

still waters

home church studies

Psalms 34: 1-8, 9-22

[Worship]

1 I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. 3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5 Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. 6 This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble. 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD rescues them from them all. 20 He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken. 21 Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. 22 The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Consider: Peter B. Price

[Words]

What a difference it makes how we answer the same question! On their journey to Jerusalem, Jesus asks the squabbling disciples, "What do you want me to do for you?" They answer him, "Grant us to sit on your right and left hand" (Mark 10:36-37). A few days later, Jesus is accosted with the shouts of the discriminated against, disenfranchised blind beggar, Bartimaeus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks him, and he replies, "Teacher, let me see again" (Mark 10:51).

Jesus cannot answer the request of the disciples, because they are seeking self-aggrandizement and the power that goes with it. Jesus can help Bartimaeus, on the other hand, because he understands the true nature of his condition: He is blind.

One of the "last" has become "first," and those who might reasonably have thought themselves first—we who "have left everything and followed"—have become "last." The writer to the

Hebrews draws a distinction between those called to high office in the church who are subject to weakness, and the Lord, who has real "power to save those who come to God through him who is absolute, since he lives forever to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

In a world whose values are almost permanently topsy-turvy, people with integrity, uncontaminated by the self-seeking of the world, are usually the disregarded, the discriminated against. To choose to live life in the way of God, despite the worst the systems can throw at us, requires opened eyes. It calls for us to move beyond the simplistic condemnation and blaming of God that so often mark discipleship under pressure. Like Job we need to confess that we have so often been those "who misrepresented your intentions with ignorant words" (Job 42:3), and recognize with the psalmist that "though hardships without number beset the upright, the Lord rescues...from them all" (Psalm 34:19).

Reflection and Action

If Jesus were to ask, "What do you want me to do for you?" how would you answer? How have you "misrepresented God's intentions with ignorant words"? Where have you discovered God rescuing from hardships?



[Scripture]

Hebrews 7.23-28

23 Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.