



still waters

home church studies

Psalm 81.1, 10-16 [Worship]

1 Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob. 10 I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. 11 "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. 13 O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! 14 Then I would quickly subdue their enemies, and turn my hand against their foes. 15 Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their doom would last forever. 16 I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Consider:

[Words]

Gospel faith concerns reordering the world according to God's purpose. Jesus is under surveillance by the power people to see if he will conform to their regime. He uses a social occasion to show that what the world honors is not what is valued in the new order of God. One that is engaged on behalf of the poor, crippled, lame, and blind, those whom the world devalues (verse 13).

That same reordering is evident in Hebrews 13. The imperative is to reach outside the zone of social safety to the "others," "strangers," and "prisoners," exactly those whom we might think defiled. Real defilement is in the violation of promises of fidelity and love of money. The ground for the new order is the assurance of God who is "my helper" (see Deuteronomy 31:6). God is faithful; one need not hustle, for either love or money.

These texts suggest a radical either/or, a generous following of Jesus or resistance to his mandate to generosity. That contrast is clear in the Hebrew scriptures; Jeremiah delineates a community that has forgotten its identity and mandate. This teaching is urgent, now as always, in a society that wants to hunker down in a refusal of the new social reality where God has placed us. —Walter Bruggemann

[Scripture] Hebrews 13.1-8, 15-16

1 Let mutual love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. 4 Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." 6 So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" 7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

15 Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Question:

It's been said, "show me your checkbook, and I'll show you what you value." I would be afraid and embarrassed to reveal the checkbook ledger of today's Church, denominationally, nationally, and morally. Jesus (the one of scripture... not the mythical, positive, motivational speaker of today's creation), would sit woefully out of place at the dinner parties of today's Church, just as he seems to be in our Gospel text this week.

Jesus believes that the kingdom order of life, would be placing ourselves intentionally in the worst seat.

How many of today's Church leaders might feel slighted by not having the choice seating at the party? How many of today's Christians find friendship with the Hebrews 13 groups unsavory? Are you a container that no longer can hold living water?

Also, read for yourself this week, Luke 14.1, 7-14