

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Proverbs 4:10-27 &
Luke 6:12-19

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45 (NRSV)

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.
Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,
O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
He is the Lord our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
He is mindful of his covenant forever,
of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."
Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold,
and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled.
Egypt was glad when they departed,
for dread of them had fallen upon it.
He spread a cloud for a covering,
and fire to give light by night.
They asked, and he brought quails,
and gave them food from heaven in abundance.
He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed through the desert like a river.
For he remembered his holy promise,
and Abraham, his servant.
So he brought his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples,
that they might keep his statutes
and observe his laws.
Praise the Lord!



Thought:

More than one Psalm calls us to remember the events of the Exodus. We are called to remember the quail in the wilderness. When the people were thirsty, God provided water out of a rock. God provided a path for the people to follow. It may have seemed that the people were wandering through the wilderness. They did spend 40 years on a journey that could be done in less than two weeks. Yet, they were following God and God was preparing them to enter the Promised Land. God was refining them in order that they would follow the law when they came into the land flowing with milk and honey.

As God led them, God is guiding us. It may seem that we have days and weeks or even years of wandering in the wilderness. Yet, if we are following the path God has set before us, we will come to the place that God has prepared for us. Observing God's law is not to keep us from life, but to give us the fulness of life. Then, we are able to take the focus off ourselves and give praise to the Lord for guiding us. Thanks be to God.

Proverbs 4:10-27 (NRSV)

Hear, my child, and accept my words,
that the years of your life may be many.
I have taught you the way of wisdom;
I have led you in the paths of uprightness.
When you walk, your step will not be hampered;
and if you run, you will not stumble.
Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;
guard her, for she is your life.
Do not enter the path of the wicked,
and do not walk in the way of evildoers.
Avoid it; do not go on it;
turn away from it and pass on.
For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong;
they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.
For they eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.
But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know what they stumble over.
My child, be attentive to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.
Do not let them escape from your sight;
keep them within your heart.
For they are life to those who find them,
and healing to all their flesh.
Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.
Put away from you crooked speech,
and put devious talk far from you.
Let your eyes look directly forward,
and your gaze be straight before you.
Keep straight the path of your feet,
and all your ways will be sure.

Do not swerve to the right or to the left;
turn your foot away from evil.

Thought:

Earlier this week, a young man shoved an elderly woman who fell and hit her head on a fire hydrant. It just looked like a random act of violence. Fortunately, the act was caught on camera and the man was caught. This wasn't a first crime. He had been arrested over 100 times. The police officer who killed George Floyd had 18 prior complaints filled against him. Whenever there is a mass shooting, one neighbor says something similar to "He seems such a nice boy (man), I would have never expected him to do this."

The truth of Proverbs is that people decide what path they go down. Do they choose the path of righteousness or the path of the wicked? There is not a middle path. The way of the wicked is the way of darkness and the wine of violence. And, they often take other people down with them. They cannot rest unless they help someone else stumble.

The wisdom of Proverbs encourages people to follow the way of righteousness. This is the path like the morning dawn. Here, a person's actions can be seen in the light and bring no condemnation. Each day, video cameras are recording common events. When you walk into Walmart or most other stores, cameras are recording the events. Cameras are on doorbells and mounted to houses keeping track of the neighborhoods. Usually, the recording simply gets recorded over. Yet, when there is a unique event, the record is kept. Proverbs is encouraging people to have the recording of their lives be worthy of being seen in the light of day. This happens when we keep our path straight, focused on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Luke 6:12-19 (NRSV)

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Thought:

Before making a major decision, Jesus spent time in prayer. He spent an entire night praying. These 12 men would be his closest followers. Jesus would spend the next three years pouring his teachings, power and Spirit into them. We are not told the qualifications of any of them here, but we know it is a mixed group. Some were fishermen, some had fought against Roman occupation, one collected taxes for Rome. Even from the beginning, Luke lets the reader know one of these close disciples will betray Jesus. Had Jesus been told in prayer to pick him, knowing that he had come to die for the sins of the world? Did Judas Iscariot have a chance to change his actions and go down a different path?

These things we do not know. What we do know is that when Jesus made important decisions, he went away to a quiet place and spent long hours of time in prayer. Time talking with the Father, time listening and probably just some time in the presence of God. When we spend long hours of time with a good friend or loved one, we don't talk and listen all the time. In

fact, deeper relationships have a lot of quiet time, just being together. When we come to make decisions in life, may we follow the example of our rabbi and spend quality time in the presence of God.

Prayer:

Loving God, you have called us to be in relationship with you and with one another. You have shown us the path to follow and given your light to keep us righteous. Yet, we have sinned. We have turned to the right or the left. We have done what we should not have done and not done what you have called us to do. In your mercy, forgive us and guide us in the way of salvation. Show us how to live in community as your disciples. May we spend time in prayer listening to your call upon our lives this day and this week.

(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.