

# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 25.1-10

[Worship]

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. 3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. 4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. 6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD! 8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

### Consider:

[Words]

The ark, rainbow, and dove are symbols of promise, signs of ending and beginning. Whatever devastation Noah witnessed, it evoked a promise, a covenant that never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all living things (Genesis 9:15). Symbols marked the beginning of a new order. The ark, in which only a few were saved (1 Peter 3:20), spoke of salvation. The dove conveyed the promise of life (Genesis 8:11), while the rainbow reminded of the covenant faithfulness of God.

At the Jordan the Spirit, like a dove, holds the promise of new life. While the baptized Jesus carries in himself, like the ark, the hope of salvation, the voice from heaven expresses the covenant faithfulness of God. To these signs is added the heavens torn apart (Mark 1:10), a symbol of prophetic hope expressed by Isaiah (Isaiah 64:1-2). In the scriptures "heaven" and "earth" are themselves symbols for two dimensions of history, that which is hidden—heaven—and that which is apparent—earth. Isaiah's vision of God "tearing the heavens open and coming down" poetically acknowledges, in Pablo Richard's words, that "history is not simply what can be seen in the world of appearance, the empirical world. It also has a deep transcendent, hidden dimension."



Such symbols speak of the reality of God intervening in the human story, inviting us to live differently. The first letter of Peter, written to Christians deprived of citizenship and civil rights, reminds them that their baptism is not just a sign of the washing off of physical dirt but of their entry into a covenant relationship with the crucified and risen Christ, to whom the ruling forces and powers are subject (1 Peter 3:21-22). Outwardly, victory over the forces remains hidden in empirical history, but the signs and symbols retain the power to remind us of the final triumph.

[Scripture]

## Mark 1.9-15

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." 12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."