

Friday, May 22, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 93; 2 Kings 2:1-12 & Ephesians 2:1-7

Psalm 93 (NRSV)

The Lord is king, he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed, he is girded with strength.
He has established the world; it shall never be moved;
your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting.
The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.
More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters,
more majestic than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord!
Your decrees are very sure;
holiness befits your house,
O Lord, forevermore.



Thought:

How would your life look different if you lived with the Lord as your king? When God is ruling over your life, you look at all your actions, at all your decisions in light of His rule in your life. Yesterday, a group of community pastors met via zoom discussing reopening. Instead of focusing on the pandemic, we focused on where is God in the midst of this. How can we witness Christ as Lord of our lives in the decisions we are making? While we need to make a decision, we need to listen to God for discernment. We spent time in prayer asking for guidance and wisdom. In our lives and ministry, God needs to be first. When we take the focus off of God and put it on ourselves, or on the situation around us, we don't allow God to be God. We hear the creation roaring and are afraid, even though it is lifting its voice in praise to God.

2 Kings 2:1-12 (NRSV)

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent."

Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent."

Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the

water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Thought:

Elisha was the closest disciple of Elijah. When it came time for his master to leave, Elisha would not depart Elijah. He wanted to spend every moment with him learning from him. Here was a man of God whose life was an example to follow. Obviously, Elijah knew he was dying a different way. Otherwise, he would not have said, “if you see me as I am taken from you.” At this time, Elijah offered Elisha anything. “What may I do for you?” My response might be asking for a prayer or one last piece of advice. Instead, Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. Elisha wanted to have Elijah’s spirit for following God.

When Elijah went up into heaven, Elisha did see him go. As Elijah had promised, Elisha would receive the spirit of faithfulness. This is a foreshadowing of the disciples seeing Jesus ascend into heaven. Jesus had promised that they would receive the Holy Spirit. When Elisha picked up Elijah’s mantle, he had the power to part the waters. When the disciples receive the Holy Spirit, they had the power to share God’s salvation with the world. Jesus has promised us the power of his Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:1-7 (NRSV)

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Thought:

The Walking Dead is a television series dealing with zombies. People who are alive need to constantly protect themselves from being turned into a zombie. In Ephesians, Paul tells us that without Christ’s spirit, we are dead through trespasses and sins. People walking in the spirit of sin are the walking dead. They may feel alive, but their spirit is simply following the world and empty air. Notice, all people are followers. The question is, do they follow the passions of the flesh or the grace of God?

The work of salvation, of regeneration is not something people can do for themselves. When we are dead, there is nothing we can do. Regeneration, new life, is a gift of grace that comes from God. It is by grace that you have been saved. This comes out of the great love God has for you to claim you and call you His own.

When we have received God’s grace, we receive God’s spirit. We are no longer controlled by a spirit of sin and trespasses. God, in his love and mercy, has made us truly alive.

Jesus was the first raised from the dead. Through him, we have been raised from the dead and given life eternal. This is not something that we simply get after we die. We are living eternal life now. God has shared his grace with us now.

Prayer:

Almighty God, we come to the end of another week filled with uncertainty and pain. We pray for our neighbors who are dealing with flooding and disaster. We pray for our nation and your creation as we struggle through this pandemic. We continue to wonder when it will be safe to return to Sunday worship. We ask for a double portion of your Spirit to fill us and guide us. May we not be filled with fear of the unknown, but filled with your life and 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.