

Psalm 148

[Worship]

1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! 2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! 3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! 4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. 6 He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, 8 fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! 9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! 10 Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! 12 Young men and women alike, old and young together! 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. 14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!

Consider:

[Words]

Following the resurrection and leading to Pentecost, we and the disciples learn how to live the resurrection and translate it into community, into church. For Jesus' followers, community has always consisted of those who look, think, pray, and act like they do. Once on their own, the disciples revert to what is comfortable and known. When Peter ministers among the Gentiles, the other disciples ask him, "Why did you go to uncircumcised people and eat with them?" Peter gives a lengthy explanation, ultimately concluding, "If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" (Acts 11:17). Peter and the

community are amazed to find that the "unclean" are also invited to the table: "God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life!"

If Jesus' own followers had trouble living the gospel, how much more so will we? Aren't we, too, hesitant to believe that God has given all others "the repentance that leads to life"?

Perhaps instead of judging the worthiness of those who are different, we should look at our own lives and the opportunities for conversion that lie within. According to martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, the ongoing process of conversion is itself the meaning of church: "One cannot be part of this church without being faithful to [Jesus'] manner of passing from death to life, without a sincere movement of conversion and of fidelity to the Lord." Both the disciples and Romero had to rethink their preconceived notions about what—and who—makes the church. In both cases, it was the despised, the unclean, who helped the faithful to pass "from death to life."

— Michaela Bruzzese

[Scripture]

Revelation 21.1-6

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; 4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." 5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Question:

Where have the "unclean" been the conduit that has brought you to a closer walk, understanding, and love for the risen Christ, who's Spirit is among us?

Are the signs of salvation being lived out through your resurrected life?

Also, read for yourself this week,

john 13.31-35 & acts 11.1-18