



still waters

home church studies

Psalm 79.1-9

[Worship]

1 O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. 2 They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth. 3 They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. 4 We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us. 5 How long, O LORD? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealous wrath burn like fire? 6 Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name. 7 For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation. 8 Do not remember against us the iniquities of our ancestors; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. 9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and forgive our sins, for your name's sake.

Consider:

[Words]

Once again we witness our religious ancestors' ongoing struggle to fulfill the covenant despite the temptations that surround them. The prosperity and power enjoyed by the Israelites are accompanied by other temptations, including the idolatry of wealth and neglect of community, especially of the needy. God calls Israel to account, first through Amos and then Jeremiah, to remind them of the covenant and their obligations.

Over and over, God is portrayed on the side of the downtrodden and outcast. The psalmist proclaims, "He raises up the lowly from the dust; from the dunghill he lifts up the poor to seat them with...the princes of his own people" (Psalm 113:7-8). Amos illustrates God's anger in the face of injustice and mercilessness, and assures those who "trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land.... Never will I forget a

thing they have done!" (Amos 8:4, 7). Jeremiah's grief is "incurable" as he witnesses Israel's idolatry and wonders, "Why do they provoke me with their...foreign nonentities?" They who worshipped nothing ultimately became nothing; after a series of corrupt kings in Judah, Jerusalem is ultimately destroyed.

In Luke, Jesus once again tells a parable on the dangers of wealth. Here, though the parable—which stems from Palestinian lending customs during Jesus' time—may appear somewhat cryptic to contemporary readers, Jesus' central message is perfectly clear when he states that "You cannot serve God and Mammon" (Luke 16:13). In a world where capital is king, placing our trust, faith, and hope in a God who loves the poor and needy is profoundly countercultural and an act of rebellion. As Christians, it is still our challenge to not only live kingdom values in secular society, but to do so joyfully, celebrating the fundamental goodness and beauty of the world. Our task is not to live the kingdom apart from the world, but to infuse the world with the joy and sacredness of the kingdom. — Michaela Bruzzese

[Scripture]

1 Timothy 2.1-7

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Question:

I've been questioning why today's Church struggles so, with living God's kingdom, specifically in the area of money. Where God judges His people, by the barometer of "How are the Poor among you," we have adopted every foul "human" principle of "Mammon idolatry" and self righteous "Neo-Gnosticism," replacing it with "atonement theory" mission, for a few. It makes God cry!

Is there any hope that the Church can turn without first going into terrible exile? How seriously do you view the eternal homes of a misguided Church.

Also, read for yourself this week, Luke 16.1-13