

For Reflection: Noticing which way people are going...

These are heavy lessons, and this is supposed to be summer. How can we use these lessons fruitfully now? One reading that could be particularly useful to us picks up on the question about, "*What direction X, Y, or Z is going in.*" This may seem a small thing, but it is not.

To be useful, we need to be able to see and hear faithful ways of following that are *possible* even given the messy conditions of our lives now. So, for this week, let's do that. We have no difficulty coming up with actions or qualities that are far beyond our reach; (or at least, they seem to be that way.) For example, we might have trouble finding a plow, let alone using one. So, let's look carefully for the smaller actions and qualities, within ourselves and those around us, like the ones described in the Galatians reading, the ones that ARE within our reach now, even if we do not move far from our chairs.

- In what directions are the faithful going this week?
- How does this Psalm help you to follow the Holy One?
- What is your prayer for this week?
- To what is God calling you this week?

1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21

19:15 Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. 19 So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. 20 He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" 21 He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Psalm 16

16:1 Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
2 I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."
3 As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.
4 Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.
5 The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.
7 I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
8 I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.
10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.
11 You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers, and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. 14 For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. 16 Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Luke 9:51-62

9:51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; 53 but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 Then they went on to another village. 57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 59 To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

60 But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 61 Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." 62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."