

livingtheword

www.livingtheword.org.nz

Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading I

[Is 43:16-21](#)

Thus says the LORD, who opens a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters, who leads out chariots and horsemen, a powerful army, till they lie prostrate together, never to rise, snuffed out and quenched like a wick.

Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers. Wild beasts honor me, jackals and ostriches, for I put water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland for my chosen people to drink, the people whom I formed for myself, that they might announce my praise.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6](#)

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,

we were like men dreaming.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the torrents in the southern desert.

Those that sow in tears

shall reap rejoicing.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown, They shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Reading II

[Phil 3:8-14](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having any righteousness of my own based on the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, depending on faith to know him and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

Gospel

[Jn 8:1-11](#)

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them.

Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders.

So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- Isaiah encourages God's people still in exile in Babylon to believe and see God is 'saving' them. The images are of making a pathway and rivers in the desert for the 'journey home'. Ponder the recent years of your life. Can you notice God's saving help? Can you see something happening 'now', today, 'this lent'?
- St Paul is writing to the two opposing groups in the Philippian community. The 'Judaisers' insisted on Christians still keeping all the Jewish laws such as circumcision, dietary laws etc which would make them 'perfect'. The 'Gnostics' proposed all one needed was baptism to make one 'saved' and 'perfect'. St Paul teaches the community that our true joy and salvation is in knowing Jesus. Righteousness does not come from satisfying 'laws' but faith in the forgiving event of Christ's death and the promise of eternal life in the resurrection. But faith in baptism alone does not 'grant' perfection or salvation. We need to co-operate in being conformed to his death, living lives of self giving love in service of God and neighbour for the salvation of the world. Do you live a Judaiser tendency? Do you live a Gnostic tendency? What would it mean for you to be 'straining forward' and being 'conformed to Jesus' death'?
- Sexual sin is personal, embarrassing, and can be a guilt ridden experience. Everyone expected 'judgment' of the woman but Jesus led everyone into 'enlightenment'. Consider your personal struggle with human weakness. Instead of judgment, consider what you are 'learning' about yourself? How could you move from guilt toward wisdom in this area of your life?
- Jesus saw the woman as a person not as a 'sinful thing' hinted at by the scribes and pharisees. Jesus punctured the tension of this event by revealing everyone's behaviour was like a window into their own heart. What do you learn about the different characters? Who do you identify with? What do you learn about God?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?