

September 16, 2018

Sustain The Weary With A Word or Back to School

First Reading ~ *Isaiah 50:4-9*

YHWH has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning YHWH awakens, wakens my ear to listen as a student. Exalted YHWH opened my ears, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who humiliated me. I did not hide my face from insults or spitting. Because YHWH helps me, insults cannot wound me, therefore I have set my face like flint, because I know I will not be put to shame. My vindicator is near. Who would dare accuse me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is YHWH who helps me. Who will judge me guilty? All of them will wear out like a piece of clothing. Moths will devour them.

Second Reading

~ adapted from Anne Lamott in "Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers"

When someone shares with you a horrible truth—about the marriage that seemed fine, or work that seemed valuable, or a mind that turned out to be weaker than you thought—you say, “Thank you for the openness between us—that’s the greatest gift.” When someone you love can reframe something that was excruciating—having at last faced putting her husband in a home, or having watched her book or hopes or retirement account sink—and genuinely see something blessed in the mess, you say thank you. You say “Thank you” that in the revelation, whether it’s ordinary or difficult, this person you love has found a way to the balm of gratitude.

Revelation is not for the faint at heart. Some of us with tiny paranoia issues think that so much information and understanding is being withheld from us—by colleagues, by family, by life, by God—knowledge that would save us, and help us break the code and enable us to experience life with peace and amusement. But in our quieter moments we remember that (a) there are no codes, and (b) if you are paying attention, plenty is being revealed. We are too often distracted by the need to burnish our surfaces, to look good so that other people won’t know what screwed-up messes we, or our mate or kids or finances, are. But if you gently help yourself back to the present moment, you see how life keeps stumbling along and how you may actually find your way through another ordinary or impossible day. Details are being revealed, and they will take you out of yourself, which is heaven, and you will have a story to tell, which is salvation that again and again saves us, the way Jesus saves some people, or the way sobriety does. Stories to tell or hear—either way, it’s medicine. The Word.