

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 123

[Worship]

1 To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! 2 As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us. 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. 4 Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

Julie Polter

When I was a child, the parable of the talents made me nervous. I was raised to consider a good credit rating as bringing a person even closer to godliness than cleanliness. An investment riskier than a passbook savings account was viewed with suspicion. Making money through any method other than sweat and thrift was reckless wheeling and dealing. By those standards, the servant who buried her one talent was wisely cautious, doing her job and doing it well—certainly not deserving of casting into "outer darkness."

This heading-toward-final-judgment part of the liturgical calendar just made it hard for me to sleep at night.

The stated dramatic consequences of "living wrong" in these passages are hard to ignore. But they can draw attention away from the lessons to be had about different ways of living in relation to God who isn't just in the End, or the Beginning, but is along for the ride through the long, bumpy Middle, too.

The choice about such things is left up to us. We can live like God is ineffectual or nonexistent, meaningless to our days and nights.

Or we can live like God is important in such a way that we don't dare risk making a mistake—like our lives are fine china on loan from Grandma, and her rage over a broken plate would destroy us.

We can live like what we have—existence, talent, gifts of wit or welding—came from Someone, somewhere, and a new day is a chance to see what it can do and how it can grow. If a few plates get broken, who needs fine china anyway?

How is the world distressed and battered, even threatened with ending, through the belief that God isn't there or doesn't matter? What outer darkness do we create for ourselves out of our fear and the burying of gifts?



[Scripture] 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day will surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; 7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.