



LIGHT FROM THE LECTIONARY

LEADER PAGES

Lent2C

March 7, 2004

From BIBLE STUDIES BY E-MAIL

RCL Readings:

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Ps 27

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

THEMES

GOD'S PROTECTION is a key theme in the readings for today. In the Genesis passage Abram is assured that God is his "shield." In the Ps 27 reading God is presented as the Psalmist's "light and salvation," so he has nothing to "fear." In the Gospel reading Jesus shows no fear at all of Herod and the harm that he would seek to do Jesus. Also, the image of the "hen" Jesus uses there is largely one of protection and care, even to the point of sacrifice.

ENEMIES is a related theme. In Ps 27 the enemies are apparently those who are warring against the Psalmist or the nation. In Philippians they are those who profess to being Christians but who do not live like it, thus setting a bad example for others. In the Gospel reading the enemy isn't the Pharisee, but Herod (sometimes those you think are your enemies might turn out to be among your best friends).

FAITH is certainly a related theme to the above. Abram needs it in regard to all the promises that God has made him (he struggles with believing them and wants some assurance that they are true). Ps 27 is a song of trust in God. Surely one reason Jesus knows no fear of Herod is because he knows the path ahead for him and Herod is but a bit player in it all.

WAIT ON THE LORD is another theme here, primarily in Ps 27. This is certainly related to the two above themes.

SPIRITUAL MENTORS is a key theme in the Philippians reading. Paul encourages them to use him (and his co-workers) as models and those among them who follow their example. Here we see the importance of choosing mentors, of seeking out those Christians among us who are truly living a Christian life as our role models. Here we see the power of an example - for good and ill.

Discussion Questions

A. Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18. How do you assure someone else your word is good?

B. What do you think Abram fears most here?

C. Why did Abram adopt a servant? What does that say about his faith?

D. Is it wrong to want reassurance?

E. What does the image of "shield" here mean to you?

F. How or where in your life right now do you most need to hear and know, "Don't be afraid. I am your shield"?

G. What promises from God seem almost too good to be true to you?

H. Why is Abram's faith counted or seen as making his "righteous"?

I. What simple rituals are significant ways to help strengthen your faith?

J. Ps 27. How good are you at remembering faces?

K. What does it mean to you here to "seek God's face"?

L. Of the images used for God in this psalm, which one speaks to your heart?

M. When in the past have you most felt or sensed the protection and presence of God?

N. Why do you think the Psalmist is so confident? Or is he?

O. How do you "seek the Lord's face"?

P. How close do you feel to God right now?

Q. Philippians 3:17-4:1. Who has been model of the Christian life for you?

R. Who in your life might need you to be that for them?

S. Luke 13:31-35. Who in your life did you think was an enemy but turned out to be a friend?

T. What do you see in God's world today that make you want to weep?

U. When Jesus looks at the church, what might cause him to weep?

V. When Jesus looks at your life, what might cause him to mourn?

W. Where is the hope, however, for us and our world?

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