

## Study Guide for October 28, 2018

**Readings:** Job 42:1-17; Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

**Theme:** Beginning to be what we're called to be.

This week I am not following the lectionary because of last week's message got me thinking, and wandering down a different path. You might recall I spoke about us all being priests, called to continue the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. I also claimed it was not that difficult to do, or at least begin to do. So why not start at the beginning? That is to say, at the beginning of the Bible.

This week I will be preaching from Genesis, at the beginning when God created humankind. From there God gives us a creative mandate – to take care of the new creation and all that is in it. That includes each other, right?

God created a place where human beings – both male and female – would thrive on their relationship with the Creator and would flourish with one another. Made in God's image, "we exalt the privilege of reflecting his character and looking after things in his world. He empowered us to be his eyes, his ears, his hands, and his voice in the world he loves – Image bearers of the highest calling." And there's no escaping this responsibility. You can learn more on this in this week's message.

### **READ: Job 42:1-17**

Like the creation story of our beginning, Job's story is a classic, told with many classic elements: a squeaky-clean protagonist who still falls on hard times, three antagonists, and here, finally a resolution beyond the reader's wildest dreams. Thank God for happy endings. The restoration of Job's riches comes not only in an unbelievable amount, but through an unbelievable series of events. Job does not pull off a last-second feat of strength against all odds. No, Job receives God's bounty after humbling himself even more before God. Like us, he relies on God's power of redemption and exercises humble faith beyond the reader's wildest dreams. This is the story of God. And how our faith in God, not in ourselves, is the ultimate source of restoration.

Q: In the face of extremely hard times, what do you focus on to keep your faith strong?

Q: What silver linings have you found during an extremely hard time in your life?

**PRAYER:** Faithful God, thank you for putting up with me and never giving up on me, no matter what I've done or left undone. Amen.

### **READ: Hebrews 7:23-28 (1-22); Isaiah 53**

Think about the great task of convincing the faithful Jews, of which Jesus of Nazareth was one, that the Messiah had actually already come and gone. So many faithful adherents to the Hebrew Law were unaware that the Messiah walked the earth somewhere far away, or

even nearby (or even right in front of them.) Jesus' earliest apostles had a lot of work to do. The power of Jesus' death and resurrection to change so much of their faithful practice must have been so difficult to hear, much less to adopt. And for hundreds of years, that remains the Christian task: spread the word that there was a man, born of God, fully divine while fully human, who will forever be your priest, as well as much, much more. The prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled. Jesus came to be the Messiah, anointed as the greatest High Priest, and still is.

**Q:** Name some of the attributes about Jesus, and then ask yourself which, if any, best describe you as you as someone anointed and blessed to walk in His footsteps?

**Q:** In what ways does Jesus serve as your priest?

**PRAYER:** Lord Christ, I look to you today for inspiration and guidance to move me through this world as you did, with love in your heart and God on your side. Amen.

**READ: Mark 10:46-52**

Nestled in Mark's gospel is this short travel story that bridges Jesus' passage from his Galilee to Jerusalem, where Jesus gives his last healing that reveals Jesus as the compassionate Christ who brings near the good news of God's victory over the brokenness (and blindness) of the world. Here is a blind beggar sitting on the side of the road, shouting to Jesus, who then ends up on his feet, following Jesus. Is this the transformation that Jesus offers us too? Maybe so, but the middle part is critical. We have to call upon Jesus' holy name more than we call upon everyone else that passes by where we sit, because Jesus is the one with the healing power. The blind beggar knew this, and said, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He would only do this if he had faith that Jesus could provide what he needed the most. And his own faith turned out to be the cure.

**Q:** What healing miracle would you call out to Jesus for, if he walked by where you sat today?

**Q:** What first inspired you to follow Jesus? What has continued to inspire you to follow Jesus?

**Q:** how might you use this story to teach someone about Jesus, or what does it inspire you to do for someone?

**PRAYER:** Blessed Holy Spirit, open my eyes, my ears, my hands, and my heart today so that you can work through me to lead others to redemption. Amen.

**SLOW READ: Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22.** The central invitation in this passage is "taste and see that the Lord is good. As you read this passage, breathe slowly and focus your breath on all the good things that the Lord has done for you.

\*Adapted from notes by The Rev. Darren Steadman of Christ Church Episcopal, Richmond, VA