



LIGHT FROM THE LECTIONARY

LEADER PAGES

Lent5C

March 28, 2004

From BIBLE STUDIES BY E-MAIL

RCL Readings:

Isaiah 43:16-21

Ps 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

MAJOR THEMES

THE PAST is dealt with here in Isaiah as something they needed to forget or cease living in, opening themselves in faith to the new things God was going to do. The Psalm reading is yet another way of dealing with the past - remember it but let it bring you encouragement for the present troubles as you remember all that the Lord has done for you. The Lord is still loving you and looking out for you. In the epistle reading Paul sees his past as nothing more than garbage, "rubble" in comparison to the new hope, the new life he has found in Jesus Christ. He forgets the past and presses forward to become all Christ wants him to be.

LOVE is another important theme here, especially in the Gospel lesson. Mary's act of extravagant love is a foreshadowing of the extravagant love of Christ on the cross. The message is that love gives and gives without counting the cost. Mary is an example of the kind of extravagant, self-giving love we, too, should give Christ and one another. We are empowered to do so when we are truly touched and filled with the love of our crucified Lord.

Discussion Questions

- A. Isaiah 43:16-21. What are the "good ole days" for you?

- B. What pivotal event on your own spiritual journey do you find yourself often remembering?

- C. What does "forget the former things" mean for you right now?

- D. What "former things" do you find difficult to forget?

E. What "new things" is God doing in your life? In your church?

F. How has God provided "streams in the desert" for you?

G. Ps 126. When's the last time you had a really good laugh? Why?

H. What period would you describe as your golden years and why? For your nation?

I. What's your favorite song about your country?

J. What's something so wondrous that's happened to you that you wondered if you were dreaming?

K. What dream do you have this Advent for which you can't dare to hope will come true?

L. What, in this song, is the dream that had come true for them?

M. How does God tend to answer your prayers - a flash flood or a long planting and growing season?

N. Philippians 3:4b-14. If you could brag about something that you had done few others have, what would it be?

O. What have you found yourself giving up or leaving behind since you have become a Christian?

P. Where or how have you heard Christ telling you to press forward, to go in some new direction, some new growth on your spiritual journey?

Q. John 12:1-8. What's the most extravagant gift you have ever given? Received?

R. In what new way might you show your love for Christ this Lent?

S. If you had a year's salary, how would you use it to show your love for Christ?

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