



still waters

home church studies

Psalm 19

[Worship]

1 The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; 4 yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; 8 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes; 9 the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. 12 But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults. 13 Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

In the scriptures, more often than not the land that folks are supposed to call home is not the land they're standing on. Witness the Lord sending Moses to the top of a mountain to see the land that is promised to the people of Israel (Numbers 27:12)—a land that Moses is forbidden to enter since he rebelled against God earlier. Then there is Paul writing to the church in Philippi that "our commonwealth is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). Christians are supposed to be seeking out a homeland that isn't even on any map.

Through the ages, the hazard with any sort of promised land is that it is usually claimed with bloody force. One people's land of promise is another's land of betrayal, loss, and death. The United States was built, consciously and unconsciously, on the wrenching of soil from others' hands. The gruesome staking of claims and counterclaims shattered the former Yugoslavia. In Israel, ancient promises engender bitterness and violence.

If the pursuit of earthly homelands has destroyed peoples and wounded the Earth, the pursuit of a heavenly country hasn't necessarily been better. Paul emphasizes "straining forward to what lies ahead" (Philippians 3:13) and not living like those who have "minds set on earthly things" (3:19). While this is a poetic call to a life of righteousness and deep spirit, such thinking has been misused to justify neglect and degradation of the creation, and dismissal or shame of our bodies, lovingly crafted by God.

What kind of tenants are we (Matthew 21:33-43)? —Julie Polter



[Scripture]

Philippians 3.4b-14

4b If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.