



# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 137

[Worship]

1 By the rivers of Babylon--there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. 2 On the willows there we hung up our harps. 3 For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" 4 How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! 6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy. 7 Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem's fall, how they said, "Tear it down! Tear it down! Down to its foundations!" 8 O daughter Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us! 9 Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!

### Consider:

[Words]

In this and future readings, we are given an entire month to ponder the nature of faith, its depth, its radical summons, and its reach into every sphere of our life. It is clear that faith, in biblical perspective, cannot be understood generically. It has its form and substance only because of its Subject, the God of Israel who has come among us in Jesus of Nazareth. The sweep of faith runs from its deep rootage in the ancient promises and commandments of Sinai to the missional passion of Paul in the early church. The texts make unmistakably clear that the faith of the church constitutes an odd way in a world that is sometimes hostile to that faith and consequently requires steadfast intentionality in its daily enactment.

Here the listener is summoned to reliance on God and obedience to God. And because that reliance and obedience are deeply counter-cultural, there is repeatedly a summons to persistence and durability.

This set of gospel readings provides accent points for us. Jesus instructs his disciples in faith as duty (Luke 17:5-10), exhibits the power to transform (Luke 17:11-19), summons to persistence in prayer (Luke

18:1-8), urges reliance upon God's righteousness and not our own (Luke 18:9-14), and evokes radical obedience in the world through restorative economic activity (Luke 19:2-10). This gospel sequence imagines a community with a different, liberated, joyous purpose in the world. – Walter Brueggemann

[Scripture]

## 2 Timothy 1.1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I am grateful to God--whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did--when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. 8 Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. 13 Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

### Question:

Do we really want our faith increased? Seems that to do that, God would need to strip us of our deep rooted religious prejudices, including our pious and self-serving orthodoxies that place us at the top of the hill. Jesus suggests, comparatively, that in the ways we are rooted in our religious beliefs of purity codes and religious rituals, real faith brings us low—down to the level of those we condescend to. Real, increased faith, places us sympathetically, at the slaves feet as his servant. Are we really sure we want all that... are we sure we want Jesus to increase *OUR* faith? ~ Kork