

Metaphors of Grace.

January 22nd 2012

Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Ps. 62: 5-12, 1Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20.

God's call continues in this set of readings for Epiphany 3. The particular reading I will concentrate on today is the psalm. Please have a copy of the words so you can refer to them. The psalm is given over to the choir director for the tune. Jeduthun was a Meraite Levite who was one of the three main Levites in Davidic times in charge of the worship in Jerusalem. He wrote music for worship and he directed the choir in the tabernacle worship. This psalm tune may either have been written by him or named for him. The tunes in our hymn book have names, often the author of the tune.

David writes the psalm when he is in trouble. We don't know when or where, but he is in trouble. He is surrounded by enemies. He sees men in high places commit injustice; He sees both lowly people and people of high rank engaged in evil, toppling people, oppressing others, stealing. He feels surrounded by enemies. Once he was like a building about to collapse, which anyone could demolish. Evil is ruthlessly competitive and attracted to weakness. Instead of attempting to aid a weak person, a person acting in an evil way takes advantage of him or her.

David's way of coping is to be still and wait for God to act. He uses words for how he regards God. He meditates on God as his Salvation, his rock, his place of refuge, his tower of strength. What beautiful images! I wonder which speaks to you and your experience of faith. Picture a gigantic rock out in the wilderness that separates you from your troubles, which are circling about you. Remember the story of Moses striking a rock in the wilderness and life giving water flowing out. Imagine God rescuing you from your troubles, saving you. See your strength like a tower. Such images are metaphors of grace.

David, in the midst of his troubles, thinks about who God is and his focus is on God. He doesn't complain or murmur: he waits. He is not like the Israelites in the desert grumbling against the Lord. He is not spreading discouragement to disturb others. In the tight place he was in he saw his only hope in God.

In verses 5 to 7 David preaches to himself to be patient. Wait and trust. God's timing was not his timing. Where are the adversaries? The troubling situations are forgotten as he looks to God. David then writes for others.

His sermon to himself was wait and trust. His sermon to others is pray and trust. Trust and pour out your hearts. Tell God, who is your refuge, that your soul is troubled. Tell God your circumstantial difficulty and how you feel.