



# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 118

[Worship]

1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever! 2 Let Israel say, 'His steadfast love endures for ever.' 3 Let the house of Aaron say, 'His steadfast love endures for ever.' 4 Let those who fear the LORD say, 'His steadfast love endures for ever.' 5 Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a broad place. 6 With the LORD on my side I do not fear. What can mortals do to me? 7 The LORD is on my side to help me; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. 8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in mortals. 9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. 10 All nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! 11 They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! 12 They surrounded me like bees; they blazed like a fire of thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! 13 I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me. 14 The LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. 15 There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: 'The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; 16 the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.' 17 I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. 18 The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death. 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. 21 I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. 22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. 25 Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success! 26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD. 27 The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession

with branches, up to the horns of the altar. 28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you. 29 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever.

### Consider:

[Words]

Either the world is about to crack, according to these texts, or God's rule reigns.

The moment of God's new rule will require the faithful to run risks. Jesus knows that the church will conflict with "the authorities," will be brought into court, and will give testimony about the power of Easter against the force of death. But, says Jesus, those who run that risk will "gain their souls" and not lose a hair on their heads (Luke 21:18-19).

Paul's counsel is more mundane. He urges believers to "hang in" with daily contributions to the life of the community. He is hard on slackers and gossips who go along for a free lunch, but do not contribute.

These texts bespeak great expectation along with great danger. Ours is such a time when the force of market-driven exploitation threatens to undo the human community. In the face of that threat, the church celebrates the rule of God, boldly attests its truth, and daily acts it out. Our time of crisis is indeed "biblical" in urgency and proportion. We are summoned to daring resolve and daily effort for the coming rule of God. – Walter Bruggemann

[Scripture]

Reread Luke 21.5-19

**Question:** Interestingly, the Church today holds the same bias' as the world with regard to those in poverty, judging everyone without income as lazy. But that is not what St. Paul is talking about in 2 Thessalonians. He is discussing those who are "idle," contributing nothing to God's work, or others, calling them busy-bodies, instead of being about God's work within the community—including those impoverished.

Where have you seen those on the margins step up to God's higher callings in community, and "good people" slack off, merely wanting to talk about others—limiting their "God work?"

Are you/we in danger of idleness?