

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 130

[Worship]

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. 2 Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! 3 If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. 8 It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

Consider:

[Words]

"For my sake treat young Absalom gently." The heartfelt cry of a father, David, toward a devious and rebellious son is unheeded by those who have been charged with putting down a costly rebellion. In their heart of hearts they are glad to see Absalom dead, and the words of one messenger sums up all their feelings: "May all who rise up to harm you share the fate of that young man" (2 Samuel 18:5, 32).

It is uncertain whether or not there is a connection between Psalm 130, David's reaction to the death of his son, and the impact of the destructiveness unleashed in his kingdom, first through his own actions, and then those of his offspring. But the question raised, "If you kept a record of our sins, Lord, who could stand their ground?" (Psalm 130:3) is a salutary reminder of the deadliness of sin in the human condition and our constant need for grace.

Paul requires of the faith communities a reordering of behavior. From now on there must be no more lies. Speak the truth to one another. Lying, anger, theft, foul talk, bitterness, anger, bad temper, shouting, and abuse (Ephesians 4:25-30) are all prohibited behavior for the Christian community. Oh!

that it were so! During the movement to end nuclear weapons and the arms trade, one wise observer reflected, "There is enough anger in the peace movement to start World War III all by itself!" The priority of the people of God is generosity, sympathy, and forgiveness in the way that God forgave us in Christ.

The community of God's people is also to be a place of sexual integrity (Ephesians 5:1-5). Sexual behavior that runs counter to the gospel provides a constant challenge to the community of faith. We are bidden to recall that our gratification is the bread of life, which is given for the life of the world (John 6:51). The behavior of Christians in all matters should not hinder the feeding of the world; and where it has, we should cry from the depths for God's forgiveness in order that God may be revered.



Reflection and Action

How is your faith community obeying the injunctions of Paul in its lifestyle and behavior? How do you deal with behavior that exposes the community to criticism, ridicule, or the dishonoring of God's name?

[Scripture]

John 6.35, 41-47

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

41 Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.