

Session One: Tuesday, September 12: 10:30 until 11:45

1. 23rd Sunday in ordinary time

^{TNK} **Psalm 95:1** Come, let us sing joyously to the LORD, raise a shout for our rock and deliverer;

² let us come into His presence with praise; let us raise a shout for Him in song!

³ For the LORD is a great God, the great king of all divine beings.

⁴ In His hand are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are His.

⁵ His is the sea, He made it; and the land, which His hands fashioned.

⁶ Come, let us bow down and kneel, bend the knee before the LORD our maker,

⁷ for He is our God, and we are the people He tends, the flock in His care. O, if you would but heed His charge this day:

⁸ Do not be stubborn as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah, in the wilderness,

⁹ when your fathers put Me to the test, tried Me, though they had seen My deeds.

¹⁰ Forty years I was provoked by that generation; I thought, "They are a senseless people; they would not know My ways."

¹¹ Concerning them I swore in anger, "They shall never come to My resting-place!"

Plan:

First, let's assemble a **set of tools** that we can grasp and deploy, can use and re-use and become increasingly comfortable with as we go. If/as you prepare, see what you can do, and anticipate that I will develop these points as we talk together. I will **italicise/bold/color** them, so we can find them in the tool box. So here: the general **type** of the psalm: what **strategy** does it seem to be "wearing" or using? What **images** does it use for the drawing of us, of God? What is the **floorplan** of the psalm, so that if you were outlining it, how would it look? The psalms all feel totally free to reach into the **trove of biblical/Israelite history** for references, and these we often need to catch up with so they work for us. It can be useful to notice **voicing**: who is talking and to whom. Are there **liturgical directions embedded**, that can give us a hint as to context?

Then, second, let's raise **our questions** about what we are hearing/reading/praying: What can we get from the image of the rock, especially as we allow it to unfold? Do rocks provide water? Is there an undertone of threat here, as well as invitation? You may recall asking someone, "Is that a threat or a promise? Fine line, sometimes, but they work very differently.

This psalm rehearses the long time in the wilderness (Exodus-numbers), when a whole generation (minus two!) died before the group reached the land of promise; is that encouraging to us? How can it be that a whole generation fails to rise to the challenge: do we appropriate that image or refuse it, react to it negatively? We learned previously that virtually all the Psalms end with praise and or gratitude; does this one? Other questions you may have? Third, how does the psalm fit the readings it is journeying with on this *Sunday lectionary arrangement*?

type

strategy

images

floorplan

trove of biblical/Israelite history

voicing

liturgical directions embedded

our questions

Sunday lectionary arrangement

[I'll let you make your own answer sheets after today]

2. 24th Sunday in ordinary time

^{TNK} **Psalm 103:1** Of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul, all my being, His holy name.

² Bless the LORD, O my soul and do not forget all His bounties.

³ He forgives all your sins, heals all your diseases.

⁴ He redeems your life from the Pit, surrounds you with steadfast love and mercy.

⁵ He satisfies you with good things in the prime of life, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The LORD executes righteous acts and judgments for all who are wronged.

⁷ He made known His ways to Moses, His deeds to the children of Israel.

⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ He will not contend forever, or nurse His anger for all time.

¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor has He requited us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.

¹² As east is far from west, so far has He removed our sins from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear Him.

¹⁴ For He knows how we are formed; He is mindful that we are dust.

¹⁵ Man, his days are like those of grass; he blooms like a flower of the field;

¹⁶ a wind passes by and it is no more, its own place no longer knows it.

¹⁷ But the LORD's steadfast love is for all eternity toward those who fear Him, and His beneficence is for the children's children

¹⁸ of those who keep His covenant and remember to observe His precepts.

¹⁹ The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His sovereign rule is over all.

²⁰ Bless the LORD, O His angels, mighty creatures who do His bidding, ever obedient to His bidding;

²¹ bless the LORD, all His hosts, His servants who do His will;

²² bless the LORD, all His works, through the length and breadth of His realm; bless the LORD, O my soul.

Plan: We turn to our

set of tools

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Just to stay in practice, let's reuse some tools from Psalm 95: How would you name the **strategy** that the Psalmist seems to have chosen to use here? We can bring to bear two new tools: the first is called **inclusio**, where we can see an item repeated at the front and end of a piece, implying a unit (also called an envelope, meaning something is contained between its top and bottom; where used here? Related but distinct is a feature called **merism**, where the first and last units are named to imply as well everything between them. What **images** are used here? Does reference to dust remind you of another place in the Bible (this is called an **intertext**, a place where one word (or larger unit) evokes a related one, and we are invited to make a connection if we wish. How do you respond to a very common feature of Psalms, where we are reminded of **God's dis/approval**, meaning that we are told what dis/pleases God. That last feature may take us right to **our questions**! What would you like to ask this Psalm, or to say about it? What do you like and not like? Finally, what of the **Sunday lectionary arrangement**? How does the liturgical context currently in use (since shortly after Vatican II) enhance this Psalm? How do you feel about the snippeting?

strategy

inclusio

merism

images

intertext

God's dis/approval

our questions

Sunday lectionary arrangement

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