

still waters

home church studies

Psalms 9.9-20

[Worship]

9 The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. 10 And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you. 11 Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion. Declare his deeds among the peoples. 12 For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted. 13 Be gracious to me, O LORD. See what I suffer from those who hate me; you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death, 14 so that I may recount all your praises, and, in the gates of daughter Zion, rejoice in your deliverance. 15 The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid has their own foot been caught. 16 The LORD has made himself known, he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. Higgaiion. Selah.

17 The wicked shall depart to Sheol, all the nations that forget God. 18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever. 19 Rise up, O LORD! Do not let mortals prevail; let the nations be judged before you. 20 Put them in fear, O LORD; let the nations know that they are only human.

Selah.

Consider:

[Words]

Crossing boundaries—of gender, race, or culture—is one of the most difficult activities in human experience. Perhaps the most difficult boundary to cross is that between injustice and justice. Mark tells the story of Jesus trying to cross the lake Gennesaret from the Jewish (albeit Galilean) side to the Gentile territory of the Gerasenes (Mark 4:35-41). The boundary in this story is between Jesus as prophet to the Jews, on one side, and to the whole of humanity, as symbolized by the Gentile community across the water. The cosmic forces of opposition are expressed in the wind and the rain; the boat is almost overwhelmed.

Any community that embarks seriously on bringing about reconciliation needs to recognize the potential for shipwreck! Paul, in his letters to Corinth, emphasizes the difficulties Christians face in retaining their integrity, and he speaks from his own experience. This part of Paul's letter is not a challenge to individuals primarily, but to the whole community—which is in danger of exchanging a commitment to justice, with its attendant risks of persecution, for moral compromise with the governing authorities. The law breaking that Paul has in mind here is the law of God, which requires the pursuit of justice and fidelity.



Reflection and Action

Where are the boundaries that need crossing in your life and community? What keeps you from crossing them? Why are you still frightened? Have you still no faith? Plan some simple boundary-crossing activity. —Peter B. Price

[Scripture]

2 Corinthians 6.3-13

3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. 11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13 In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

Also read, 1 Samuel 17.1a, 4-11, 19-23, & 32-49