

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 31.9-16

[Worship]

9 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. 10 For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away. 11 I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. 12 I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. 13 For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. 14 But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." 15 My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. 16 Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

Consider:

[Words]

Lent is a time for "following." The narrative about Jesus' suffering and death provides a way in which we are able, in an act of disciplined imagination, to situate (or resituate) our lives in the story of Jesus. We become aware that the story of Jesus requires and permits a new version of our own story of life and faith.

Lent is a time for fresh decision-making about reliance upon the God of the gospel. Such decision-making in Lent is commonly called "repentance." It's a time to reflect on the way in which God gives new life that is welcome when we recognize how our old way of life mostly leaves us weary and unsatisfied.

Lent is a time to face the reality that there is no easy or "convenient" passage from our previous life to a new joyous life in

the gospel. The move is by the pattern and sequence of Jesus' own life, an embrace of suffering that comes with obedience, which comes inevitably when our lives are at odds with dominant social values.

Lent is a time for life with God. While Jesus' suffering and death are quite public events in the Roman Empire, his prayers—echoing the Psalms—evidence that his primary focus was on life with God. In Lent we may draw away from public life enough to give energy to this defining relationship with God who hears and answers, who summons, forgives, and saves.

[Scripture]

Isaiah 50.4-9a

4 The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.



Morning by morning he wakens--wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6 I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult

and spitting. 7 The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9 It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

Question:

What has Lent meant to you?

How can we respond to this call?

Indeed, it is at the point of facing not only death but the less ultimate tragedies of failure and disillusionment that the call comes again. It is then that our discipleship journey, like our LORD's story, our journey either truly ends or truly begins.

Also, read for yourself this week, Luke 22.14 – 23.56