

WELCOME TO...

The Presbyterian Church of Saint David



Pentecost 17 October 01, 2017
WE'VE A STORY TO TELL...

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem^f on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Hymn: Love the Lord your God

715

People of God, open your ears! Come and celebrate the story of our God, a story of compassion and mercy, of redemption and love; a story passed down from generation to generation, so that God's people never forget the wonderful things our God has done! Let's praise God together!

Hymn: We will tell each generation

(1-2)

46

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 ♦ Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

♦ I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, ♦ things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us. ♦ We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. ♦ In the sight of their ancestors he worked marvels in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. ♦ He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap.

♦ In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all night long with a fiery light. ♦ He split rocks open in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. ♦ He made streams come out of the rock, and caused waters to flow down like rivers.

Hymn: We will tell each generation

(3-4)

46

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Response: Behold the lamb of God

525

A Reflection on the Psalm: The section of the psalm set apart in the lectionary reading has a distinct place in this poetic report of

Israel's past. Verses 23-29 appear within a larger section that reports God's anger over Israel's rebellion and lack of faith (vv. 21-22 and the larger account in vv. 9-22). In fact, the psalm in some ways is dominated by this theme. As the account of the ancestors unfolds, it goes quickly to their rebellion so the present generation "should not be like their ancestors" whose "heart was not steadfast" (v. 8). The Israelites of the past "refused to walk according to his law" (v. 10). The entire psalm is thus punctuated by this characterization of the forebears in faith who failed in their walk with God: "they tested God" (v. 18); "they spoke against God" (v. 19); "they had no faith in God" (v. 22). After the lectionary section there will be more of this: "they tested God again" (v. 41); "they did not keep in mind his power" (v. 42); "they tested the Most High God, and rebelled against him" (v. 56). Thus, the upshot of the historical recollection is that the ancestors were faithless and those reading the psalm now should see the ancestors as a negative example and live differently.

Despite this extensive denunciation of the Israelites from the past, the psalm as a whole accents God's grace and faithfulness. The larger point is really that the present community of faith should remember God's goodness. Indeed, the ancestors' lack of faith is set in contrast to God's constant faith and continuous acts of salvation, and this is the focus on verses 23-29.

For Discussion: Professor Walter Brueggemann in his book *Worship in Ancient Israel – An Essential Guide* declares: "...Israel's primal utterance in worship is an act of remembering that is implicitly an act of hope. In such utterance Israel anticipates that the future will feature more of the decisive transformative goodness of YHWH that Israel had known in the past..." Question: How much does "remembering" inspire your worship of God?

Perhaps Psalm 78 is not only a reminder of the grace acts of God for the people of God, but of the human propensity to be dissatisfied with what they have received. Maybe the Psalm carries a message for contemporary society bent on consumption and as such environmental degradation. Discuss

Response: Jesus, remember me (X3)

206

Invitation: *This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love God and for those who want to love God more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is Christ who invites you. It is our Lord's will that those who want to find God should meet God here.* (from *Invitation from 'a Celtic Eucharist'*) *Are you ready to accept this gracious invitation? **We are ready!** Jesus said: "I am the bread of life. All who come to me shall not hunger, and all who believe in me shall never be thirsty. **We are hungry and thirsty. O Lamb of God, we come!** We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took his authority as the Christ and offered the bread in thanksgiving and said . . . "Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance. In the same way, and by the same authority, Jesus offered the cup in thanksgiving and said, "Take, drink. This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me." Come, Holy Spirit. Come. Open our eyes to the mystery of Christ's presence in these ordinary things in these our ordinary lives. May they be for us the very essence of the living Christ in our midst. Through the broken bread . . . **We participate in the Body of Christ. Through the cup of blessing . . . We participate in the new life Christ gives. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God! Come, for all things are ready!***

Hymn: Eat this bread

527

Words of Institution

Response: *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, grant us your peace.*

Communion

Prayer after Communion *Thanks be to you, uniting God, for your love and mercy and forgiveness in Christ. **May the blessings of this table strengthen our faith, increase our generosity and unify our hearts, for we pray in the name of Jesus, the Risen One. Amen.***

Hymn: For the bread

549