

Bible Study
Second Sunday after Epiphany, Year A
January 15, 2017

[RCL] Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-12; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

Isaiah 49: 1-7

These verses from Isaiah broaden the writer's message of hope out to those "from afar," to the whole world. He is someone God has chosen since before birth and was equipped to restore the true Israel, "in whom I will be glorified." He will be the One who will restore Israel. Although the Servant assumes his failure as he has not seen any results in his attempt to free captive Israel. "I have labored in vain," I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity," yet he does not turn from God and will continue on because God will be his reward.

God proclaims that the servant will not only bring restoration to Israel, but will be "as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." The servant has been called for a much larger mission: salvation offered to all the world! Israel is to be the light, to bring this message of hope to all peoples.

- When have you felt disappointed with your relationship with God? Have you ever felt that you, too, "labored in vain?"
- What assurance does God give to us for those times?

Psalm 40: 1-12

In this Psalm, David reflects on how God has delivered him from the darkness of the despair his situation causes him into the light of freedom. David's joy is so great he must sing praises to his God! David's willingness to express God's faithfulness and deliverance has not only changed David's despair to joy, but has caused others to "see, and stand in awe, and put their trust in the Lord".

David reminds us that "happy are they who trust in the Lord" who is willing and able to deliver us in our times of trial and tribulations. Turn to Him and trust that He is good, even in your times of despair, though the answer may cause us to have to wait patiently for it. Or perhaps you have prayed for God to deliver you from some dark and dreadful place, and you have suddenly found yourself back in the light. Share God's faithfulness with others and bring God's light into the world!

- Can you think of a time in the past when God came to your rescue?
- What are some works of God in which you can give praise now?

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

The Corinthians were a people who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." They were set apart as God's people and as such, Paul reminds them that they united with ALL those who were in Christ. Rather than simply living for their own accord, they were to use the gifts God lavished upon them in service to others. As they awaited "the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ", their gifts of speech and knowledge which had been enriched by God "in every way", were not to become a source

of pride for them, but were to be used to show their gratitude to God for them by sharing them with others.

As the Church, we too are called and equipped by God. God is faithful and will strengthen us to live sanctified lives as we share our faith with a world living in darkness. We are to be God's light, thankfully and faithfully sharing the gifts God has given to each of us.

- Do you know the spiritual gifts God has given to you?
- How might you use these gifts for the building up of the Church, the Body of Christ? How might you use them to share Christ with the world?

John 1: 29 - 42

“Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” John’s words describing Jesus can seem so familiar to us that we can forget the true impact of what this means. Jesus is the Lamb of God, the One sacrificed for us. Through His sacrifice, He takes away the sins of the world. His willing sacrifice is sufficient and available to pay the price for all those willing to place their trust in Him.

The glorious truth is that Jesus was, and is, the One come to lead and save God’s people! He is the One who is the light to the nations. He is the One through whom comes the grace of God and who will strengthen you to the end, until He comes again. He is the One we can turn to for deliverance from our troubles and our sins. He can still be found as we seek Him. He is our Messiah, our Savior, our Christ, the Lamb of God!

- John called Jesus the Lamb of God. Why do you think John choose this title for Jesus?
- What name would you use to describe Jesus? How is this displayed in your life?

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