

Prologue to the Word
February 9, 2020

The Abacus

Isaiah 58:6-12

This week's verses come from the final section of the book of Isaiah. The people have returned from exile and have become very pious in their attention to religious practices such as fasting. They are complaining, however, because they feel that God is absent and is not responding to their worshipful acts. Through the words of the prophet Isaiah, God tells the people that their pious acts of fasting are self-serving. God wants instead for the people to "loose the bonds of injustice," share their bread "with the hungry" and "bring the homeless poor" into their houses. God promises that if they do this, their "light shall rise in the darkness" and the Lord will "guide them continually."

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul has an important message to share. He tells the people that it is not in worldly human wisdom that the power of God is revealed, but it is revealed through the Holy Spirit. Paul did not want the church in Corinth to adopt the same elite power structure as the society in which they lived – rather, he wanted them to stand with the oppressed and work for justice. It is the Holy Spirit which works to bring God's truth and wisdom into people's hearts.

Matthew 5:13-20

These verses from Matthew contain some familiar words and images. Last week we heard Jesus share the Beatitudes. Now this week, in a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus further tells his listeners what they are to be and do. They are the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world". It is a call to discipleship. Jesus further tells them that he has not come to "abolish the law or the prophets", but to "fulfill", and calls his listeners to live in righteousness.

Sermon Notes

What does it mean for Jesus to say that he has not come to "abolish" the law and the prophets but to "fulfill"? What do Jesus' words of instruction to the disciples have to say to us in this day and time?

Shalom,
Rev Lisa Bowersock