

“May the words from my lips and the meditations of our hearts always be pleasing to you”

A short time ago I was asked how I prepare a sermon. Am I given guidance on what to preach on? Am I given material from the Synod office? How do I do it? I replied that I can preach on whatever I want! Although that might not always be the best course of action! I usually preach on the Gospel reading but not always. And today is one of those days.

As I prepare to write a sermon I look at the readings assigned for the day and then I let them muddle around in my head for a bit. I consult commentaries and I see what is going on in the week. Some days one reading will trigger something or resonate with me more than another. Sometimes it is only a word or phrase or part of a reading.

Today is one of those days.

In our readings today it was the psalm that resonated with me. And in fact it was part of the psalm that was really speaking to me.

Verse 1 - Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good

Verse 19 - Then in their trouble they cried to the Lord and you delivered them from their distress.

Verse 21 - Let them give thanks to you, Lord, for your steadfast love and your wonderful works for all people.

And the last bit of verse 21 - and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy....

I have found this past year that I have relied on the Psalms more than I have in other years. It has now been a year since the Province went into a lockdown and we began to worship virtually.

I have relied on the psalms in times of praising God in times of wailing, grief, distress, thanksgiving and discouragement. The psalms truly have it all covered!

Our Psalm today - number 107 begins the book of praise Psalms. It recalls times when God's people suffered and were saved or redeemed by God. It reminds us over and over and over again that God's love for us is steadfast - that God does not abandon us that we are redeemed by our creator.

The theme of this psalm is the glorious nature of God's steadfast love. The tone is hopeful and almost triumphant with epic refrains of thanksgiving and praise. For God has brought healing and redemption to people in desperate need. God has brought healing and redemption to us.

What does redemption look like? In this psalm there are 4 instances given - redemption is food and drink for those who wandered in the wilderness. Redemption is release for those who were captive. Redemption is healing. And finally,

redemption is safety. Psalm 107 tells us that redemption is a function of the steadfast love of God.

As we draw near the table the words in our eucharistic prayers echo this psalm - the redeemed come from east and west and south and north. God's redemption is for everyone. God's table is for everyone. All may approach - all may sit at the table of the Lord - all may sit at the table with the Lord.

The invitation in this psalm to give thanks and praise is extended to the four corners of the world - everywhere God's steadfast love and mighty acts have spread. Remember them, sing of them - tell of God's actions in your life! Sing with joy and thanksgiving for all that God has done. All that God is doing - all that God will do.

In our self reliant and individualistic culture radical thanksgiving and extravagant trust in God is prophetic. That is what this psalm is begging us to do. Prophecy! Share the good news of God's steadfast love.

“Let us offer thanksgiving sacrifices and tell of God's deeds with songs of Joy”!

AMEN

Our Hymn of the day is “Joyful Joyful we Adore Thee #836