Worship Resources for October 25, 2015—Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost, Social Media Sunday #SMS15

Revised Common Lectionary: Job 42:1-6, 10-17 or Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22 or Psalm 126; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

Narrative Lectionary: David Anointed King, 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 6:1-5; Psalm 150 (Mark 11:8-10)

We come to the end of our four-part series from Job, and Job’s response after God finally answers him is to repent. Not because Job did anything to deserve what happened to him, but Job repents for questioning God’s motives, for questioning God without understanding God’s role in the entire universe. Job’s fortunes are restored, and in a twist of Biblical literature, though he has seven sons and three daughters, only the daughters are named (usually, only the sons are named). His family and friends come to him and share what they have with him as well. The ending of Job is like a fairy tale—he lives happily ever after. Everything he thought he lost, he gained even more, once he recognized God as the Creator, and recognized that blaming God for what had happened to him was not getting him anywhere.

Jeremiah 31:7-9 is a proclamation that God will save the remnant of Israel and that they will return home. God will be with them, for God is like a father to them, and will make sure they return home in safety.

Psalm 34 was part of the Lectionary choices back in August and it appears as an option again today. The psalmist sings praises for God’s faithfulness, and shares personally how God has delivered them. The psalmist ends the first section by using the sense of taste: “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (vs. 8). This selection ends with words of comfort and assurance that those who practice evil will meet their end, but God will remain faithful to those who walk in God’s ways.

Psalm 126 is a psalm of thanksgiving for God who restores what has been taken away. God’s ways of justice is the way of restoration, not retribution. God is restoring what is good and right and just, and the psalmist reflects on the remnant that returned home to Jerusalem, that what was taken will be restored. Though they left in tears, they return with rejoicing.

Hebrews 7:23-28 portrays Christ, as both the High Priest and the final sacrifice. There is no more need for sacrifice because Christ died once for all. Christ was the perfect priest and sacrifice; therefore, the sacrificial system they once knew is no longer needed or required, for Christ has abolished this system in his death and resurrections.

Mark 10:46-52 tells of a time when a blind beggar shouted for “Jesus, Son of David!” to have mercy on him. The crowds tried to keep him quiet but he kept shouting until Jesus told them to call him. Jesus asks the man “What do you want me to do for you?” and he replies, “My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus tells the man that his faith has made him well, and his sight is restored. None in the crowds could see for their spiritual blindness; they could not see the man’s needs or his importance as a human being. They just saw him as a beggar, as a nuisance. In Jesus’ healing, the crowd’s own eyes are opened to the needs of those around them.

The Narrative Lectionary focuses on David being anointed as King by the elders in 1 Samuel 5:1-5. The elders of the tribes have come to David and recognized his leadership. In the next chapter, David has the Ark of the Covenant brought to him. Psalm 150 is a song of rejoicing, echoing the rejoicing of David and the Israelites at the Ark being brought home, for this, to them, meant that God was with them. God was present with them and God’s power was with David. They rejoice and praise God who has done great things for them. The passage in Mark’s Gospel signifies this recognition of royalty in Jesus—the people praise God and shout for joy at Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem, reminiscent of David’s triumph and the entering of the Ark into the city.

Sometimes we do not see what is right in front of us. We are waiting for a spiritual answer, for God to come down and save us, and we do not see how God is saving us, every day. Or we are waiting for an opportunity to do God’s work in the world and that opportunity has been right around us all along. We do not see Christ at work in our lives, when every day miracles are happening around us, whether it is good news from the doctor, or the call of a far-away friend, or the beauty of creation. We are still waiting for God to come and rescue us, and God already has. But it can be hard to perceive.

October 25th is being observed by some congregations as Social Media Sunday, or #SMS15. Here are some ways you can encourage Social Media Sunday:

--Encourage members to “check in” on Facebook or Swarm

--Have members take pictures or post something they are taking away from the sermon.

--Encourage use of social media across age levels—even those without social media can write a 140 character summary of the worship service or sermon, and those who use Twitter can tweet the responses later.

--Check out the “Social Media Sunday” Facebook Group for more ideas and information.

Call to Worship (from Isaiah 43:19; Psalm 34:8; and John 5:25)

God is about to do a new thing, it is springing forth;

 **Can you not perceive it?**

God is going to make a way in the wilderness, a river in the desert;

 **Can you not see it?**

God is doing something wonderful, for God is good;

 **Can you not taste it?**

God is giving us eternal life in Christ;

 **Can you not hear the Good News?**

Come, join in the fullness of new life in Christ;

 **Let us join our whole selves, all our senses,**

**in knowing Christ as Lord in this time of worship. Amen.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Holy Spirit, You are working and moving through us, but our senses have turned inward. We do not perceive Your peace in the world, when all we hear of is violence and destruction. We do not feel Your love in the world, when all we see are messages of hate and intolerance. We do not know Your goodness in the world, when all we see is hopelessness and despair. Call us beyond the brokenness of what is around us to see the new life that is springing forth. Call us out of the self-centeredness of consumer culture to see opportunities for justice, and the courage to do Your work. Call us away from giving up, to giving a hand to help. In the name of Christ, who defeated the cross and shows us the way to eternal life, we pray all things, and live into His hope. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance of Pardon

If we go out weeping, God, help us to return with shouts of joy. If we stumble, God, help us to accept a hand up. If we lose sight of Your goodness, God, help us to see the goodness in others. May we know Your peace, and be filled with Your joy and courage to continue on, even when it is hard to take the next step. Fill us, renew us, and restore us; and may we do the same for others. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Prayer

God Most High, we have allowed other things to take priority in our lives. The priorities pile up into stacks we cannot see over. We collapse under the weight of the burdens in our lives, drown among the to-do lists and tasks. Call us out from behind the piling-on of the world. Help us to give over our burdens, and to ask for help when we need it. May we know Your presence in our lives, and may we keep You as God Most High, when the idols of the world demand and insist on our attention. Hold us to the promise that we have in You, God Most High, that does not reside in productivity or completion of tasks, but in the great love You have for us. Amen.