



Come and See!

Week of January 18, 2026

The Word...

*"Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.
Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not; then said I, "Behold I come."
In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!"
I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know"*
(from Ps 40).

Pondering the Word...

I'm struggling to access the Spirit's voice today. My mind and heart are clouded by the events in the US over the past few weeks, especially the extrajudicial killing of a young mother in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It has shaken me and reminds me, yet again, that this kind of thing happens regularly for people of color in the US and is commonplace for those in other repressive regimes. I am awake but feeling so impotent.

I looked back on what I wrote five years ago about this same psalm passage after the insurrectionist mob attack on the US Capitol: *"It is beyond time for Christians to put aside their political platforms and take up the gospel; to stop restraining our lips and to announce God's justice in the world by calling out and taking concrete nonviolent action against treason and injustice. I am reminded of a good parenting lesson: 'to tolerate is to teach.' ...What lessons are we teaching our children about responsibility and accountability if we sit on our couches and post on social media, or if we let those who incited the mob go free because of their privileged positions. '(The zeal of Christian) love does not mean accepting breaches of justice 'for the sake of peace' (Jürgen Moltmann). No accountability, no healing...no truth, no reconciliation...no justice, no peace. Do something."*

I'll add even stronger words this time from Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *"If I sit next to a madman as he drives a car into a group of innocent bystanders, I can't, as a Christian, simply wait for the catastrophe, then comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrestle the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver."* Lev.19:16: *"You shall not stand by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake."* Who is my neighbor? Who is your neighbor?

Living the Word...

What is God's will for you right now? I don't pretend this is easy. I try to use this forum as a call to action, but I am just preaching to the choir. What am I doing to make a difference? I pray, I contribute, I protest, but I am not wrestling any steering wheel out of anyone's hands. And how does one do that nonviolently? (Read *The Cost of Discipleship* by Bonhoeffer to see how he 'wrestled' with this.) I imagine many of you feel the same way. My thought right now is that each day, I say the words of Samuel: *"I come to do your will."* That requires paying close attention, being aware, and listening. Perhaps God's will for me today is to take a risk and stand beside someone being oppressed. Or, to continue to call and write to political officials. Or, today, to fast and spend the day in prayer for peace. But it is not to continue to ignore the reality of this situation and hope it goes away. What is God's will for you today?

Personal Reflections and Ideas...

Mon, Jan 19: "Does the LORD so delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience to the command of the LORD? Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission than the fat of rams" (1 Sm 15:16-23). Readings like this are tough. I am uncomfortable hearing God instruct Saul to utterly destroy the people and property of another nation. But if we get too caught up in the tribal context of the OT, we can fail to learn important lessons. Here, Saul thinks he is doing God one better by sparing the best of the enemy's livestock to sacrifice in thanksgiving to God. What God desires is obedience. **Provision: Don't try to "one up" God.** Perhaps we go overboard attempting to atone for past sins or we refuse to forgive ourselves rather than simply accepting God's mercy. Or we devise elaborate rituals when all God wants from us are humble, loving hearts, open to God's commands. Do you ever assume to know better than God?

Tue, Jan 20: "How can I go? Saul will hear of it and kill me." To this the LORD answered: "Take a heifer along and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD" (1 Sm 16:1-13). I love this dialogue. Samuel expresses his well-founded fear and God doesn't dismiss it or lord over Samuel. Instead, God devises a plan in partnership with Samuel to keep him safe. **Provision: Have a dialogue with God.** Have you faced a sticky situation like Samuel faces? You don't want to be dishonest, but you also don't want to raise someone's ire by following what you know to be God's will. It could be with a family member or friend, or at work or school. Talk to God and ask God's help to find a way to do what you know is right without lying or inflaming the situation.

Wed, Jan 21: Looking around at them with anger, [Jesus was] mortified at the hardness of their hearts (Mk 3:1-6, literal Greek). I understand what it means to be angry and mortified—literally disgusted, ashamed, and embarrassed—by the hardness of heart on display today. I also know there is much compassion and love and mercy being shown as well that doesn't make for "clickbait" headlines. But like Jesus, despite anger and disgust, I am to counter hardness of heart with mercy. **Provision: Look for opportunities to show compassion.** Pay attention to what is happening around you. Seek out places to serve where you can show mercy for people who are withered with angst and fear. By your actions, you may help soften the hard-hearted who witness your love.

Thu, Jan 22: "My wanderings you have counted; my tears are stored in your flask" (Ps 56). Several years ago, a friend was working with an asylee woman from Cameroon. Rebels had killed her husband and elder son, and it was only a matter of time when she and her young son would be killed as well. She somehow arranged for them to escape on a flight to Brazil, and then walked—yes, walked—to the US border and found her way to Maryland. On the way, she was raped and gave birth to another child. When I read this psalm, I imagine her tears and the size of the flask in which God held them. God brought her to safety, and I pray she is still safe and not afraid. **Provision: Be a "flask" for another's tears.** There are enough tears out there to fill an ocean, especially within the immigrant community, but also in our families and local communities. Yes, we should do our best to work to address the causes of those tears, but sometimes, all we can do is be there to hold them for another. We can't change the past and often cannot fix the future, but by being there, we can provide comfort.

Fri, Jan 23: [David] said, "LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to the LORD's anointed, as to lay a hand on him" With these words David restrained his men (1 Sm 24:3-21). How do you think David's troops felt when he refused to kill Saul? Let's be real here: some were incredulous; others, disappointed ("Let's get this over with and go home!"); others, worried about his courage. But I imagine there were some who saw this act of nonviolence as a sign of great faith. **Provision: Let faith in God be your guide.** In OT times, David's restraint was very rare! Perhaps this is why God saw David as a man after God's own heart! (1 Sm 13). Nonviolence is pacifist but it doesn't call for passivity. And in these times when government leaders preach "might makes right," having an active living faith is even more important. Pay attention and let faith guide your actions.

Sat, Jan 24: David rent [his garments] and all the men did likewise. (2 Sm 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27). "He is out of his mind" (Mk 3:20-21). David is mourning Saul and Jonathan (maybe Jonathan more 😊). Between yesterday's episode and today's story, Saul has continued to try to kill David. I imagine some of the men who follow David's lead and rent their garments are the same ones who witness David's continued mercy on Saul. A few of them probably think, "He is out of his mind!" **Provision: How are you called to be "out of your mind?"**