

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; 1 Samuel 3:1-9 &
2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

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:

When Jess lived in Ethiopia, she was referred to as “Jessie Bruce.” When I asked one of her teacher friends about this, he told me the importance of knowing one’s family lineage. His name is “Yirga Wendu.” But then he kept listing names of his fathers. I was a bit embarrassed that I could only say “Bruce, Stan, Clifford.” Yirga went back twenty names and could keep going. Part of the importance comes when you meet someone. They would list their father’s names until they connected. If you go back far enough in Ethiopian history, you will have a common ancestor. In this way, they all realized they were family. They just hadn’t met yet.

The Psalmist reminds us that all believers are descendants of Abraham and Jacob. The covenant God made with them is the same covenant God has made with us. In Jesus Christ, that covenant came to fulfillment and reached beyond the Jewish nation to include all the nations of the world. This covenant is an eternal covenant. God will continue to keep it, even when His people break it.

Part of the reason we do not remember our family heritage results from the break-up of the family. If I was being honest, “Bruce, Stan, Clifford” is following my adopted father’s lineage. I couldn’t go even that far back on my biological father’s side of the family. Yet, we are reminded to give praise to God for his faithful through all generations. If we want to know who God is and what he is like, explore what he has done throughout the generations.

1 Samuel 3:1-9 (NRSV)

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Thought:

At this time, Samuel was a young servant for Eli. When God called to him, Samuel needed Eli to understand that it was the Lord speaking. Eli gave Samuel the words, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” The role of a spiritual mentor is to help people discern when God is speaking and when we are just hearing things. All too often, when it is God, we are slow to listen. It seems like a nagging voice in the back of our heads. At these times, we need others to help us listen to God.

Samuel did listen, and Samuel became the last and greatest of the judges in Israel’s history. It would later be his job to anoint first Saul and then David as king over Israel. We remember the work of Samuel more than we do of Eli. Yet, Eli was important to the salvation history found in the Bible. Who is your mentor helping you discern the voice of the Lord? Who are you mentoring? Or maybe, you just need to lie down and be quiet and say, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening. And then, listen to for the Lord speaking to you today.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5 (NRSV)

But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you, and that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will go on doing the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

Thought:

Paul had just been speaking about persecution. He had sent Timothy to be with them to help them keep the faith. Then, he begins this section with the word “But.” When we face trials and storms in life, we need to have the faith to remember it is not the end of the story. There is always the “But” of faith. Even in the midst of chaos, Paul calls us to give thanks to the Lord because we are the first fruits of salvation. God is working His salvation history through his chosen people. We have been given the gift of the Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming the good news to others.

Today, the winds of time are blowing. There is change within the air. Some of this change is necessary. We all look forward to the day when all God’s children are treated with respect and grace. When a person is judged by their character and not the color of their skin. Yet, there is other changes in the wind that blows away from the faith, and away from the word of God. May we have the wisdom to discern God’s salvation. To stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that are that guide us in the faith. Then, we can find comfort in our hearts from our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Prayer:

Eternal God, we are thankful that you keep your covenant throughout the generations. We give you thanks for the people who have guided us in our faith in you. May we be mindful of them and remember to share your message of salvation with the next generation. Give us your wisdom to discern your voice in the midst of all the voices today. May we hold fast to the traditions that are important to salvation and let go those that keep people from you. Continue to reconcile your people to you and one another.

All powerful Lord, we pray for our community, our state, our nation and your world. Give wise advisors to those making laws. Allow our country to remain a land that is free to gather and worship you. We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted for their faith. Bring people of encouragement into their lives as you bring change to their land. O 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.