



still waters

home church studies

Psalm 124

[Worship]

1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—let Israel now say— 2 if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when our enemies attacked us, 3 then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; 4 then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; 5 then over us would have gone the raging waters. 6 Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth. 7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped. 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

"Is the Lord among us or not?" ask the grumbling children of Israel. "Who do people say the Human One is?" asks Jesus. Between these two questions stretches a long, thirsty history. The wandering in the wilderness desert has become a settled life under occupation, but the people still feel lost, and parched. They look for a prophet, some old-time religion, a rainmaker, a holy well-digger.

Peter's recognition that Jesus is the Messiah will not bring living water to Israel in the way that Peter might have

thought in the moment. But his basic statement of faith has tapped into a deep, wetter-than-wet spiritual truth. God is among us.

Jesus reacts by granting a type of leadership within the faith community to Peter. (*"Church" here doesn't mean an institution with buildings and committees, but rather a group of people waiting with faith and longing for the end times.*) "Binding and loosing" refers to rabbinical interpretation of the law to determine when a given action is forbidden or permitted. In Matthew 18:18-20 Jesus grants this authority to all the disciples.



A traditional gospel hymn goes, "Where are the keys to the kingdom? I'm standing at the door and I want to come in." How do the presence of God's living water and questions of authority come together in your faith community?

Julie Polter

[The Scripture]

Matthew 16.13-20

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.