



BIBLE STUDY for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost



Focus text: Hebrews 11: 29 – 12: 2

At the heart of the Scripture passages for today is the relationship between God and the chosen people. The repeated litany in Psalm 80, “Restore us, Lord God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we might be saved” (vv 3,7,19) is an appeal to the covenant promise of God made with Abraham. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Gen 12:2).

The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1 Kin 8:22-61) again takes on the theme of a great name and a king in the line of David that would rule forever. In this prayer the chosen people find their greatness in nothing other than the great Name of the Lord. It is because of the Name of the Lord, the banner under which Abraham was called, that his descendants enjoyed such prominence. It is because of this Name that they grew from a “vine” to become the “vineyard” that dominated the Middle East. However, without this Name they became a mockery without any power to offset their enemies.

This great Name is also the theme in our New Testament texts for today. Reading the signs of the times is to be able to see Jesus Christ and the requirements that go with our confession of His Name. It is Jesus, seated at the right side of the throne of God, who is the model that we should imitate. He is our compass, pointing to the perfect will of God.

As a believing community we might be very knowledgeable about the type of life Jesus led in the Bible, but we are very poor in practicing how to live such a life in the specific context in which we find ourselves.

We have become experts in works of mercy, but poor in living with people to whom such works are directed. The best of our efforts might seem to us to be “good fruit” but in the eyes of God they might be “bad fruit”.

Christ is calling us to see the world through different eyes, the eyes trained in the Spirit. In order for us to see habitually like this we need to practice in our hearts. How might our community venture into this avenue?

(Taken from Word and Worship – Year C 2018-2019, p253, 254)

***Father, sometimes your word dismays and unsettles us!
We don't like to hear about divine fire, judgment, and division.
Make us courageous and steadfast in our faith.
Give us ears to rightly hear, and hearts to rightly repent.
And give us grace to show the fruits of repentant faith,
to your glory and for the nourishment of your people. Amen***

