



BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Lent 3 (C)
March 20, 2022

RCL: Exodus 3:1-15; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Exodus 3:1-15

This Scripture is a powerful truth of God reaching out through the miracle of daily life with a transcendent call, to join with God in obedience in order to set others free. After fleeing Egypt for committing murder, Moses is settled into his new life with his new wife and son, living quietly in the desert, tending sheep. In the midst of this holy, everyday experience, God appears and calls out to Moses. This is the first time in the Scriptures that God uses God's name, showing Godself to Moses in a brilliant fire that illuminates and does not consume. God commands Moses' attention to the holiness of place and the holiness of mission to set suffering people free from injustice, in the exact place Moses is afraid to return. God calls Moses to be free from shame and live into his identity as a shepherd of oppressed people, that he might free others from pain. This is not about Moses' own ability, for God will be with him for every step of this journey, and the journey ends in freedom and worship on God's holy mountain.

- God illuminates all that is but will not consume, and we are invited into living into God's call for us. Does this story evoke any image of your own journey with God and God's call for you?
- How is God calling you to be free from shame and to live into your identity as a child of God, freeing others as we journey with God?

Psalm 63:1-8

This psalm is a song of yearning and trust in God's goodness. This was most likely written by a Levite in exile, yearning for worship of God in the Temple. The words of praise and power are especially powerful, as the psalmist recounts all the times God has restored and saved God's people, especially when thinking of King David in the wilderness, the time when God's promises of kingship and victory were not yet realized. This is a song of trust, of deep joy of God's promise, and the knowledge that God promises salvation and restoration. This concept is a dear one in this season of Lent, as we remember God's call for us to repent and be restored through belief in Jesus Christ, and to be agents of God's Kingdom, proclaiming freedom and restoration for all of creation.

- What can we do to remind us of God's promises during difficult times? Is there space for holy longing in worship and our walk with God? Talk about it.
- In Lent, we remember God's unimaginable love in the teachings of the Incarnate Jesus Christ. How can we share this hope with those with whom we are blessed to interact this week?

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Paul here roots the Corinthian church, and us as the newest members of the Great Cloud of Witnesses, in the spiritual legacy of our Israelite faith ancestors. Sometimes Paul's rhetorical style may seem jarring to modern sensibilities, as when he uses frank talk of our spiritual ancestors being struck down for going astray of God's command. Perhaps Paul is inviting us to be shocked out of our complacent self-confidence, which is not a guarantee of our loyalty to God and adherence to God's path. Faithful people throughout history have stumbled in this way, and Paul is warning Corinth (and us readers) to be wise and mindful of the preciousness of grace. We are invited to remember the cost of the enormous gift of God's grace in the redemption and restoration we've received through Christ. The reassurance in this passage is that God is eternally faithful and loves us beyond measure, calling us again to repent and return to full relationship with God, and to invite others into this freedom, too.

- Did you have an internal response to this passage? Invite God to share what God might be whispering to us in this. Close your eyes and sit in God's presence and listen. God is with you.
- How is God inviting us to walk humbly in faith this week and in this season of Lent?

Luke 13: 1-9

It is human nature to search for a "why" amid atrocities. Jesus is sought by believers throughout time trying to make sense of heartbreak. During Jesus' ministry on earth, there was a prevalent cultural belief that suffering was brought about by sin. Perhaps we can find vestiges of this in our surrounding culture, too. Jesus moves against cultural norms and does not ascribe blame to the victims of atrocities, and instead speaks of our collective vulnerability. God alone can save us and empower us to do the work of the Kingdom of God. This stark truth leads into the parable of the fig tree. This fig tree has not been fruitful; years passed the expected time for producing figs. However, rather than giving up on the tree, the gardener intercedes on behalf of the tree and pledges to aerate and enrich the soil and carefully tend to the plant so the nourishment can reach the roots. Perhaps pain and atrocity may have affected the tree, perhaps drought compacted the soil. Our gardener encourages us to reach for nourishment which God provides, because God can soften hardened earth and hardened hearts. Trees have a limited time on earth, as do we. Let us reach for God's abundant enrichment and restoration, so we can enrich God's kingdom and live a fully fruitful and joyful life.

- How might God be reaching out to you to enrich your soil and soften your earth? Spend quiet time with God and see what the Holy Spirit whispers to you.
- Is God inviting you to be God's hands and feet and enrich the soil of someone else today?

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