

still waters

home church studies

psalm 81 .1, 10-16

[Worship]

1 Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob.

10 I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. 11 "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. 13 O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! 14 Then I would quickly subdue their enemies, and turn my hand against their foes. 15 Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their doom would last forever. 16 I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

"You are what you worship," Jeremiah tells us. While we may confess one faith, the object of our true devotion reveals itself in our everyday actions and in the things that we devote most of our time and energy to. And when our hearts are devoted to anything but God, we betray not only God but expose our true selves: "Your fathers went after idols, and became empty themselves... My people have changed their glory, for useless things" (Jer. 2.5). Though more than 2,000 years have passed, little has changed. If anything, we now have more access to a greater variety of useless things than ever. The idols are different in name and shape, but their effect is the same: Lifeless objects bring death, not life. In the end, however, we are always freely allowed to make the choice between

God and idols: "My people heard me not, so I gave them up to the hardness of their hearts" (Psm 81.12-13).

The choice to "fear" (also translated as "revere") the Lord has never been easy to make or to maintain. But God promises the only true and lasting fortune, for "I will never forsake you or abandon you" (Heb 13.5).

Jesus reaffirms the rewards of choosing the goodness that God asks of us. When our generosity and mercy have no bounds toward "the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind... blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you" (Lk 14.13-14). We are most blessed when our generosity (like God's) is not repayable.

[The Scripture]

hebrews 13 .1-8, 15-16



1 Let mutual love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those who are in prison, as

though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. 4 Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." 6 So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" 7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 15 Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God