

Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138; Romans 11:25-36; Matthew 16:13-20
In the Presentence (Glory) of God

I sometimes think, confronted with the truth of God, we learn to live with/ accept, in ourselves, a certain amount of lackluster or subtleness or maybe even (I'll call it) moral pride /authority or entitlement, in ourselves, as we struggle /seek to balance the instruction /guidance / commands offered in the Holy Scriptures; to Boldly, approach His Throne of Grace Hebrews 4:16; and to, Work out our Salvation with fear & trembling Phil 2:12-13. In example, I wonder, were I to fully comprehend / embrace the truth that God, who is Holy God, Eternal God, Creator; God who was enfleshed among us, sacrificed & resurrected; Holy Spirit who hovered over the waters: present & living now, in each one of us, & anointing us as his holy temple. I would just melt/surrender, unable to hold any notion/distinction of myself, I would be (and rightly so) laid prostrate on the floor in humble adoration and awe of my God, my savior, his holiness, his righteousness, his awesomeness, totally incredible God before me. For what could I do to bring glory to the one who is forever deserving of it all?

We each have experienced / can identify the reality; that God is; and that He is personally present with us and that we are in Him & He in Us; and that He/this is light and truth and power and love personified, the one & only true God. He is God and He desires us; and calls/draws us even closer into relationship with Him. We upon coming to faith are not taken up into Heaven, such as Elijah, when his mantle was transferred to Elisha. We are not necessarily called to live in the wilderness, to call people out into repentance, in the manner of John the Baptist. We are not given a new revelation of God, incarnate in Christ; yet, we are called, to live as His people, proclaiming Him by our life and labors. We are called, to worship Him, with our whole being; our flesh, our souls redeemed to love and serve God and His people. We are called to function as his body, his hands and feet and voice, to be hearers and doers of the word. We are serve and embrace as the arms of His Love, His out stretched hand in offer of mercy. Yes, the rapture shall come; & heaven awaits us; but we are given to fulfill His great commission, here & now; to share His truth, granted in us. We the Church as his bride, are never to love him any less, our heart must remain ever true; and we are granted/have an intimate place/ a calling in His kingdom, such that the love in and of him, magnifies & inspires us to action and service, not just admiration alone. I had an opportunity, this Wednesday to spend some reflective time, to meditate, in Eucharist Adoration; and the Lord strengthened in my considerations, distinguished above all others, that he alone is the holy one, He alone is the Lord, there is none to compare, no man, no prophet. Jesus is God, Amen! To continue let us review who we are in God, what the people thought of Jesus, and what God the Father revealed to his disciples & to us, about him; and our call to build his Church. To start let's look at the prophetic word of God's calling the Gentiles, the distant lands, the islands, us. Please open your Bibles to Isaiah 51: 1 And, while you find that, let me take a moment to answer the 2 scriptures I paraphrased earlier. KJV Hebrews 4:14-16 seeing that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. We are assured of God, who came to save us. We may trust him to do what he has promised, to have mercy upon us. He, who experienced temptations, as one of us; He who knows us & our weakness, will not condemn, but heal and restore us into the presence of God's glory. Our faith, our hope is fully invested in him. We may approach him with confidence/faith in him. Phil 2:12-13 therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to

will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Christ, whom we are to honor, desires a personal relationship in us; will do the “work” grow us/equip us in faith and love if we offer ourselves to him.

So now, let us look at God’s blessing for us, thru his prophet Isaiah, in chapter 51

Vs 1 Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness that’s us, right? and who seek the Lord
it is the Lord in whom righteousness is found and there are none righteous apart from him!

Look to the rock, the quarry, to Abraham, to Sarah we’ll see this come to life, a little later in Romans
Vs3 The Lord will surely comfort Zion as we will see, this includes us. Vs5 My righteousness draws
near speedily, my salvation is on the way this is our Lord! whose salvation will last
forever, his righteousness will never fail Praise be to God Almighty!

Let’s keep going, turn to today’s Epistle reading in Romans 11:25-to the end look at the middle of
Vs 25 : Israel has experienced a hardening, in part, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.
that’s us 26 And so all Israel will be saved So we with Israel will be saved, fulfilling God’s
covenant promise, declared in His Holy Name. Many of you will recall Fr Chris’ teaching last week from
Romans that we, as wild branches, are grafted in alongside the remnant of those natural branches,
the root, the nation Israel, with whom God first made know his covenant. We shall all be brothers in
Christ, in the fullness of times, in the fulfillment of His covenant to save, to redeem a people unto
himself. You can see the hand of God’s mercy extended to all creation, willing to come to His truth. We
may look to see that God, has been, and will be, our hope for all eternity. We are saved unto his Glory,
by His will & provision directed to us.

Now, bear with me a little longer, as we turn to our Gospel, Matthew 16, beginning in Vs13 Jesus
asked his disciples, Who do people say the Son of Man is? Use of this term *Son of Man*, by Jesus,
recognizes the truth of the incarnation, perfect God & perfect man. Vs 14 The response/ the peoples’
opinion: suggesting the return of John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah, though honorable among the
calling of men, falls well short of recognizing the divine nature of Jesus.

Then Jesus asks of his disciples, those who have witnessed firsthand his miracles, experienced with him,
anointing & empowerment, prayer & teaching; who do you say, that I am? Vs 15
Now, I envision a hush; because how else can we prepare for such a moment

Vs 16 Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God These are among the most
powerful words to ever be spoken by man. Jesus response honors & acknowledges the greatest
impact/development, to that moment, of his discipleship of man. That these men are now beginning to
move and recognize and hear from God; no longer limited to their own capacity & understanding; but on
the very truth of God, from God. The seeds planted have began to show fruit and in a way that may be
sustained by God. So much so that the Church may be built upon the truth of God, never changing. Upon
this rock shall be the Church be built, prevailing with the truth over & against the manipulation of man
and satan. In check, only to God and His Holy Word. We know that these men will continue to be tested;
and will even fail; but God will call them back into His truth and in relationship with him.

Holy Spirit, inspire in us, the truth of God, as proclaimed by God, in the Holy Scriptures, in the
teaching, and miracles and leadership and mercy, of Jesus Christ, in the examples of faith by our
Apostolic Fathers and in the anointing power and discernment of your Holy Spirit. Jesus said I will

give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven; I believe Jesus, and the truth of God in him and his gift of himself for us, is our key to kingdom of heaven.