

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 85.1-2, 8-13 [Worship]

1 LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. 2 You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin. Selah

8 Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. 9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. 11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. 12 The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. 13 Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

by Peter B. Price

Exile is a place or state of not belonging. It is a refusal to accept or conform to the prevailing culture. The people of God are in exile in Babylon. Babylon symbolizes everything that destroys faith and community—idolatry, wealth, power, luxury, oppression.

People in exile experience anger, guilt, and powerlessness; they are trapped in despair (Isaiah 40). Such people need a voice. The poet's voice must nurture, inspire, and empower change. By speaking words of comfort (40:1) and forgiveness (40:2), hope is generated (40:9-11).

For God's people a new story is in the making. "All humanity will see it together" (40:3-5). The apparent powerlessness of God during the exile will be transformed; "Here is your God!" is the recognition of reclaimed sovereignty (40:9-10). People once afraid now speak fearlessly. It is a time for action. Exiles must embrace faith in God, discern their true political situation, and choose to act. "Prepare.... Make a straight way for God" (40:3). The power of God's Word must have its say in history (40:6-8; 55:10-11).

This is gospel, or good news (Mark 1:1). In the Roman Empire, gospel was political propaganda, telling news of military victories. Jesus announces "good news from God" and speaks of a "kingdom." Preparing a way for the Lord to come is an activity, and a declaration, which gives notice to the culture of empire that "what we are waiting for, relying on God's promises, is the new heavens and new earth, where uprightness will be at home" (2 Peter 3:13).

Talking Points

Who do you know that does not "belong"? Who is nurturing, inspiring, and empowering them? Are you? What would be "good news" for them?

Reflection and Action

How is your practice of resistance developing in the light of today's study?

[Scripture]

2 Peter 3.8-14a



8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. 11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. 14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him.