



still waters

home church studies

Psalm 65

[Worship]

1 Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; and to you shall vows be performed, 2 O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come. 3 When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions. 4 Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple. 5 By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. 6 By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might. 7 You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples. 8 Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy. 9 You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. 10 You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. 11 You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. 12 The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, 13 the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

Consider:

[Words]

The connection between humility, service to others, and spiritual greatness is frequently emphasized by Jesus in word and action. He cautions against the danger of religious superiority, stating that "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14). He knew how susceptible people of faith were to self-righteousness and pride; the gospels testify to his passionate arguments with and condemnations of religious hypocrisy and spiritual arrogance (see Luke 6:37, 16:14, 7:36, 9:46, and 11:37). Jesus' words still ring true; people of faith are not exempt from

the human need to be recognized and important. Unfortunately, religious beliefs are often used as a weapon of exclusion against those perceived to be less deserving of God's (and therefore our) love and generosity.

We, like the Pharisee, forget that it is God "who set the mountains in place" and who stills "the roaring of the seas...and the tumult of people" (Psalm 65:6-7). God alone, as Paul reminds us, is the "just judge" (2 Timothy 4:8). And like Paul, who "competed well...finished the race," and "kept the faith," the passion of our beliefs should be an instrument of radical inclusion rather than exclusion. Though abandoned by those whom he considered friends, Paul prayed that "it not be held against them." He could do so because his faith was in Jesus, who "stood by me and gave me strength" (2 Timothy 4:16-17).

Fortunately, our path has been prepared by Paul and a whole "cloud of witnesses." The lives and works of the saints continue to provide living testimony to Joel's prophecy that "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). The gospel and the lives of those who embrace it make it clear that the greatest dreamers and visionaries are those who choose to be last in line, to serve rather than be served, to forgive rather than judge.

– Michaela Bruzzese

[Scripture] 2 Timothy 4.6-8, 16-18

6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

16 At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Also, read for yourself this week, Luke 18. 9-14

Question:

Who are you in our Gospel story, and why?