

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 63.1-8

[Worship]

1 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. 4 So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name. 5 My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips 6 when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; 7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy. 8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Consider:



[Words]
Lent is a time for making decisions about God's good news and our life in the world. The decisions pose the question: "What is better?" In Psalm 63, we get an answer, "God's steadfast love is better than life." The Psalm evokes a plethora of images: God's fidelity is like water in a weary land; a feast of rich food; a shadow amid the hot sun; a strong hand that keeps one from falling. The Psalm

invites reflection on God's reliability for which there is no adequate substitute in our busy world of consumerism.

Corinthians is more concrete. Here the alternative is to "desire evil." The phrase gives Paul a chance to review ancient history as an "example." That memory includes the "golden calf" (Exodus 32; Corinthians 10:7-8) and murmuring in the wilderness (Numbers 21:4-6; Corinthians 10:9). The "desire of evil" is an alternative of self-sufficiency, to shape our "gods" according to

our convenience. "Desiring evil" in our contemporary society is to imagine with enough power, goods, and control one does not need the gift of fidelity.

Isaiah's poem sets the choice that God's people are always making—free water, milk, and bread, or the rat-race of self-sufficiency. "Seek the Lord" is an invitation to abandon self-sufficiency for life in the gospel. Luke, with its two odd case studies, is preoccupied with "repentance" and the call to "bear fruit." The hard part is choosing to live differently. That is always the important part, now as it was then. Life in the rat-race makes us "prey for jackals" (Psalm 63:10) without time to bless and thank God (Psalm 63:6) **Walter Bruggemann**

[Scripture]

1 Corinthians 10.1-13

1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. 6 Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.