Worship Resources for June 28th, 2015—Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Revised Common Lectionary: 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27 or Lamentations 3:22-33; Psalm 30 or Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43

Narrative Lectionary: Psalm 40:1-10 (Thanksgiving)

As we follow the rise of the Kings in the first selection of our Hebrew Scriptures, we read this song of lament from David over the death of Saul and Jonathan. Though Saul tried to kill David, David still mourns his passing, and especially Jonathan whom he loved. Recorded in the book of Jashar, a book lost in history, it is also recorded here. The song calls for mourning, and records David’s love for Jonathan, and that the weapons of war are useless when you grieve the ones you love.

In the midst of the book of Jeremiah’s Lamentations, there is this message of hope about God’s love. This beautiful song reminds us that God’s love is always with us, and that God has compassion for us in the midst of our grief and despair, and we will not wait forever. God will deliver us.

Psalm 30 sings of joy for one’s deliverance. The psalmist has been through a difficult time but has seen the blessings on the other side. They have experienced their mourning turned to dancing. They have cried out to God and God has heard their prayers, though in that time it was difficult. The psalmist gives thanks and praise to God for their deliverance.

Psalm 130 (which was an alternate lectionary choice a few weeks ago) sings of God’s forgiveness and redemption. The psalmist knows that if God were to keep track of their transgressions, the psalmist would deserve judgment, but in God there is forgiveness, there is healing. God hears our prayers and knows our hearts. God is the one who redeems us all, who saves us and rescues us, even from our own transgressions.

2 Corinthians 8:7-15 is part of Paul’s encouragement to the church in Corinth to be generous. He calls upon them to follow through on what they say they will do, and that it is important to have enough by their work, but also to share what they have with others. Wealth itself is not evil, as long as it shared—but it should be fair, and needs need to be met (vs. 14). The church in Corinth, back in the first letter, had a history of the wealthier members hoarding their goods and other church members going hungry, even at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11).

Mark 5:21-43 contains two stories of Jesus healing—one is nested inside the other. We begin and end with Jesus on his way to be with Jairus’ daughter—Jairus was a leader of the synagogue and his daughter was deathly ill. On the way, the crowds press in on him, and Jesus feels power go out of him as a woman touched the hem of his cloak, a woman who had been suffering for twelve years from hemorrhages. Jesus tells her that her faith has made her well, and Jesus later tells Jairus, “Do not fear, only believe.” Faith has power over fear. The woman was afraid, but stepped forward in faith, and Jairus was afraid of his daughter’s death, but Jesus called her up, and then, the first thing Jesus did was make sure her needs were taken care of and that she was given something to eat.

The Narrative Lectionary has been focusing on different types of Psalms, and this week it focuses on Thanksgiving with Psalm 40:1-10. The psalmist sings praise to God who has brought him out of death into new life, and God has given him a new song to sing, one of thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness and delight in following God’s ways.

A connecting theme this week is that grief and mourning, even despair, are part of life, but that God’s steadfast love endures. Faith is greater than fear, greater than death. We put our trust in God, but at times this is too difficult, and we need one another to look out for each other’s well-being. God will see us through, even if it is hard to know that in the moment.

Call to Worship

In God alone we put our trust and hope;

 **May we learn to walk by faith together.**

In Christ we know God’s love and forgiveness;

 **May we love and offer forgiveness to one another.**

In the Spirit we know God is doing a new thing;

 **May we trust in the work of the Holy Spirit among us,**

 **Joining our hearts together on this journey of faith. Amen.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

God of All People, we confess that we try to go it alone. We think that we can handle what comes our way, or we swing to the opposite side and worry we are burdening others. Remind us that we need one another on this path of faith, and that we need to help one another. You came to help us bear our burdens; help us to bear one another’s burdens as a community in Christ. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance of Pardon

You are not alone. Even if at times it feels that way, God is with you, and God is present in the people around you. Know that you are beloved by God, and forgiven. Go and share the good news, seeking justice and forgiveness in the name of the love of Christ. Amen.

Prayer

Holy One, guide us out of fear into hope. Guide us away from the doubts that hold us back and help us to trust in You. Your love is with us always; help us to remember that when fear is stopping us. May we remember that Your light is always shining, and the darkness cannot overcome it. May that light continue to guide our steps. In the name of Christ, the Light of the World, we pray. Amen.