



# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 30

[Worship]

1 | will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me. 2 O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. 3 O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit. 4 Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. 5 For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. 6 As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved." 7 By your favor, O LORD, you had established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face; I was dismayed. 8 To you, O LORD, I cried, and to the LORD I made supplication: 9 "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness? 10 Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me! O LORD, be my helper!" 11 You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, 12 so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

### Consider:

[Words]

Paul makes an argument against preoccupation with one's self ("flesh" in Galatians 6:13). In his time that preoccupation was expressed as circumcision—taken by some as a qualification of merit to make the self more acceptable, more pious, or more obedient. Paul famously dismisses such "merit" and contrasts it to a new creation that "is everything" (6:15).

The focus on "new creation" gives entry to the gospel reading. Jesus sent his disciples out, admonishing them to travel light ("no purse, no bag, no sandals," says Luke 10:4), but to focus on their assignment of healing the sick, as sign that the new rule of God is very near. They report on their journey that they did indeed have power over demons to

enact new creation among those who had been disabled and immobilized.

It is not different in the narrative of Naaman, the Syrian general, and Elisha. Elisha is infused with God's power for life, and is able to bring amazing newness, even to a Gentile (see Luke 4:27). It is no wonder that the song of thanksgiving in Psalm 66 attends to God's "awesome deeds." Israel praises the God who has "kept us alive." The texts converge on "new creation" that in Israel is the Exodus (see Psalm 66:6); for Naaman, it's newness of "baby flesh" (2 Kings 5:14); and it's enacted as healing by the disciples (Luke 10:17).

Paul has named the debilitating pathology of our society: the preoccupation with self (flesh). Those who are preoccupied with self—self-fulfillment and self-securing—have no power for new creation. The gospel summons us away from that societal preoccupation to a focus on the suffering love of the cross (Galatians 6:14) that imbues with transformative power, that makes all things new ... for lepers, for the demon-possessed, for all those denied fullness of life. No wonder the disciples returned from their mission "with joy" (Luke 10:17).

Walter Bruggemann

[Scripture]

## Galatians 6.1-16

*1 My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4 All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5 For all must carry their own loads. 6 Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher. 7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. 8 If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9 So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up. 10 So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. 11 See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. 14 May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! 16 As for those who will follow this rule--peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*