

Sunday, September 8, 2019

Old Testament

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

God asks the Israelites, through Moses, to trust him and the path that he has made before them, to listen to the wisdom of the Lord rather than the whims of their own hearts.

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy:

Moses said to all Israel the words which the Lord commanded him, "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 1

1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *

nor lingered in the way of sinners,

nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

2 Their delight is in the law of the LORD, *

and they meditate on his law day and night.

3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *

everything they do shall prosper.

4 It is not so with the wicked; *

they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *

nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, *

t the way of the wicked is doomed.

The Epistle

Philemon 1-21

Paul makes a large request of Philemon, on behalf of their mutual friend, and sometime slave, Onesimus; this tangled web of relationship and debt reveals the mutual obligation we all have to one another.

A reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon:

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love-- and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own

heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother-- especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

The Word of the Lord