

still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 31.1-8, 15-16 [Worship]

1 In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me. 2 Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. 3 You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, 4 take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. 5 Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God. 6 You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD. 7 I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have taken heed of my adversities, 8 and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place. 15 My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. 16 Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

### Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

The journey that we take from betrayal and death to resurrection and new life is a search for community, spiritual vision, and the reconstruction of a new humanity, our own included. To follow Christ is to recognize that we are not captive to the old order; that we are not surrogates of systems that are not working; and that we are not authored by credentials, achievements, or possessions. Rather, to follow Christ is to embrace the path that offers compassion, vulnerability, justice, covenants, and relationships.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, we are affirmed as the daughters and sons of God, created and shaped in God's image. God's mark and spirit are upon us. We are not God's elite or God's favorite or pampered people, but are claimed by God for God's purposes. This is about obedience and faithfulness.

In Acts 7:55-60, Stephen is stoned for proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah. The temple leaders, who had condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy, are willing to accept him as the son of

Abraham but not as the Son of God. The temple leaders claimed to be believers, but they refused to become disciples.

Believers give lip service without obedience. Belief demands a radical break from life as we know it and live it. It is freedom from our limited perception of things and from the lifestyles and life agenda that those perceptions engender. If God's Spirit is to breathe through us, belief involves a radical break from the gods of militarism, nationalism, and materialism.

However, those who choose to follow in the way of the crucified and risen Sovereign will always be in trouble with the authorities.

Jesus creates a crisis with the authorities because he transcends the rules of the scribes who manage the tax system, the priests who manage the rituals, and the Pharisees who manage the morality. He lived in the world by different definitions. Jesus offers us a new and different notion of what it means to be a powerful person—it is the power to serve but not to master, to die but not to kill, to bring order but not to dominate.

**Reflection Questions:** In what ways are you living in the world by different definitions? How do these definitions empower—giving you breathing space and room to grow and move in new ways?

[The Scripture]

### Acts 7.55-60

55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" 57 But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58 Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

