

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Daily Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 69:7-10, 16-18; Jeremiah 18:12-17 &
Hebrews 2:5-9

Psalm 69:7-10, 16-18 (NRSV)

It is for your sake that I have borne reproach,
that shame has covered my face.
I have become a stranger to my kindred,
an alien to my mother's children.
It is zeal for your house that has consumed me;
the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.
When I humbled my soul with fasting,
they insulted me for doing so.
Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good;
according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.
Do not hide your face from your servant,
for I am in distress—make haste to answer me.
Draw near to me, redeem me,
set me free because of my enemies.



Thought:

There are times when standing up to the faith leads to rejection or criticism. This becomes even harder when it is family members or close friends. Here the Psalmist is lamenting that being close to God and standing on Biblical principles has alienated him from his brothers and sisters. When relationships struggle over Biblical principles, it is worth taking a moment to investigate the cause of alienation. Maybe the problem is related to history that needs to change. Yet, if it is truly biblical, it may be better to lament the loss of relationship with those close to us than with God.

Jeremiah 18:12-17 (NRSV)

But they say, "It is no use! We will follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of our evil will."

Therefore thus says the Lord:

Ask among the nations:

Who has heard the like of this?

The virgin Israel has done
a most horrible thing.

Does the snow of Lebanon leave
the crags of Sirion?

Do the mountain waters run dry,
the cold flowing streams?

But my people have forgotten me,
they burn offerings to a delusion;
they have stumbled in their ways,
in the ancient roads,
and have gone into bypaths,
not the highway,

making their land a horror,
a thing to be hissed at forever.
All who pass by it are horrified
and shake their heads.
Like the wind from the east,
I will scatter them before the enemy.
I will show them my back, not my face,
in the day of their calamity.

Thought:

Over and over again, God has warned Israel and called them to repent and return to following God's covenant. Yet, the people refused. God had Jeremiah observe a potter at the wheel. God used that image to warn Israel that God could apply pressure from Israel's enemies to reshape Israel into something that suited God. Israel would not listen. They wanted to follow their own paths.

We all know people, and if we are honest, there is a part in each of us that want to just live as we have lived no matter the doom that will result. God wanted to reason with them. Is it possible to make the snow stop falling in the Blues in wintertime? Is it possible to have the Columbia stop flowing? Is there anything you can do to have weeds stop growing in your yard? We all know the answer is a resounding "NO." yet, all things are possible with God. We forget that God is the one in control. This does not mean the snows won't remain, the river won't flow and the weeds won't grow. Yet, God is able to bring any change. If we are only willing to repent and return to God. Over and over again, God gives us a chance to change our lives and allow Him to mold us into His image.

Hebrews 2:5-9 (NRSV)

Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. But someone has testified somewhere,

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?

You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned them with glory and honor,
subjecting all things under their feet.”

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Thought:

Jesus Christ is the source of our salvation. On the cross, God judged sin. Jesus took upon himself the sins of the world. On the cross, God tasted death for everyone. Now, Jesus is crowned in glory and honor and worthy of our praise. We have all sinned. We have all wandered away from God. Sometimes this has happened when family and friends criticize our faith in God. “If God loves you, what did this happen to you and not me?” Sometimes it happens because we have chosen our own way and told God we want to follow our own plans. No matter, we have all turned from God.

And over and over again, God has come to us. He has given us images of snow-covered mountains and cool flowing rivers. God has given us images from His creation that point to one who is faithful to the everlasting covenant. In the end, God came himself as Jesus Christ to suffer

death in order that we may experience the complete grace of God. God himself tasted death to give us life and life eternal. God has prepared a creation where we will see God face to face and join with the angels in giving praise and glory to the one who has a never-ending love for humanity.

Prayer:

Almighty God, give us strength to be your witnesses in the midst of rejection and criticism. When you were rejected, you continued to display your love and gift of salvation with all people. Simply give us the strength to stand firm in our faith and proclaim you as Lord and Savior. When we seek our own way, guide us back to your path of salvation. In Jesus; name, forgive our sins and fill us with life anew. In the midst of the chaos and noise of today, allow us to be in your presence and hear your words of grace.

Lord, you know our prayers better than we know them ourselves. We pray for our nation. Heal the pain. Bring the reform that is needed in order that we can be one nation under God. We pray for those who work for peace in our land and in the world. Give protection to those who risk their lives each day that we can have the freedom to worship you. Give wise counsel to our president, senators, representatives, supreme court judges, governor and all you have placed in authority over us. 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.