

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 80.1-2, 8-19 [Worship]

1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth 2 before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!

8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches; 11 it sent out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the River. 12 Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? 13 The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. 14 Turn again, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, 80:15 the stock that your right hand planted. 16 They have burned it with fire, they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your countenance. 17 But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself. 18 Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name. 19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Consider:

Jesus announces that it is “crunch time.” It’s time to decide, to take sides at some risk, to be with Jesus or against him. He chides his listeners for their inability to notice that in his very person the world comes to a dangerous moment to decide for or against God’s rule. Jesus calls his listeners beyond their casual conversation about the weather to face the grand drama of the world being played out before their eyes.

[Words]

In Hebrews 11 the church recites the roster of those who have decided for the rule of God and have suffered for their faith. Finally, the text reminds present listeners that those remembered crunch times now boil down to our own crunch and our decision for the rule of God.



Crunch time—in heaven or on earth—is about doing economic justice. Isaiah’s poetry attests to what God expects of God’s people: “justice and righteousness,” not violence and exploitation.

In the covenant of Israel and in the person of Jesus we are given a heads up on what time it is, what decisions have to be made, and what actions must be taken. All of that in a world that prefers to continue to discuss the weather!

—Walter Bruggemann

[Scripture]

Luke 12.49-56

49 “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” 54 He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain’; and so it happens. 55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

Question:

Is our Christianity mere talk? Do we actually think that to “be nice” is our calling as fruit of a just and merciful vineyard?

What is your fruit, and will it stand the pruning of a loving “Vinedresser?”

Also, read for yourself this week, Hebrews 11.29 – 12.2