

## **Monday, January 16, 2017 - Day 15 – Genesis 37-39; Psalm 13; Matt 13**

In the Day 15 lessons we have rich material to work with and I feel on that I am getting involved with God through the lives of those who sojourned before us.

In today's reading there were all kinds of folks. Insufferable youth. Bitter siblings. Joseph must have driven his brother's crazy; his parent's favorite; the youngest son; the fancy clothes; the dreams. Joseph's life is saved by selling him into bondage; he was trafficked.

Was Psalm 13 on his lips, maybe, maybe not: it certainly would be what I would be saying. I can hear Joseph wailing as those who were supposed to look out for him, betrayed him. "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?" And what was it that Jesus said? "No one is a prophet in their home town." Was that Joseph's problem? Was it simply the dreams?

Enter Jesus as he is called out by his neighbors. His neighbors took offense that Jesus possessed wisdom, a wisdom that they clearly did not. And instead of listening and learning as we are doing today, they mocked him.

The passages in today's readings feel connected, but are they? As the words jump off the pages at us we are to "read, mark, and inwardly digest them." We are to get involved with God by learning the Biblical Stories; we are to learn the lessons of God.

Old Testament Scholar Ellen Davis, shared a story from my class at Virginia Seminary, in her book *Getting Involved with God*. "If there is a secret to getting involved with God through the pages of scripture, then perhaps it is this: turn the pages slowly. One of [her] students in an introductory Old Testament course once said, 'When I started this course, I thought that my problem was that I read too slowly. Now I realize that I read too fast.' Our reading style reflects our culture's general admiration for speed. Modern novels have taught recreational readers to skim for plot. Many of us must read for our jobs, and we pride ourselves in our ability to read large amounts of information" very quickly, but when we do so, we miss so much. Joseph was trafficked. The Psalmist was broken. Jesus was a lot for those he grew up with to handle.

My temptation, as I have approached each of the days of the Bishop's Bible Challenge, has been to read quickly so that I do not fall behind. But that is not the message today. The message today is that if I really want to get involved with God then I am to present myself as fertile soil able to take full advantage of the seeds planted by God. Will God call me in a dream; will God be present in the censure of my neighbors; will God call me? Will God use me as God used Joseph?

By The Very Rev. Jonathan Clodfelter