



Quiet Day
8th November 2016

Reflecting on today's lectionary readings

Compiled by Brian Holliday

Today's readings are about living for God in the ordinariness of life. Living right for God is what we do, and is nothing to crow about!

Psalm 37 is about trusting God and holding to the right way in the ordinariness of life. Those who bend the rules, getting ahead in life by creating havoc in other people's lives, will eventually lose out. Stay true to God, not just in the flush of youth, but even when you are grey-haired. Don't quit, even when it seems everyone else is giving in, taking short cuts in the hope of getting rich or climbing up the corporate ladder.

In the Gospel reading in Luke 17, Jesus is saying to us that this life of being a Christian may seem unrewarding, mundane, unfair, tedious and sometimes hard work, but it is nothing unusual as it is something we should expect rather than be surprised about. Such a life is very "matter of fact" for a Christian.

In Titus 2, Paul is telling Titus to encourage the people under his care to live godly lives in the middle of the ordinariness of their lives. The older men and women, by their patient persistence in living God's way, can show the younger men and women how to live faithful to the end. Titus is to inspire others to live this way by his own example and life. Even slaves are not exempt from living godly. Salvation and godliness are available to all – in the ordinariness of our lives.

Suggestions for quiet reflection:

Read through the passages slowly.

Is there a word or image that strikes you?

Sit with that word or image and listen to what it is saying to you.

Do you hear God's voice to you?

Who is God for you today?

What is God calling you to?

Or

Sit with these passages and with the open, loving attention of God, and reflect on one or more questions:

1. What is God saying to you from the passage in Psalm 37? Is there a word or phrase that strikes you? Turn it into a breath prayer and listen to it deepen within your heart. What is God saying? Is there something God is calling you to do or change?

2. The Luke passage calls to mind the Celtic prayer:

Seven times a day, as I work upon this hungry farm, I say to you,
"Lord, why am I here? What is there to stir my gifts to growth? What
great thing can I do for others: I who am captive to this dreary toil?"
And seven times a day you answer, "I cannot do without you. Once did
my Son live your life, and by his faithfulness did show my mind, my
kindness, and my truth to all. But now he is come to my side, and you
must take his place."

(Alistair Maclean, Hebridean Altars, p. 22, adapted)

Sit with these passages and hear God speak to you about your life. What
resolution is God calling you to?

3. Read through the words of Paul to Titus and the different groups he speaks about. Which group do you identify with? What is God's message to you? Sit with this and allow it to deepen in your heart. Is there an affirmation or a challenge to you from God? What is God calling you to?

Psalm 37:25-34 (The Message)

²⁵⁻²⁶ I once was young, now I'm a greybeard—
not once have I seen an abandoned believer,
or his kids out roaming the streets.
Every day he's out giving and lending,
his children making him proud.

²⁷⁻²⁸ Turn your back on evil,
work for the good and don't quit.
GOD loves this kind of thing,
never turns away from his friends.

²⁸⁻²⁹ Live this way and you've got it made,
but bad eggs will be tossed out.
The good get planted on good land
and put down healthy roots.

³⁰⁻³¹ Righteous chews on wisdom like a dog on a bone,
rolls virtue around on his tongue.
His heart pumps God's Word like blood through his veins;
his feet are as sure as a cat's.

³²⁻³³ Wicked sets a watch for Righteous,
he's out for the kill.
GOD, alert, is also on watch—
Wicked won't hurt a hair of his head.

³⁴ Wait passionately for GOD,
don't leave the path.
He'll give you your place in the sun
while you watch the wicked lose it.

Luke 17:7-10 (The Message)

⁷⁻¹⁰ “Suppose one of you has a servant who comes in from plowing the field or tending the sheep. Would you take his coat, set the table, and say, ‘Sit down and eat’? Wouldn’t you be more likely to say, ‘Prepare dinner; change your clothes and wait table for me until I’ve finished my coffee; then go to the kitchen and have your supper’? Does the servant get special thanks for doing what’s expected of him? It’s the same with you. When you’ve done everything expected of you, be matter-of-fact and say, ‘The work is done. What we were told to do, we did.’”

Titus 2:1-14 (The Message)

A God-Filled Life

² ¹⁻⁶ Your job is to speak out on the things that make for solid doctrine. Guide older men into lives of temperance, dignity, and wisdom, into healthy faith, love, and endurance. Guide older women into lives of reverence so they end up as neither gossips nor drunks, but models of goodness. By looking at them, the younger women will know how to love their husbands and children, be virtuous and pure, keep a good house, be good wives. We don’t want anyone looking down on God’s Message because of their behaviour. Also, guide the young men to live disciplined lives.

⁷⁻⁸ But mostly, show them all this by doing it yourself, incorruptible in your teaching, your words solid and sane. Then anyone who is dead set against us, when he finds nothing weird or misguided, might eventually come around.

⁹⁻¹⁰ Guide slaves into being loyal workers, a bonus to their masters—no back talk, no petty thievery. Then their good character will shine through their actions, adding lustre to the teaching of our Saviour God.

¹¹⁻¹⁴ God’s readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation’s available for everyone! We’re being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honouring life. This new life is starting right now, and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, appears. He offered himself as a sacrifice to free us from a dark, rebellious life into this good, pure life, making us a people he can be proud of, energetic in goodness.