

Friday, May 29, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 33:12-22; Exodus 19:16-25 &
Romans 8:14-17

Psalm 33:12-22 (NRSV)

Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage.
The Lord looks down from heaven;
he sees all humankind.

From where he sits enthroned he watches
all the inhabitants of the earth—
he who fashions the hearts of them all,
and observes all their deeds.

A king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

The war horse is a vain hope for victory,
and by its great might it cannot save.

Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
to deliver their soul from death,
and to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.

Our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.



Thought:

As a child, when my parents said, “my eye is on you,” I knew I was being watched. It usually had to do with the fact that I was doing something I shouldn’t. Yet, as a parent, my eye was always on my children to make sure they were safe. When a parent says, “I only had my eye off him for a second,” you know something bad happened. A parent’s eye is watching out for the safety of the child.

In Psalm 91, we hear that God’s eye is on those who fear Him. This is the eye of a parent watching out for their children. When we hope in the covenantal love of God, God is faithful and watches out for us. Those who had trusted in their own strength cannot be saved. Yet, those who trust in the Lord will find salvation from death. We are not to trust in the strength of this world. We are to trust in the strength of the Lord. Our only hope is in Jesus Christ, the one who conquered death and has delivered us to life eternal.

Exodus 19:16-25 (NRSV)

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp

trembled. Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people not to break through to the Lord to look; otherwise many of them will perish. Even the priests who approach the Lord must consecrate themselves or the Lord will break out against them.” Moses said to the Lord, “The people are not permitted to come up to Mount Sinai; for you yourself warned us, saying, ‘Set limits around the mountain and keep it holy.’” The Lord said to him, “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let either the priests or the people break through to come up to the Lord; otherwise he will break out against them.” So Moses went down to the people and told them.

Thought:

For generations, the covenantal relationship was one sided. God had promised Abraham that God would make Abraham into a great nation. God had told Abraham about the struggles ahead for his descendants (Genesis 15). Now, Israel has come out of slavery and brought to Mt. Sinai to receive the 10 commandments. As they gather at the mountain, they hear God’s voice as a loud trumpet and experience His presence as an earthquake. God is present in the midst of the people wrapped in smoke and fire. God’s presence is felt, smelled and heard. God was present in through all the senses.

The people were to cleanse themselves and consecrate themselves. They were to wash their clothes, and present themselves into the presence of God. Yet, they could not come onto the mountain. Moses and Aaron were the only ones to come into the presence of God. Israel needed to understand the holiness of the Lord. As a people, Israel was to conform to God’s holiness. Now, after bringing them out of slavery, God is giving them his laws to guide them in holiness.

Ultimately, it was only Jesus Christ who was able to fulfill the law. When we receive Jesus’ Spirit, we are called to be his people, and live by his covenantal law. While it had been given to the Israelites externally, it is given to us internally through the Spirit. As a result of this, our ability to keep the law has increased by the grace of God. We are enabled to be a holy people, a royal priesthood.

Romans 8:14-17 (NRSV)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Thought:

Being under the law is not being under slavery, but under the family rules of God. Paul used the image of adoption in God. Through the Spirit of God, we have been adopted by God, called his children. As children, we have become part of the family of God. We are no longer strangers and aliens. We are loved children of God. Our relationship with God was initiated by

God in order that we could have life eternal. A child does not start the adoption process. A child cannot sign adoption papers. Adoption is something that is done by the parent to claim the child as their own.

When I was adopted by my father, he was calling me his own child. My former birth certificate was destroyed and has no legal standing. I was given a new birth certificate where my father's name was the name of my new father. Legally, I took the last name "Sexton." I had been using it for years, at adoption, the relationship was finalized. In grace, he chose me to be his child. In a similar way, God has claimed us and given us a new name. God has signed our birth certificate and said, "call me Abba, Father." When we fully accept this relationship and this grace, we want to follow the house rules. We want to live in the freedom as children of God. We want to be heirs, receiving the eternal salvation from our Father.

Prayer:

Holy Father, through Jesus Christ you have claimed us, adopted us and called us your children. Through your Spirit, you have filled us with life and life eternal. Forgive us when we live in fear and do not trust in your strength. Show us how to live into the freedom of a relationship built on grace and holiness.

Empowering Spirit, send us out to be your witness to our community and your world. May we work to bring unity where there is disunity, love where there is hatred, hope where there is despair. We pray for Minnesota and other places of unrest and riot. Show your children how to bring light into the darkness. Work within us to cleanse our prejudice and sin. Lord, hear our prayer.

(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.