

Vocations Sunday 2017

Short Bible notes

Acts 2:42-47 This is a famous passage that speaks of life among the believers after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Peter's stirring speech on Pentecost (2:1-13, 14-42). 3000 were baptized and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship. Acts 2:42-47 describes a community that took part in the various aspects of life in the community. For example, the generosity of sharing and distribution of things, prayer and teaching, evangelism as seen in the increase of number added to the community. The building of the community was not only the work of the Holy Spirit upon them but also on members of the community, each with his or her gift, and who was willing to be the mission of the Christian community. **(Themes: Different gifts/callings; Building up the Christian community)**

1 Peter 2:19-25 In 1 Peter, Jesus is consistently portrayed as one who suffers (1:11, 19; 3:18; 4:1). Therefore, when Christians suffer for their faith, they share in his suffering. In this passage, Jesus set an example of his suffering for them so that they might 'follow in his footsteps,' a role that they have been 'called' to (2:21). Followers are asked to imitate the manner of his endurance before his death. Since they may have to suffer even though they have done nothing wrong (2:19), they can therefore look to Jesus, who suffered even though he had 'committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips' (2:22). Therefore when Christians are reviled, they should not revile in return but bless (3:9) and place their trust in God (1:21). **(Themes: Calling entails suffering; A call to endurance: The example of Christ)**

John 10:1-10 In this passage, Jesus describes his relationship with his followers. Jesus declares, "I am the door of the sheep" (10:7). In contrast to thieves and robbers who seek to destroy the sheep, those who enter by him will be saved (10:9) and given life: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." In the light of the shepherd discourse (10:1-18), this passage speaks on the one hand to the close relationship of the shepherd, namely Jesus and his followers, the sheep. The shepherd knows his sheep and the sheep knows him, "I know my own and my own know me" (10:14b). On the other hand, the shepherd is willing to lay down his life for his sheep (10:15). **(Themes: Listening to the voice [call]; Relationship between the caller and the called; Protection of the flock; the sacrifice)**

Psalms 23 This is one of the best-known and most often-quoted passages in the Bible. The Psalm speaks of the shepherd, namely God, who provides, leads, guides and protects the sheep in all circumstances, such as their needs, struggles and also in the face of death. In short, the promise of God's presence is overwhelming. This psalm is connected to the shepherd discourse in John 10 where we see Jesus as the 'good shepherd' (John 10:11) and also Jesus as the 'shepherd and guardian' who leads those who are 'going astray like sheep' (2:25). If the shepherd guides his sheep along the right paths, the question is do the sheep listen to God's direction and guidance? **(Themes: Listening; Struggle; Leading; Faithfulness)**