

March 18, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 51:1-12

Isaiah 30:15-18

Hebrews 4:1-13

Selected Verses:

You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. – Psalm 51: 6-7

Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you;
therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you.
For the Lord is a God of justice;
blessed are all those who wait for him. – Isaiah 30: 18

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. – Hebrews 4: 12-13

Devotional:

When I checked the internet news this morning, I learned that Dick Hoyt died over night. I first heard the story of Dick and his son, Rick, about 10 years ago while at Young Life Camp. Janet and I had taken a group of high school youth to Washington Family Ranch outside Antelope, Oregon. There was a large number of young people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Young Life offers a unique ministry for them called “Capernaum.” Each night, the keynote speaker shared the gospel in a unique way to meet the needs of all the kids at camp.

One evening, there was a violent thunderstorm that knocked out the power throughout the camp. Since the room was without windows, there was complete darkness. Imagine a room of 400 high school students, many with disabilities cast into complete darkness. The speaker, who also had a special needs sister, calmed the room and spoke directly to the Capernaum students. He talked about the need to rest in the Lord. To trust that God is with us in the midst of the darkness. That God’s light shines into the darkness. That like Dick Hoyt, God is running with us in the race of life.

Earlier, he had shown a video of Dick and Rick Hoyt set to the music of “My Redeemer Lives.” ([Link](#)) Rick was born in 1962 suffering with cerebral palsy as a result of a difficult birth. In 1977, Rick asked his dad to help him run a race to benefit a lacrosse player at his high school who had become paralyzed. After the race, Rick said, “Dad, when I’m running, it feels like I’m not handicapped.”



Before that day, Dick had never run in a race. Yet, with the love of a father for his son, they started running. Team Hoyt ran in over 1,000 races including 31 Boston Marathons and six Ironman Triathlons. In 1992, they biked across the United States, completing a full 3,735 miles in 45 days. This morning, Dick Hoyt has passed away and rests from his labors. Most of his public labors were labors of love for his son.

The passages today we are called to wait and rest in the Lord. In Hebrews 4, the writer talks about the Lord resting on the seventh day of creation. The image I often think is that God worked hard for six days. So, on the seventh day he took a nap and rested. So, once a week, we are to set aside a day of rest. Yet, that is not the image the writer of Hebrews gives us. The image of resting in the Lord is spending time realizing we are in God's presences and giving God praise and glory for his mighty works.

The concluding sentence of resting in the Lord is the passage above: "the word of the Lord is living and acting." When we rest in the Lord, God's word can examine our hearts and understand the motive of our heart and intentions. That is what it means to strive to enter the rest. Our hearts need to be washed whiter than snow, and taught the wisdom of the Lord. To spend time in the arms of God.

All too often, we think we need to run the race on our own. In reality, we need to be more like Rick and realize that God is the one who has run the race. God has conquered sin and death. We need to rest in the Lord. We are part of the team, yet God is the one who has done the hard work. God is carrying us in his arms and invites us to join in the race with Him. God's heart and grace has been shown to us. In all we do, we are to rest in the Lord allowing His great works to be displayed through us.

Prayer:

Almighty God, we give you thanks for your love, grace and mercy. May we rest in your loving care. Teach us your wisdom in our hearts. Wash us clean that we can be whiter than snow. As you show us your mercy, may we display your grace to others. Touch those places of our lives that are far beyond any human power to mend, that we might be strengthened and freed to walk according to the Spirit. Set our minds on pleasing you, through Jesus Christ, the source of all new life. Amen.

Note:

Here is the Link: <https://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=JMEE1NNU>. Part of the devotional notes comes from this link. Be sure to turn on the volume. The picture of today's devotional is a statue honoring Rick and Dick Hoyt near the start of the Boston Marathon.