

Psalm 97

[Worship]

1 The LORD is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! 2 Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. 3 Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side. 4 His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. 5 The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. 6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory. 7 All worshipers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him. 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O God. 9 For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. 10 The LORD loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked. 11 Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

Consider:

[Words]

The Acts narrative has all the ingredients for a greedy, self-deceiving, status-quo society:

There is a used slave-girl fortune-teller who thinks that the future is all fated and can be programmed in a way of certitude. There are money-making exploiters, the banker-pimps who use the innocent fortune-teller to generate private wealth. There are the magistrates who use their authority to maintain the status quo and prevent any social "disturbance." And there's a prison that is a social statement about power and order that constitutes a threat to any who act "outside the box."

Into the midst of these "fixtures" of a stable society come the apostles who assert an alternative "way of salvation" (verse 17). The new way of well-being exposes all their old ways as failed frauds. In reaction to such news, the magistrates by decree and the mob by violence try to stop the news of "another way." But, we are told, "suddenly" all the fixtures of shut-down control are shattered. The text makes no direct connection between *the news* and *the quake*. It only lets us imagine that God's new power is on the move. It's no wonder that the ones who know, sing and pray and praise and praise (Psalm 97). We praise because we know the prison houses of fear cannot contain this God who gives "life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25).

—Walter Bruggemann

[Scripture]

John 17.20-26

20 "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Question:

Where do you see today's Church falling prey to an orthodoxy that looks more to personal certitude of individual futures and societal norms, than to those who 'Wash Their Robes' in a longing to be 'found at one with God and each other, as we endeavor to follow the risen Christ, together?

If you were wronged (particularly financially) by a conflict between Christ's 'Way' and the world's system, how would you seek restitution... Or would you?

Also, read for yourself this week,

Acts 16.16-34