

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:

[Words]

A fresh start is always possible. On inheriting the throne of his father, David, Solomon prays, "Give your servant a heart to understand how to govern your people, how to discern between good and evil" (1 Kings 3.9). Undoubtedly the Davidic empire needed such discernment, and Solomon's prayer and intention is a model for all inaugurations. God promises discerning judgment, and the psalmist recalls that the works of God's hands are fidelity and justice (Psalm 111.7).

Such transformation is more than a matter of wishing or praying. Jesus invites participation in a new order by calling on those who are trapped within the legalism of tradition to find new life through "munching" on him. The idea of eating flesh

and blood was anathema to Jews; but Jesus needs to use an alternative metaphor to mark out the distinction between his community, which offers food for life, and the staleness and oppressiveness of law and tradition. Jesus discerns a longing for social justice among those who have received the bread at the feeding (John 6.1-15), but sees a people trapped by the bread that ancestors ate (John 6.58).



Yet Jesus' invitation to life is not unqualified. Paul perceives the need for Christians not to be thoughtless or to become addicts to the spirit of the age, dissipating the life that God gives (Ephesians 5.15-16). The community is called to praise God, because it is God, not us, who seeks to transform relationships for the transformation of the world.

Reflection and Action

Where are the signs of new beginnings in our world? To what extent is your community of faith munching on the bread of life or the bread our ancestors ate?

[Scripture]

John 6.51-58

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."
52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; 55 for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. 56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."