

February 24, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 77

Proverbs 30:1-9

Matthew 4:1-11



Selected Verses:

Your way was through the sea,  
your path, through the mighty waters;  
yet your footprints were unseen. – Psalm 77: 19

Every word of God proves true;  
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.  
Do not add to his words,  
or else he will rebuke you, and you will be found a liar. – Proverbs 30: 5-6

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. — Matthew 4: 1-11

Devotional:

In Proverbs 30, Jakeh asked, “Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has established the all the ends of the earth?” As Proverbs was written before Jesus, the answer was “Nobody.” Since nobody has been able to come down from heaven, nobody has the power to establish he ends of the earth, nobody is able to change the word of God. Since nobody has come from heaven to earth, the word that God has spoken to Moses and through the Prophets are God’s authoritative word to us.

We can use God’s word as a shield and as a refuge. Knowing and quoting God’s word will protect us from a liar. Even when there seems to be no way out, God provides the way. In the Psalmist, Moses had been led by God to the edge of the Red Sea trapped by the pursuing Egyptians. The people saw no way out. Yet, God’s way was through the water. Though God led them, his footstep was not seen in the waters. God was ever present with the people in the midst of the chaos. God guided, though they could not see God guiding. For us, that happens when we spend time in God’s word listening for His direction.

Jakeh was not able to experience Jesus, nor his teachings. When God came to be one with us, to show us how to live, Jesus also showed us how to deal with temptation. Like Israel escaping the Egyptians, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Going from a high spiritual moment to the valley of temptation was immediate. While tempted, Jesus was able to overcome the devil by quoting God’s word. Over and over again, Jesus displayed that every word of God works as a shield against temptation. Even, when the devil tried to use God’s word against him,

Jesus knew God's word fully to know God's plan for salvation would not come through these temptations.

In another place in Scripture, Jesus told his followers "a student is not above the teacher." As followers of Jesus Christ, we should use his example. When we are tempted to sin, we should use God's word as our shield and our defense. Part of this is spending time in God's word. ON my iPad, I use the You Version app of the Bible. This offers daily verses for memorization. It offers a variety of Bible reading plans. Some plans are for a few days or weeks. Others are reading through the entire Old Testament, New Testament or the entire Bible in a year. This is one app of many that can be on your smart phone or tablet. Whenever you are waiting at a doctor's office or other appointment, you can pull out the Bible and focus on God's word. When we have it as close as our hearts, we are able to use it as a shield when temptation comes.

Prayer:

Whose words echo in our ears? Are they the words of our consumer culture? Are they the words of our past, remembering every put-down, every angry word? Are they the words of our inner doubts where we hear that we will never amount to anything?

Holy One, open our ears to your words. Let us find comfort for our need, hope for our future, challenge for our journey. Let us hear blessing and love enough to drown out the cheap temptations. Give us reassuring words to face our fears and follow Christ along the path to Calvary. Amen.