

Church of the Resurrection
February 5, 2012
Mark 1:29-39
5 Epiphany B

Take my lips, O Lord, and speak through them; take our minds and think with them; take our hearts and set them on fire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” In our Old Testament reading from the Book of Isaiah, the writer is trying to give hope to the Israelites who are in exile. The God who made the entire creation, who sits above the circle of the earth, and stretches out the heavens like a curtain, who counts the number of the stars and calls them by their names – that God will not leave them helpless or hopeless.

This author is calling the exiles to remember their history, their story, their covenant with God. Just because the exiles are struggling to return from their wanderings in the wilderness, they should not forget all that God has done for them. They should not think that God has abandoned them. The crisis of the Babylonian exile has caused the people to forget their own story, the story of God’s attentiveness and dependability, the story of God’s love for Israel. Because they have forgotten, they are questioning the presence and the power of God. Their memory seems to be selective, to forget God when a crisis arises, and forget all the good things that God has given them. They have forgotten who they are – children of God.

And don’t we do the same thing? When things are going well, we forget God. We forget to thank God for all the many blessings that we receive. When things are going well, we think we don’t need God. But then trouble or a crisis comes along and we

collapse with stress and anxiety. We are stressed out because of our lack of trust in God. We think God has abandoned us to take on life's crises by ourselves.

The author of Isaiah is trying to cure the world's amnesia. God has not forgotten us. Why are we forgetting God? We worry because we don't trust God enough. We think God should take away our suffering when in reality God can give us the strength to get through it. Or we don't trust God because God doesn't heal us in the way that we want to be healed or in the time frame that we want to be healed. More trust in God means less worry for us. "The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless," the author says. Only when we realize God's power and our powerlessness does hope emerge.