

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Hab 1:2-3; 2:2-4

How long, O LORD? I cry for help but you do not listen! I cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not intervene. Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery?

Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and clamorous discord.
Then the LORD answered me and said:
Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets,
so that one can read it readily.
For the vision still has its time,
presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;
if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late. The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.

Reading 2 2 Tm 1:6-8, 13-14

Beloved:

I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.

Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us.

Reflection Process / Questions

- **10 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
 - **10 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
 - **10 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
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- Today is the only time this year we hear from the prophet Habakkuk. Disheartened by the violence and the harm done to the innocent he receives a vision and instruction from God. Literally, he is told to 'write a sign so that those who run by may be able to read it'. The first Billboard! God will save the just. He is asked to trust that the Babylonian army entering Israel will ultimately serve God's purpose of a renewal of faith in Israel. What disheartens you? What words of comfort have you heard from God or friends? What 'billboard' sign would you create to help and comfort people to trust in God?
 - Timothy is a young man appointed by Paul to lead his community in Ephesus. He has become discouraged and is thinking about giving up preaching and leading the community. Paul writes to encourage him to 'stir into a flame' the gifts that God has given him. He is not to be a coward and he is not to be ashamed of his youth and how God has worked in his life. You have been given a 'rich trust', a big responsibility of looking after God's family. What gifts have you recognised in yourself? Are these being celebrated and grown? Is cowardice, fear, shame, limiting you at the moment?

Gospel Lk 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

The Lord replied,
"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed,
you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted
and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

"Who among you would say to your servant who
has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in
the field, 'Come here immediately and take your
place at table'? Would he not rather say to him,
'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your
apron and wait on me while I eat and drink.
You may eat and drink when I am finished'?

Is he grateful to that servant because he did what
was commanded? So should it be with you. When
you have done all you have been commanded,
say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done
what we were obliged to do.'"

- When a text is confusing it is often helpful to place the 'text in context'. Luke 17 has a number of small teachings given by Jesus to his disciples on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus guides his disciples on their leadership responsibilities in their future communities. They are not to cause the downfall of a 'single little one' (17,2). They are to forgive people in their community seven times a day (17,4)! This challenge makes the disciples ask 'increase our faith' (17,5). The word 'faith' can also be understood as 'loyalty' in following the instructions of a teacher. Is there a 'little one' you may be bringing down by your example? Is there anyone who is difficult to forgive seven times?
- The disciples do not ask for more teaching. They ask for help in surrendering more fully to God. Write a one line prayer / mantra for a deeper trust in and surrender to God.
- A servant was normally working in the fields or in domestic house work. Strikingly this servant is doing 'double duties'. And is expected to do so without complaining. The 'double duty' of gentle, faithful leadership and extravagant forgiveness is a minimum for discipleship in Christ. How do you feel about being a 'servant' with a 'double duty'?
- The image of Master and Servant stirs up feelings and even resentments. Our consciousness forms expectations and it is often expectations that are at the source of our 'feelings'. What expectations do you have in working for and 'serving' God? Do you run away from the identity of being a 'servant'? A joyful servant recognises the gift of work, housing, responsibilities, food and needs being provided for. Am I able to say truthfully 'I am merely a servant'? What are some frequent feelings that you experience that may reveal your expectations and consciousness (identity)?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?