

Psalm 52

David speaks words of judgement against Doeg, proclaiming that he will be punished for his lies, while David will prosper under God's care.

Why do you boast, O mighty one, of mischief done against the godly?
All day long you are plotting destruction.
Your tongue is like a sharp razor, you worker of treachery.
You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth.

Selah

You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

But God will break you down forever;

God will snatch and tear you from your tent;

God will uproot you from the land of the living. *Selah*

The righteous will see, and fear,

and will laugh at the evildoer, saying,

“See the one who would not take refuge in God,

but trusted in abundant riches, and sought refuge in wealth!”

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.

I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

I will thank you forever, because of what you have done.

**In the presence of the faithful I will proclaim your name,
for it is good.**

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus is welcomed into the home of Mary and Martha. While Martha serves, Mary sits at Jesus' feet - and he refuses to chide Mary for this as Martha requests.

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

READINGS COCU48C

Truth and lies; prophecies and the silencing of prophecy; sitting at Jesus' feet or serving; Christ as the image of God, and the Gospel as the saving message that reconciles us with God. This week it's all about God speaking, and the question of whether we will listen or not. As tempting as it might be, based on the Gospel reading, to create a dichotomy between listening and serving, hearing and doing, the other readings don't allow us this. Listening to God's word is inextricably connected to following God's ways of justice, truth and compassion. Perhaps Jesus simply wanted Martha to listen before she acted, rather than assuming she knew what needed to be done? Ordinary things powerful in the work of God's reign: it is as we listen to God's message and implement God's saving reconciling word through simple acts of justice, compassion and a commitment to truth and integrity, that we find ourselves living out the reality of God's reign in our lives and our world.

Global application:

Words, used as propaganda, mere rhetoric or to inspire, are a massive feature of today's media-driven world. So many messages call us to label certain individuals or groups in certain ways. So many speakers claim to have the final word on certain situations or problems. So many speeches give little more than double-speak, finger-pointing or denial of responsibility. And, in all of the words, little actually changes. Lives are not saved. Injustice is not exposed and removed. Peace is not created, and solutions are not found to our big crises. One could be forgiven for thinking that we are living in the times Amos spoke about – a famine of God's word. But, God's word is not absent. It has not changed since Jesus lived it and preached it. The essential message of the Gospel – integrity, compassion and justice – has not changed or been silenced. All that is required is for those of us who follow the message of Christ to speak up, in words that are supported by accompanying actions, to challenge the empty words of our time, and call our leaders and our peers to account. But, we cannot do this unless we are prepared to be held to our own standards.

(John van de Laar, Sacredise)

Amos 8:1-12

Amos sees a vision of a basket of ripe fruit, which God explains indicates that Israel is ripe for judgement. Amos then prophesies God's judgement against the corruption of God's people, and the famine of hearing God's word that is to come.

This is what the Lord God showed me - a basket of summer fruit. He said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the Lord said to me, "The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass them by. The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day," says the Lord God; "the dead bodies shall be many, cast out in every place. Be silent!"

Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat." The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who lives in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt? On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on all loins, and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son, and the end of it like a bitter day.

The time is surely coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.

Colossians 1:15-29

Paul celebrates Christ as the visible image of God, the Creator and reconciler of all, and describes his ministry of proclaiming the Good News that leads us into relationship with God.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him - provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel. I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.