



still waters

home church studies

Psalm 71.1-6

[Worship]

1 In you, O LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame. 2 In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me. 3 Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. 4 Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel. 5 For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth. 6 Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

Consider:

[Words]

The God of the gospel is one who heals. The healing narrative in Luke is a case study: Jesus does the healing work of God for "a daughter of Abraham," thus evidencing God's abiding fidelity to the old Abrahamic promises. It is only a surprise that the disabled woman counts among the family of Abraham.

The opposition to Jesus can't reach beyond their "sacred duty" of Sabbath to the transformative generosity exhibited by Jesus. They reckon their Sabbath observance to take priority over urgent human need. But Jesus, with an illustration about animal care (verse 15), inverts the order of things. Healing takes priority over observance. No wonder they left the meeting embarrassed over their punctilious requirements.

The juxtaposition of healing and Sabbath in Isaiah is dominated by the repeated conditional "if." The community is urged to look beyond "pursuing your own interests on my holy day" (verse 13). Jesus is always looking beyond his own interests to the interests of the needy. The issue is a reordering of religious priorities. In Hebrews 12 the issue in dispute is cast as Mt. Zion (site of joy) and Mt. Sinai (site of obligatory scruple). These texts imagine a gospel freedom for those who open their faith to the disability of the world. —Walter Bruggemann

[Scripture]

Hebrews 12.18-29

18 You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, 19

and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. 20 (For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.") 21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear.") 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. 25 See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! 26 At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; 29 for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

Question:

"*The Sabbath was made for man*" Jesus said. We tend to view that as a great gift to us; giving us needed rest from labor—God's generosity to us, *Personally*. However, in our leisure, and even our religious observance of Commandment Keeping, we often become unwitting "lords" of the Sabbath, seeking service from others, helping us to remain good and loyal to the law, and our version of new covenant.

What is wrong with this picture...?

Just who do we remember the Sabbath for (keeping it Holy)? Who's voice does God hear in the gospel story? Good people who have it all together? How secure is your covenant?

*Also, read for yourself this week,
Luke 13.10-17 & Jeremiah 1.4-10*