eLectionary Readings Discussion for Sunday, October 25, 2009

A Ministry of Christ the Redeemer Church, San Marcos, Texas

You can take THAT to the bank

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The Lectionary Readings for the week:

Job 42:1-6, 10-17
Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 10:46-52

Is God reliable? What are the limits to God's power and love? This week's scriptures deal with "testing the limits" of God's power to save and love. Read and be comforted and empowered and encouraged. May God bless our study and grant us understanding.

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Then Job answered the LORD:
"I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
`Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
`Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.'
I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes."
And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his

children, and his children's children, four generations. And Job died, old and full of days.

This week's readings conclude our foray into the emotional and theological quagmire that is the Book of Job. How could God allow all this tragedy to happen to a "righteous man" like Job? Job, though a righteous man, "repented"? He "repented" for his questioning of the motive and love of God. Job almost gave in to his own lack of trust in God but overcame despite his "humanity". This "tale" was undoubtedly told around campfires for millennia by people wishing to impart a better understanding of the relationship between mankind and the Creator. Those who heard it remembered it and passed it on to the generations to follow. It became part of OUR legacy of truth, our "Myth". Was there ever a person named "Job"? Does it matter? We could easily substitute our own names for the name "Job" and insert our story into the story of Job. Truth stands the test of time and distance from the events. Yes, if there was a man named "Job", what happened to him was not "fair" in worldly terms. Was "patience" Job's virtue or was "faith" his saving grace? Is the message, "All things work together for good for those who LOVE THE LORD and are called according to His purposes"? When surrounded by the maelstrom, it is easy to forget that God is in charge of the storm. Is the message "Hang in there and be patient for God will reward our faith and patience"? Was there a "bet" between God and "Satan" that caused the calamities of Job's life? What "sin" did his wife and children commit that condemned them to death? It is not logical for God to "allow" such tragedy to happen to his "children", is it? What about when "bad things" happen to you and me? Are we tempted to question God or to "curse God" and die? You have heard it said that "The brave die but once but, cowards die many deaths." Was Job brave or was he "faithful" to God? What gave Job the ability to withstand the loss of everything he thought important in his life? The story of Job should make us evaluate the "things" in our lives for their real "value". What would you and I hate to lose the most? Is it our spouse, our friends, our children, our jobs, our money? Learn the lesson of Job: They are all transient and gifts from God to be enjoyed and to give us pleasure in the relationship and their use. The "RELATIONSHIP" of Job to the Creator withstood the supreme test and the "relationship" won despite extreme challenges to its very existence. OUR relationship with our Maker is not dependent on "things" or it is false and rotten to the core. If Job had "cursed God" and "died", he would have sacrificed his most important asset, his relationship with God. Would you and I remain "faithful" to God IF we lost everything? Job made the "Book" because of his reliance on the FAITHFULNESS and PROMISE of God to be there to the end and beyond. No matter what happens to us, God promises to be there during and AFTER the tempest passes. Job says, **"You can take that to the bank."**

Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)

1

***I will bless the LORD at all times; ***
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

2

***I will glory in the LORD; ***
let the humble hear and rejoice.

3

***Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD; ***
let us exalt his Name together.

4

I sought the LORD, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.

5

***Look upon him and be radiant, ***
and let not your faces be ashamed.

6

I called in my affliction and the LORD heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.

7

The angel of the LORD encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.

8

***Taste and see that the LORD is good; ***
happy are they who trust in him!

[19

Many are the troubles of the righteous, *
but the LORD will deliver him out of them all.

20

***He will keep safe all his bones; ***
not one of them shall be broken.

21

Evil shall slay the wicked, *
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

22

The LORD ransoms the life of his servants, *
and none will be punished who trust in him.]

The psalmist recounts numerous personal events and crises when the faithfulness of God "pulled his chestnuts from the fire." How many times can you and I recount when God did the same for us? The imagery is sound: God pays our "ransom" to "redeem" us (buy us back) from destruction and death. Do we believe in the ever-ready salvation of the Lord? Do we rely on the "faithfulness" of God in our daily lives? Notice that "The LORD ransoms the life of HIS SERVANTS," which is in keeping of the New Testament tenants of "willing slaves" and "willing servants". It is our SERVICE that opens the opportunity for

God to redeem us. The psalmist agrees that this "relationship" is what saves us and **"you can take that to the bank."**

Hebrews 7:23-28

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

The writer of Hebrews is, once again, comparing and contrasting the earthly "priests" with Jesus, the Heavenly High Priest. The earthly priests' "ministry" ended when they died. The priesthood of Jesus CONTINUES for eternity because the Father raised him from physical death to dwell in Heaven seated "at his right hand". Seated at God's "right hand", he can WHISPER into "God's ears" the petitions of the faithful servants upon the earth. Can you grasp this? Can you see the value of our relationship with Christ based on His relationship to the Father? The second paragraph illuminates the idea that Christ is ETERNALLY our HIGH PRIEST. His self-sacrifice PAID OUR RANSOM from the time of his resurrection onward until the end of eternity. I have a hard time getting my mind around this concept and, apparently, so did the recipient of the Book of Hebrews. It is reflexive of the passage "For God so LOVED the world that He gave HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON that whosoever believes on Him should have eternal life." The concept of "blood sacrifice" being offered to "forgive sin" begins early in recorded scripture and culminates in the sacrifice of Jesus who becomes the "sacrificial Lamb" who offers his OWN BLOOD for our sins. This is another of God's promises and the writer of Hebrews says, **"You can take that to the bank."**

Mark 10:46-52

Jesus and his disciples came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him,

"Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

This passage contains a LOT of theology worthy of our examination. A blind beggar hollers out "Jesus, Son of David, have MERCY on ME!" This is reflexive of "Blessed are they who CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD." Notice that the disciples tried to shush him from calling out to Jesus. What were they thinking? Did they want to "quench the Spirit"? Have you and I ever tried to stop someone from calling upon the Lord for help? Think about it. What do you and I have to offer anyone in God's name? IF we don't offer it "in the Name of the Lord", are we not "quenching the Spirit" in the same way as the Disciples? Are we "selfish" with the LOVE of God? How does preventing someone's receiving the love of God in any way diminish the love that is available to you and me? Remember: "Lord, when did we see you hungry, naked and in prison?" The reply should give us pause: "When you do it for the least of these you do it to me." It is a theme that permeates Christ's message: Serve ME by serving MY PEOPLE. The "Word" is a synonym for "Christ" or the "Spirit of God", take your pick. "Word" is the ACTIVE, CREATIVE force of God. The spoken "word" of Christ allowed the blind to see. God is a true "creator" whose mere words can create. I know of no man upon the earth who can speak anything into being. Also note that it was the FAITH of the blind man that restored his sight. We "have not because we ask not." FAITH in the UNLIMITED potential power of God is our most unutilized asset. Job had to learn it, the psalmist had to learn it, the Hebrews had to learn it and the disciples had to learn it. They and their stories all confirm to us that God's love and power have no limits. **"You can take THAT to the bank."**