

Bible Study
Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 26, Year A
November 5, 2017

[RCL]: Joshua 3:7-17; Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12

Joshua 3:7-17

As Joshua and the Israelites ready to fight against Jericho, they spiritually prepare for battle at the Jordan River. God powerfully reveals his presence with them by stopping the Jordan River and allowing the people of God to cross over on dry ground. This not only reminds them of their redemption and liberation from Egypt at the Red Sea, but it also affirms and validates the leadership of Joshua—who has stepped into the massive leadership footsteps of the great Moses. God’s people are powerfully reminded that God is with them as they head into battle.

- As you face various “battles” in life, how can our Exodus—our redemption from sin and death in Jesus—be of encouragement to you?
- Jesus, who is our Moses and our Joshua, now leads us forward in life. Where is he leading you? How can you more closely align yourself with his leadership?

Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37

As a response to the Joshua reading above, this is a psalm of thanksgiving, reminding the readers of all that God has done to redeem them—to gather them and set them on the road to abundance and life. As God calls us to new adventures of faith, we can remember the many ways God has worked in our own lives, bringing us out of meaninglessness and despair onto the pathway toward life and peace. As God has worked in the past, we can be confident that he will continue to work in our future as we seek first his kingdom and look ahead to our full redemption on the Last Day.

- Consider now how God has worked in your past. How has he shown himself to be a God of redemption and liberation?
- As you consider the challenges in life before you this day, how can the remembrance of the past help give you proper perspective on your future?

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

In this epistle, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his tireless work to bring them the Word of God, the gospel. Paul’s ministry was marked by integrity, hard work, and love for those to whom he ministered. He expresses gratitude for the ways in which the Thessalonians recognized and accepted Paul’s message as having a divine origin and not one of Paul’s own making. It should be noted that there was a powerful partnership of both word and deed in Paul’s ministry; he not only spoke the gospel, he lived it out among them.

- Take stock of the key relationships in your life right now. Think of people that you see regularly and with whom you are highly invested in relationally. How can you more fully live out a holistic expression of the gospel with them – one where you are honest about your faith in Jesus and where you seek to live it with love, integrity, and devotion?

Matthew 23:1-12

In this gospel reading, Jesus discounts the ministry of the Scribes and Pharisees for their hypocritical ways. They love to teach others how to live according to the will of God, yet fail to live what they preach. “Do as I say, not as I do!” Most parents know how little this works. Kids pick up more what you do than what you say – and sometimes to embarrassing results! We want children to use proper etiquette and manners, and yet often we face the embarrassment of kids taking on the bad habits of their parents. We are all called to live out the gospel of Jesus and emulate his life of love and devotion. We have been sent out into the world as agents of peace and reconciliation.

- In your mind’s eye, walk through the various situations and challenges you are facing today. How can you more faithfully live out the gospel of Jesus in those situations?

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