

Monday, April 6, 2020
Monday of Holy Week

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 36:5-11; Isaiah 42:1-9;
Hebrews 9:11-15 & John 12:1-11

Introduction:

Today is Monday of Holy Week. The lectionary passages for Holy Week are the same passages every year. We hear the life of Jesus from John's gospel from chapters 12-19. May this Holy Week bring you closer in your walk with Jesus as we pick up our crosses and follow Him.



Psalm 36:5-11 (NRSV)

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgments are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.
How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.
O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!
Do not let the foot of the arrogant tread on me,
or the hand of the wicked drive me away.

Thought:

When I pray with people before surgery or during a difficult time, I often use the image “take refuge in the shadow of your wings.” When birds of prey are hunting newborn chicks, the mother will spread her wings to hide the chicks from danger. Not only are they hidden under the wings, the mother looks bigger than normal. God's love for us is displayed in the image. God spreads His wings to cover us and protect us from danger. While under the shadow of His wings, we are able to drink from the fountain of life.

Isaiah 42:1-9 (NRSV)

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.
Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
I am the Lord, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

Thought:

Holy Week begins with reading the “Suffering Servant” passages from Isaiah. In this passage, the nation of Israel is reduced to a single servant who will bring forth justice. As Jesus went through his crucifixion, he did not raise his voice in self-defense, nor did he break from the plan for salvation. Through his life and death, Jesus gave true light to the world that releases all prisoners from the bondage of sin. He gave His nation eyes to see the grace of God. In his death, Jesus gave us an example of the Lord worthy of glory. Jesus willing was the suffering servant for a new creation, a new nation with Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Hebrews 9:11-15 (NRSV)

But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.

Thought:

On Yom Kipper, or the Day of Atonement, the Jewish people fast and pray for forgiveness of the sins they have done during the past year. After the time of prayer and fasting, the High Priest offered a sacrifice in the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem. This sacrifice would bring forgiveness of

sins for the past year, and re-establish Israel as a Holy nation. Yet, people would sin again, and the next year another sacrifice would be needed. The writer of Hebrews explains that Jesus is the true High Priest that offered his own blood as a once and for all sacrifice for our sins. Through Jesus' blood, we are now cleansed from our sins and filled with the Holy Spirit. Without the burden of guilt, we are able to do good works for the glory of God.

John 12:1-11 (NRSV)

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

Thought:

A week before Jesus' death, a day before Palm Sunday, on the surface the life of Jesus looked normal. His disciples gathered for dinner at the house of Lazarus. People were coming and going, to see the one raised from the dead. They focused on Lazarus as much as they did Jesus. Martha was busy being Martha serving as hostess. Her sister Mary was sitting at the feet of the Teacher. She took the most valuable thing she probably owned, a jar of perfume, and anointed Jesus. This was maybe in response to giving her brother back.

Yet, under the surface, things were not normal. Jesus knew that he would be going to the cross. He was not to be with them very much longer. While Mary was acting on the past actions of Jesus, Jesus knew that she was anointing his body for death. The strong fragrance would have been with Jesus throughout the week ahead. All too often, we do not see what God is doing under the surface. We do not see the plan of salvation God has for us, let alone those we love.

Prayer:

Holy God, you have created all we see and all we know. We look to the heavens and see your faithfulness. We look to the mountains and see your power and strength. Your steadfast love endures forever. As we enter this Holy Week, allow us to see your covenant fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through the sacrifice of Jesus, you have cleansed and purified us to be your holy nation. Fill us anew with your Holy Spirit that we may live as your holy nation. May we serve others as you have given us an example. As our nation and world face death this week, show us the greater and perfect tent of life eternal.

(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.