

Bible Study Guide October 20, 2021

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9

⁷Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

This passage speaks not only of the southern kingdom, Judah, and its homecoming from exile in Babylon, but also of the northern kingdom (“Israel” or “Ephraim”) and its restoration. The northern tribes of Israel had been lost in exile to Assyria more than a century before Jeremiah prophesied. The image of returning with tears is a strong one in our time, as well, because we look forward to that day when we can return to in-person worship. What emotions run through your mind regarding this?

Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then we were like those who dream.

²Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.

⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The Joy of God's restoration brings praise from the lips of the people. Even though the work is burdensome sometimes (v.6), it brings joy with the harvest. How has God restored you in a time of struggle? If you are still struggling, how can this psalm bring hope?

Second Reading: Hebrews 7:23-28

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Human priests of old offered sacrifice for their own sins and served only until their death. In contrast, Jesus is God's Son, the holy, sinless, resurrected high priest. Death did not terminate his priestly service, but since his resurrection, he is able to intercede for us. Why is it good to know this? How do we receive this intercession from Jesus?

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶As [Jesus] and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Bartimaeus comes to Jesus with faith, asking that he might see again. Recognizing Jesus' identity, Bartimaeus is the first person to call him "Son of David" in the Gospel of Mark. How is Jesus calling us to come? What can we learn from Bartimaeus about being silenced? About joy? About boldness?