

Lectionary Resources for October 19, 2008

Domestic Abuse Awareness Sunday

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Although October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and October 19 is designated on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar for special worship and educational activities, any time is a good time to break the silence about domestic violence in our churches. Sitting in worship, every time we gather, are victims and perpetrators of abuse and those bystanders by might be agents of hope and healing.

Call to Worship: A Psalm of Wisdom from Psalm 73

One: Lord God you guide me with your counsel and afterward you will receive me with honor.

All: Whom have I in heaven but you? And there's nothing on earth that I desire other than you.

One: My flesh and my heart may fail,

All: But God is the strength of my heart

One: Let us worship God.

Prayer of Confession:

Great God of Wisdom, from the beginning wisdom was a gift given to human beings to help direct our path in life. Our Lord Jesus identifies himself as a child of wisdom and indeed we know that he is the embodiment of your wisdom and truth. And yet, Lord, we divert our attention away from him and his teachings and towards personal gain and selfishness. In so doing, we create idols of wealth and human intelligence, turning our backs on your role in our lives. We reject as important the wisdom of our elder adults preferring to turn to technology and youthfulness to solve our problems. Lord, forgive us. Help us to rediscover the balance between your wisdom and human intelligence and to listen for the wisdom in older adults. For we pray in Christ's name.

Note: Each of these passages could be used for the theme of God's wisdom revealed to humanity.

Exodus 22:12-23:

The context of this passage is Moses in the wilderness leading the band of Israelites who have broken the Covenant with God and have impatiently begun to worship idols in Moses' absence. They chose to create the golden calf as the visible object of their worship (chapter 32) while Moses is worshipping God. Moses pleads with God to send him help that they will recognize the tangible proof of God's deliverance. God assures Moses that his presence will go with Israel. God reasserts his mercy and grace and passes by Moses, revealing his back, but not his face. The visible presence of the back of God guides Moses and his people into their future. This serves as a visible presence of God's guiding wisdom with them.

I Thess. 1:1-10:

This passage points to the connection between God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the way for his followers to sustain their strength together as the Body of Christ. This is what it means to be an imitator of Christ. By living out the love of God, the disciples embody the wisdom of Jesus Christ and serve as teachers for others whom they encounter. Those who have spent a lifetime of following him in our churches serve as models of wisdom helping us to turn from idol worship towards God whose reality is revealed in the embodiment of love, grace and peace exemplified by senior members in our church.

Matthew 22:15-23:

The Pharisees strive to trap Jesus by setting him up with a question that should either force his allegiance to Rome, thereby putting him at odds with the Temple and all Jews, or force his allegiance to God, thereby identifying him as an enemy of the state. But Jesus relies on the wisdom of God to provide a third response, that honors both state and God. How does God's wisdom help us to find a third way in our society during a political year? How do we face the economic challenges in our own day and time? How do we seek out God's wisdom revealed through scripture and the wise members of our own congregations?

Affirmation of Faith: 1979 Declaration of Faith-PCUS

Jesus Christ overthrew evil doers that enslaved and degraded people, yet he made no use of power to protect himself. He healed those who were sick in body and mind, yet he did not avoid pain and suffering for himself. He commanded his followers to place loyalty to him above loyalty to family and country, yet he lived among them as a servant. Jesus taught with authority, yet he submitted to humiliation and death without a word on his own behalf. He forgave sinners, yet he was counted among sinners.

We recognize the work of God in Jesus' power and authority. He did what only God can do. We also recognize the work of God in Jesus' lowliness. When he lived as a servant and went humbly to his death, the greatness that belongs only to God was manifest. In both his majesty and lowliness, Jesus is the eternal Son of God, God himself with us.

Hymn Selections: The Presbyterian Hymnbook

- #262 God of the Ages Whose, Almighty Hand
- #339 Be Thou My Vision
- #434 Today We Are All Called to Be Disciples
- #358 Help Us Accept Each Other

Visit the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network web site for future worship suggestions, www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn.