

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 111

[Worship]

1 Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. 2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. 3 Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. 4 He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful. 5 He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. 6 He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. 7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. 8 They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. 9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name. 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Consider:

by Peter Price

Authority can be imposed and submitted to, or it can be discerned and willingly accepted. The religious leaders of Jesus' culture imposed both authority and control, manipulating the life, death, health, and welfare of many. Jesus' first sermon made a deep impression on his hearers because unlike the scribes, he taught with authority.

The "spirit" of the authority of the scribes undergirded the prevailing social order. Challenged by Jesus the demon became infuriated, and questioned, Have you come to destroy us? That is, Have you come to destroy scribal authority and all that it means? The answer contained in Jesus' exorcism is yes.

The prophetic word needs to be spoken in each generation. Moses recognized that such a word (Deuteronomy 18) needs to be consistent with the God whose work is full of splendor and majesty, and whose saving justice stands firm forever (Psalm 111:3). Through his practice of saving justice, Jesus elicited praise for God from the common people. "Here is teaching that is new" (Mark 1:27) is the bittersweet response, a painful reminder that the truth understood by the psalmist—the deliverance God sends to his people—had long been neglected by religious leaders.



Paul continually speaks of freedom in Christ and encourages people to live in freedom (Galatians 5:1). At the same time he cautions against wounding vulnerable consciences (1 Corinthians 8:12). The chief reason for turning to God is to discover a love that transforms the whole world. True authority is discerned in discovering God as the root of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

Reflection and Action

[Think & Pray...]

What structures might reasonably cry out, "Have you come to destroy us?" Where are the signs of the prophetic word being spoken in our generation? Who are those with "vulnerable consciences" that should not be wounded? How can you be sensitive to them?

[Scripture] 1 Corinthians 8.7b, 9-13

Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? 11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. 12 But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.