

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24;

Exodus 15:1-18 & Colossians 3:12-17

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 (NRSV)

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

The Lord is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;  
the right hand of the Lord is exalted;  
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the Lord.

The Lord has punished me severely,  
but he did not give me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord;  
the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord’s doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.



Thought:

When we read, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,” it sounds like things are going well. Yet, this Psalm is written for when things are difficult. There are days when we need the right hand of God. The right hand is the side of strength. In the midst of struggles, God is with us. Finding the joy of the Lord in the midst of difficult situations takes effort and faith on our part. It requires our heart to be set on him. Faith is realizing no matter what we face, we can still believe in God’s goodness and love. Psalm 118 is the final hymn of the Hallel, the hymns Jesus would have sang after the Passover meal. This could have been the last words Jesus sang before he entered the garden to pray. Jesus went to his arrest and cross with these as the final words of Scripture on his lips. “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good...This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Exodus 15:1-18 (NRSV)

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:  
“I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.  
The Lord is my strength and my might,  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.  
The Lord is a warrior;  
the Lord is his name.  
“Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he cast into the sea;  
his picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea.  
The floods covered them;  
they went down into the depths like a stone.  
Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power—  
your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy.  
In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries;  
you sent out your fury, it consumed them like stubble.  
At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up,  
the floods stood up in a heap;  
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.  
The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake,  
I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them.  
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.’  
You blew with your wind, the sea covered them;  
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.  
“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?  
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,  
awesome in splendor, doing wonders?  
You stretched out your right hand,  
the earth swallowed them.  
“In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed;  
you guided them by your strength to your holy abode.  
The peoples heard, they trembled;  
pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia.  
Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed;  
trembling seized the leaders of Moab;  
all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away.  
Terror and dread fell upon them;  
by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone  
until your people, O Lord, passed by,  
until the people whom you acquired passed by.  
You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession,  
the place, O Lord, that you made your abode,  
the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established.  
The Lord will reign forever and ever.”

Thought:

Imagine what it would have been like to stand beside the Red Sea just after God had divided the waters delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians. As soon as God had delivered the people from slavery, Moses led them in singing praise to God. Words of joy, words of praise, words expressing the salvation. God and God alone had saved them from their enemies, so God received the praise. God had made a covenant with the people, and has kept his promises.

As we read the ancient Psalm, may we remember that God continues to keep his covenant with His people. As the Red Sea gave Israel freedom, the resurrection has given us freedom from sin and death. Jesus has conquered the enemies, and only God is worthy of our praise. We do not put our circumstances, our feelings, our insights or our experiences at the center of our lives. Let us put the Lord at the center of our praise. Let us praise God for who He is “The Lord will reign forever.”

### Colossians 3:12-17 (NRSV)

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Thought:

In this short passage, Paul uses the image of getting dressed, something we do every day, to speak about forgiveness. By grace, we have been chosen by God. God has made us holy and loved. As fallen people, we cannot make ourselves holy and loved by God. This is a gift. As we receive the gift of God’s holy people, we are to put on the wardrobe God has picked out for us: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Because we are holy, and wearing God’s holy garments, we are able to forgive those who sinned against us. God is there to help us forgive, so that we can live with the peace of Christ to rule our hearts. When we forgive with God’s help, we can give praise and thanks to God in everything we do or say. We can live by the grace God has given us and we have shared with one another.

Prayer:

Almighty God, today we experience the warmth of your grace and love. We sing with joy that you have conquered the power of sin and death. In your resurrection, you have become our salvation. Help us to live as resurrection people, knowing that you are with us. May we keep our focus on you, and give you praise in the midst of our daily lives.

Forgiving God, as you have forgiven us, and clothed us with your holy wardrobe, help us to forgive those who have hurt us, who taken our focus off of you. In everything we say or do, may we give thanks to you and give you praise.

(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.