

still waters

home church studies

psalm 79.1-9

[Worship]

1 O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. 2 They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth. 3 They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. 4 We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us. 5 How long, O LORD? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealous wrath burn like fire? 6 Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name. 7 For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation. 8 Do not remember against us the iniquities of our ancestors; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. 9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and forgive our sins, for your name's sake.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

Engaging the World – This week's passages are confounding. Jesus advises his disciples to use "worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings" (Luke 16:9). Paul seems to endorse the use of worldly power structures by advising Timothy's congregation to pray for those in power that "we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." What's going on here?

Just when the disciples think they understand the kingdom of God, Jesus throws them with a new idea. "It's not what you think," Jesus is saying. "Keep on your toes, keep engaging with the Word." Within these strange verses we learn something of the new order Jesus issues. We are to engage with every sphere of life with holy, transforming reverence. The children of light should never assume that they've figured it all out and have nothing to learn from outsiders.

We are not free from engaging with the world and its structures. This includes filthy lucre. According to verse 14, the Pharisees were listening. Jesus is once again trying to draw these teachers of the people into God's view of things, inviting them to use wealth as a means to serve God's people.

We are not permitted to abandon anyone within our society, including those within the ranks of the powers and principalities. This is not an endorsement of structures of oppression, but an invitation to stay engaged and compassionate, praying for their transformation and liberation to serve God. To live as God's children is to refuse to regard people through the labels and categories the system of oppression creates. This means those at the top of society need as much (if not more) love and prayer as those at the bottom of society.

The manager responds with urgency to an imminent event—his dismissal. Jesus prods us to be alert, for the kingdom of God is nigh. Do we live with a sense of the imminent kingdom of God? Do we recognize God in the small things as well as the large? Do we consider the "very little" with which we are entrusted as being of utmost import? *Kari Jo Verhulst*



[The Scripture]

1 timothy 2 .1-7

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all--this was attested at the right time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.