



still waters

home church studies

psalm 97

[Worship]

1 The LORD is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! 2 Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. 3 Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side. 4 His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. 5 The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. 6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory. 7 All worshipers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him. 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O God. 9 For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. 10 The LORD loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked. 11 Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

[Think & Pray...]

Consider: We are a very comfortable people. Our lives here have many choices and consumerism is evident even in our Churches; from buildings, church styles, even how padded our pews are, so that our Christian butts are comfortable while we bring our "sacrifice" of praise each Sunday.

What is really surrendered in our style of following Jesus? You know, that prophet with the wild claims about being God; the one who said ridiculous things to friend and acquaintance about placing others first, and more importantly, placing ourselves at the back of the line.

We want to relegate Jesus to a whole different level of humanity (as well we should), but often confuse his ability as being unattainable. After all, "He is God and I am not!" "He knew people's thoughts and hearts," as if to say that that made his way easier than ours. Really?

I'm sure knowing everything has its advantages, but the things that Jesus asks of us (and fully expects) is to learn his response to every situation, finding the godly, moral way, which always reflects God's grace, justice, and mercy, requiring our servitude--our selflessness to the point of sacrifice for God and others. And at all costs, those who are oppressed, marginalized, and kept at arms distance.

As we think this week about how we silently demand God to bless, even our inappropriate grasping for comfort as entitlement in our comfortable churches, expecting nary a problem to befall us,...

Paul & Silas singing in a dungeon, after delivering one swept up in the popular religion (and its props), and as a result of this 'Jesus style' sacrifice, God is glorified in worship... "In that very Hour!"

Hmmmm... Maybe we've missed something...

[The Scripture]

acts 16 .16-34

16 One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17 While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." 18 She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. 19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. 20 When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews 21 and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. 23 After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 34 He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.