

Reflections on March 2013 Readings

* A well-known, much-loved and often-used blessing is found in Numbers:

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon and give you peace.

This is the blessing the Levite priests were told by God, through Moses, to bestow on the Israelites. I remember saying it with our youth group in my formative years. Does it rekindle any memories for you? Who would you like to bless with it right now? Say it aloud as you envision it blessing that person.

* At our Bible Study Lenore shared a very interesting write-up by a scholar who researched Jesus' dying words, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* His conclusion is that the words are not so much that Jesus felt abandoned by God, but because he wanted the people to ponder Psalm 22, which begins with those words (No chapter or verse numbers had yet been assigned to the collection of Psalms, so they were often identified by their first lines.). We took time to read that Psalm aloud. Please join us by reading it, too, and finding its references to the suffering Messiah.

* In Numbers 11 God tells Moses to get 70 trusted men to receive a share of the Spirit so they could help to carry the load of dealing with and leading so many challenging people. What I found interesting was that two of men were unable to be there for the special gathering to get the Spirit, yet they both still received their shares. Another long-distance miracle, like Jesus curing the Centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10). Can you think of any other examples?

* Moses was a quietly humble man. He pleaded for his people, prayed for his rebellious sister, Miriam, when she was struck with leprosy, and graciously accepted his not being able to enter the Promised Land. Help me, Lord, to be humble and to do as Jesus says: forget about myself and follow Him (Luke 9:12-17). My New Year's resolutions (for now and the rest of my life) are 3-fold: Forget about myself, encourage others, and put God first!

* Our church has called us to a 3-week fast that ends on Easter Sunday. I am giving up two things that I know are not good for my health though they taste great, and have been inspired to learn all of Proverbs 3 by heart. I have refreshed my memorization of the Prodigal Son (which I shared last Lent at my NJ church) and will tell it once again at our Bible Study this week. It's found in this month's readings: Luke 15:11-32. Please read it and think about what it says to us today.

* Luke ends with the resurrected Jesus telling his disciples that He will send His Spirit, but they must stay in Jerusalem and wait for it. The Book of Acts is the continuation of Luke; it's the 2nd Book written by Luke to Theophilus. We look forward to reading about the acts of the apostles in the month of May. Meanwhile here's a great verse from Luke: *Blessed are those who hear God's Word and obey it. (11:28)*

In Luke 9 Jesus sends the 12 disciples out; in Luke 10 he sends 70 people out; and at the end of the Book He tells his followers that every nation must be told, in His name, to turn to God for forgiveness. We have our work cut out for us, don't we?

This weekend we once again ponder Jesus' death and celebrate His resurrection. Let's pray with all our hearts that we can do our part in spreading the Good News, and then take an action in the right direction, small as it may be. As Mother Theresa said, "We don't have to do great things, just small things with great love."