

Devotion May 6, 2020

Scripture Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 "Refuge"

Let us pray: Gracious God, we give you thanks that through the gift of baptism you have embraced us as your own and made us one in Christ's body. By the power of the Holy Spirit, continue to nourish and strengthen us in the ways of faith, hope and love, through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen

Wednesday Morning Prayer: Book of Common Worship 2018 Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville KY

In you, O LORD, I seek refuge;
do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.

²Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily.

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me.

³You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,

⁴take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.

⁵Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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Psalm 31:15-16 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹⁵My times are in your hand;
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

¹⁶Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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This scripture is a lament, it has the last 7 words of Christ on the cross. Three years ago, I had the privilege of baptizing a young boy on Mother's Day. This was the psalm reading for the 5th Sunday of Easter. It was quite a mixture of themes for the day and I struggled in my preparation for the big day. Carson is now 11 or maybe 12. How do we take a lament and turn it into scripture for a baptism?

In Baptism, from a reformed perspective, we belong to God. The PCUSA website gives 3 points:

God's baptismal claim on us is gracious and unconditional.

God's baptismal claim on us is corporate and communal.

God's baptismal claim on us is transforming and liberating

In the liturgy of a baptism the congregation is asked these questions:

"Do you as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture (child's name) by word and deed, with love and prayer?"

The response is "We do."

"Will you encourage (child's name) to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his church?"

The response is "We will."

Carson was a young boy, creative, smart, inquisitive, loving and kind. Can you tell he is special to me? Today he has grown into a handsome young man in Jr. High, still creative, smart, inquisitive, loving and kind.

On that day I encouraged the congregation that we might read this Psalm substituting Carson's name; "In You O Lord I seek refuge for Carson, and so on.

Our world continues to change, and we have the need for refuge, of being saved in God's hand and steadfast love. Today we might put a loved one's name into the psalm as we ask God for healing or help for those we love. When we take this seriously, then we can see that our trust in God encourages us to see this psalm as asking for refuge in God's hand and in His steadfast love, for ourselves and others.

Let us close with prayer and I will pause so that you may say out loud names of those need help in these days. Let us pray:

Gracious God, we thank You for the many blessing we have received. Help us to use these blessing to be Your servant, in sharing Your word and loving others. We ask for Your guidance as we make decisions, as we walk forward with You, as we struggle with concerns for family and friends. Lord, we now lift up the names of loved one(s) who need special healing and care...

Lord, let Your face shine upon Your servants; save us in Your steadfast love. Amen.