

11/15/09

THE PSALM AND THE INVOCATION

Psalm 16

Lay Minister: 1 Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.

People: 2 I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."

Lay Minister: 3 As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

People: 4 The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

Lay Minister: 5 LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure.

People: 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

Lay Minister: 7 I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;

People: even at night my heart instructs me.

Lay Minister: 8 I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand,

People: I will not be shaken.

Lay Minister: 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,

People: 10 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

Lay Minister: 11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence,

People: with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Lay Minister: In a world of strife and stress, we turn to the Lord who gives us joy in His presence.

People: We begin in the name of the Holy One, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O Lord, by Your bountiful goodness release us from the bonds of our sins, which we have brought upon ourselves. Strengthen us in your love so that we may stand firm until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Daniel 12:1–3

(The resurrection of all is prophesied.)

1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people-- everyone whose name is found written in the book-- will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Hebrews 10:11–25

(Jesus is the Great High Priest who made the single offering for all time.)

11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. 13 Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, 14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. 15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." 17 Then he adds:

"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

18 And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Mark 13:1–13

(Jesus tells of the signs of the end and the struggles coming for His people.)

1 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

2 "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"

5 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. 9 "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. 12 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 All men will hate you because of me, but **he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**

THE SERMON "Standing Firm in the Mess of Life"

Mark 13

INTRO - Next Sunday is November 22. How many remember what happened on November 22? Forty six years ago, in 1963, November 22 is the day that John Kennedy was shot in Dallas. That death in and of itself seemed to be a horrible act of violence and tragedy for the whole country. But then the country watched in one weekend as a suspect was captured. That suspect was shot dead when being escorted by police. Then a little boy laid a wreath on the grave of his dad, our former president. It seemed the world was in chaos, and everything was falling apart. When the world is falling apart, what do you do?

I. Jesus tells his disciples about coming chaos

A. Listen to Mark 13

1. The Temple, the symbol and center of the Jewish faith, was going to be destroyed
2. False teachers would come along.
3. There would be wars and rumor of wars - destruction people brought on themselves.
4. There would be natural disasters like earthquakes and famines, or tornados and Hurricanes.
5. God's people would be handed over to hostile authorities
6. Families would fall apart and betray the faithful.
7. People would hate the followers of Jesus.

- B. Have you ever seen such a list?
 1. Actually, Jesus tells us this chaos is going to continue to happen, because we live in a sinful world. We don't always remember how sin affects us and our world.
 2. Later in this chapter Jesus says that someday the whole world will come to an end.
 3. What do we do when the world is falling apart?
- C. Jesus says to keep going,
 1. Watch out that no one deceives you (5)
 2. Don't be alarmed.
 3. Be on guard
 4. Don't plan to defend yourself, but let Holy Spirit speak through you
 5. Stand firm because those standing firm will be saved.
 6. In other words, Trust in God in life's difficult times, because when the world is falling apart, He is saving His people and has heaven waiting for us. Keep going

II. Eleven years after 1963 more tragedy hit. In the Spring our church body had a horrible fight and a split. In the early summer of that year our President resigned under scandal. No matter what your politics, the scandal hurt. The church and country were falling down around us, it seemed.

- A. In people's lives there are times that life seems to be falling apart.
 1. It can be a divorce, or the death of a loved one.
 2. It can be an illness, or the loss of a job.
 3. It can be a horrible sin and failure on our part, or when a friend or family member hurts us.
- B. Jesus does not tell us to keep going because we are so righteous, or strong, or perfect.
 1. **he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**
 2. It is God who is saving us, by Jesus, from our sins, from death, from the end of the world.
 3. God who is stronger than sin and death and who saves His people is stronger than any problem that comes along.
- C. Think what this says, stand firm. You have to have a firm place to stand, in order to stand firm.
 1. In a world that is in chaos because of rebellion against the creator, there is only one firm foundation.
 2. That foundation is not me, or my righteousness, or my wisdom.
 3. That foundation is not my country, or even my denomination.
 4. That foundation is God Himself, and the forgiveness He has won for sinners on the cross. That foundation is God Himself, and the eternal life he has won that is stronger than all of life's problems.
 5. There is only one place where we can stand when life is giving way, that is on the sure foundation of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION - Last week I went ice fishing. Some warned me it might have been a little dangerous because it was early in the season. Actually, I drilled holes on the edge of the lake,

and found the ice thick enough, and kept drilling them. But, imagine trying to stand firm if the ice gives way to freezing water. You have to have a firm foundation to stand. **he who stands firm to the end will be saved.** It is the fact that GOD SAVES US in Jesus that gives us the ability to keep going, and living, and serving as children of God when the world is falling down around us.