

Stretching Toward Sunday

Thoughts, readings and reflections
based on this week's lectionary readings

March 24, 2019
Third Sunday in Lent, Year C

The readings this week:

- Isaiah 55:1-9 ◦ Psalm 63:1-8
- 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 ◦ Luke 13:1-9

[Click here to read this week's Scriptures](#)

How is it With Your Soul?

I meet regularly with a few friends and we ask one another an important question. We ask, "How is it with your soul?" In other words, at the core of your being ... what is going on? We ask the question every time we meet for lunch because we have promised to "watch over one another in love."

The question actually comes from the 18th Century Anglican priest and leader of the Methodist movement, John Wesley. And the hour or two we spend together every month has become one of the most important times of our lives.

How is it with your soul? That is a vital question. With other people I may ask, "How are you doing?" "How is everything going?" Or, "What's happening?" But when I'm with these four men, we try to be as honest as we can and tell each other what is really going on. How is it with your soul? It's a bigger question than, "How are you feeling?" It includes body, mind, spirit, relationships -- everything.

I love that question. It reminds me to check in with myself from time to time. And I appreciate that there are a few other people that really want to know.

So let me ask you -- how is it with your soul? And how would you answer these related questions?

1. Do you take time to FEED your soul?

Human beings need nourishment beyond the physical. I'm told that a hummingbird flaps its wings some 50-80 times a second. It must eat constantly to work that hard. It takes tremendous energy simply to live. We, too, must feed our minds and spirits as well as our bodies if we intend to be fully healthy. It may include prayer or meditation or the practice of other spiritual disciplines. Or taking classes and reading uplifting books. Or contacting an old friend. Without constant nourishment, our bodies, minds, spirits and

even our relationships will grow weak and listless.

2. Do you REST your soul?

In our multi-tasking lives, sometimes the best thing we can do is to do nothing. I occasionally like nothing better than sitting quietly, listening to soft music and letting my soul be at peace. Charles Darwin said, "If I had my life to live over again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once a week." What rests your soul?

3. How do you CHEER your soul?

One of the greatest gifts you have been given is a gift of laughter. And it is a gift we can never use enough. My own experience is that when I feel down, disheartened and discouraged, the cause is not because of too much suffering; it is because of too little joy. Where I find joy, I find life.

So, how did you do with those questions? This may be a good time to check in with yourself. Make sure you ask the big question: how it is with your soul?

Then listen carefully. Your soul may have something significant to tell you.

~ Steve Goodier, [Life Support System](#)



Reflecting on the Word



___ 1st Reading: [Isaiah 55:1-9](#)

What is at the heart of the invitation in v. 1? (Hint – the same invitation is given in v. 3) In what ways do we “spend money on what is not bread” and “labour on what does not satisfy”? What is the promise held out for those who seek, call, and turn back to the Lord? What is repentance and why is it essential to the Christian life? What attribute(s) of God do vv. 8-9 describe? How do we hear God’s invitation to come to the waters? For what do you hunger and thirst? How are God’s ways and thoughts different from our own? What promise do we hear within these verses? [Coonabarabran Presbyterian Church, Book of Faith](#)

___ Psalm Reading: [Psalm 63:1-8](#)

Have you ever been in need of food or water so badly that you could physically feel it? Perhaps you were fasting, or have a medical condition like hypoglycemia, or were in a hot place and couldn’t get water. What was that like – both physically and mentally? When you are in such need, what other things become important – or unimportant and why? In what ways do you think such needs might change you as a person, at least in other people’s eyes? What place does adoration of God have in prayer? (A personal challenge – How much of your time in prayer is spent adoring God?) What signs of real spiritual experience can we read in vv.1-5? What does David do to try and quench the “thirst” he has for God? What are some of the things that David adores about God? What are some of the results of this adoration in David’s life? What might be the result of adoration in your own life? [Faith Element, Coonabarabran Presbyterian Church](#)

Praying Toward Sunday

Lord Jesus Christ,
pierce my soul with your love
so that I may always long for you alone,
who are the bread of angels
and the fulfillment of the soul's deepest desires.

May my heart always hunger and feed on you,
so that my soul may be filled with sweetness in your
presence.

May my soul thirst for you,
who are the source of life, wisdom, knowledge, light
and all the riches of God our Father.

May I always seek and find you,
think about you, speak to you
and do everything for the honour and glory of your
name.

Be always my hope, my peace, my refuge and help
in whom my heart is rooted
so that I may never separate from you.

~ written by Bonaventure, 13th century

on those days
when i hunger
for some people to be
hurt
the way they've hurt me,
i feed eagerly at the
banquet
of judgment and
retribution
proclaimed by some;
yet you offer me
an abundant feast of
what is good:
loading my plate with a
mound of mercy,
pouring grace over it
and asking me to pass it
on
to my worst enemy.

in those moments
when i am so
dehydrated
by not having my
desires met

that i drink deeply from
the fountains
of self-pity and
pettiness,
you turn the handle of
hope,
filling that dented cup
of compassion
you have had since the
beginning of time,
and hand it to me,
saying,
'Drink up! It's good for
you!'

in this life
where it seems
i never get enough of
me,
help me to seek
to get enough of you, O
God;

help me.

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___ 3rd Reading: [1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#)

What has testing looked like for your faith community? Why did Paul describe Christ as the Rock? What does it mean that the Israelites were baptized into Moses? How does this connect with those in Corinth? In verse 11, what is the reference to the end of the ages? Why is idolatry such an important issue for the life of the Christian? How do you respond to Paul’s depiction of the Israelites in the wilderness? [Prestonwood Baptist Church, Episcopal Church](#)

___ 4th Reading: [Luke 13:1-9](#)

Describe a time when you, or someone one close to you, experienced suffering. How did you mentally process through that? Did you catch yourself asking the question, “Why God?” or “What have I done that brought this on?” What is the context of Luke 13:1-9? What is the “occasion” Luke refers to? Why would Luke put this at the end instead of in its chronological sequence? What had Jesus already done during this occasion? What can you conclude from the information reported in Luke 13:1? Why does Jesus bring up the matter of the 18 killed by the collapse of the tower in Siloam? What does Jesus mean that unless you repent, you will all likewise perish? What is the meaning of perish? What is repentance? Why is it more than just a mental change of mind? From what must you turn and repent? What about your church community? What does healthy soil mean to you? What do you need in your life to enrich it? [Grace Bible Church](#)