



Resources & Reflections

Week of September 20th

How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

This is Psalmist's cry in Psalm 137, verse 4. It is a *cri de coeur*, a cry from the heart. Perhaps you remember the circumstances. A psalmist sang this question that echoed in the hearts of the Israelites who were captives and refugees in Babylon, bereft of all they knew in a foreign land, isolated from what they loved, cut off from places they knew.

We are living in a strange land as well. In our country, pandemic, horrific natural disasters, effects of climate change, social unrest, deep political divisions, hateful speech . . . all seem a perfect storm of chaos. Indeed, how dare we sing?

Holding to the faith in good times is no great challenge. Faith in good times is a "milk-toast faith"; not worth much, not tasty, only minimal nourishment, actually "milk-toast faith" is boring and uninspiring as a repast; false calories.

The Christian Faith that counts is one which sees us through hard times, tough choices, weighty sorrows, those moments of distress that inevitably make up life. This is the Christian Faith in triumph. This is what Paul writes to the Romans:

"For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38-39

FROM "THE CONFESSION OF 1967," PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

"The new life takes shape in a community in which women and men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no person has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace.

"The new life does not release us from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, fear. We still have to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as we mature in love and faithfulness in our life with Christ, we live in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.

"The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death. The teaching of apostles and prophets guide us in living this life, and the Christian community nurtures and equips us for our ministries.

"The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of all persons in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they also are called to fight against the pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in the confidence that God's purpose rather than our weak schemes will finally prevail."

"The Confession of 1967" is contained in The Book of Confessions, which is part of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

A WEEK OF SCRIPTURE READING

Sunday - 16th Sun. after Pentecost September 20th

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Old Testament: Exodus 16:1-15
The Gospel Reading: Matthew 20:1-16

Monday - September 21

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 57
The Gospel Reading: Luke 1:1-4, 3:1-14

Tuesday - September 22

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 54
The Gospel Reading: Luke 3:15-22

Wednesday - September 23

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 65
The Gospel Reading: Luke 4:1-13

Thursday - September 24

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 143
The Gospel Reading: Luke 4:14-30

Friday - September 25

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 88
The Gospel Reading: Luke 4:31-37

Saturday - September 26

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 122
The Gospel Reading: Luke 4:38-44

Sunday - 17th Sun. after Pentecost September 27th

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7
The Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:23-32



*If mail is slow in reaching you,
We provide a Sunday start
on the coming week.*

THE HYMN: "BE NOT AFRAID"

Refrain: **Be not afraid, I go before you always
Come follow me, and I will give you rest.**

1. You shall cross the barren desert,
but you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety
though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words in foreign lands
and all will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live.
refrain

2. If you pass through raging waters,
in the sea you shall not drown.
If you walk amid the burning flames,
you shall not be harmed.
If you stand before the power of hell
and death is at your side,
Know that I am with you through it all.
refrain

3. Blessed are your poor,
for the kingdom shall be theirs.
Blest are you that weep and mourn,
for one day you shall laugh.
And if wicked tongues insult and hate you,
all because of me,
Blessed, blessed are you!
refrain

You may hear this hymn on
our Hamilton Church website:
www.hamilton-pres.org Go
to the page "Useful Links" on
the right hand side of the top
banner.

