses had ordered, and ran into the middle of the assembly, where the plague had already begun among the people. He put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. He stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stopped. Those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. When the plague was stopped, Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

Thought:

Passages like this are often overlooked when we read the Bible. We want to think of God as all loving and full of forgiveness. In this passage, a group of Israelites, the Korah group, turned against Moses and Aaron as leaders. The people had just learned that their generation would not enter the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey. The spies had returned and reported the promised land was filled with giants. Only Joshua and Caleb trusted that God could lead them into the promised land. They wanted to return to Egypt, and revolted against Moses and against God. The leaders of this group, the family of Korah, we destroyed by an opening in the ground. Then, those who gathered to criticize Moses were struck with a plague and were dying. As a leader, Moses went through the people making atonement for the people. He stood between God and the people. This is a passage of an angry God.

From a passage like this, there are a couple lessons. When God has put a leader, especially a spiritual leader, in your life, be careful to turn against him or her. Look at whether they are following God and listening to God's direction in their lives. Second, part of being a leader is to intercede with God. Leaders are to spend time in prayer before the Lord bringing the concerns of their people. Even when the people are wanting to remove them.

1 Peter 4:7-11 (NRSV)

The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Thought:

Scripture reminds us to live with the end in sight. When we think we have plenty of time to do something, we put it off. That is human nature. When schools were closed for this

pandemic (as I understand it) Hermiston school district decided that all high schoolers who were passing a class received a passing grade. Those who were failing have had a few months to get their grade above passing. This week, many students are going to be doing whatever is needed to get a passing grade. Come Friday, grades will be final. In faith, we are to live expecting the end to come soon.

Focusing on the end, Peter wants us to spend time in prayer, show love to others, forgive each other, be hospitable and good stewards of the resources God has given us. One of those resources is the gifts you have received. Though lives challenges and events, God has gifted you with abilities to serve Him. Maybe your gift is teaching, hospitality, financial management, cooking, writing, and the list goes on. Spend a little time exploring how God has uniquely gifted you to serve the community. When you use our God given gifts, God will give you the strength to accomplish His purposes. And, God will receive the glory.

Prayer:

Almighty God, you and you alone are worthy of our praise and worship. We give you thanks for the men and women you have put in our lives to guide us in our relationship with you. As we remember their witness, may we witness our faith to others. Guide us on how to love you and others, to show hospitality during this time, to extend the blessing you have shown to us. May we use the gifts you have given us to further your kingdom. In all we say and do, may you be gloried.

(Spend time in silent prayer, praying for those you know. Name them before God and place them in God's loving arms).

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.