

Bible Study
Christmas 2, Year C
January 3, 2016

[RCL] Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 84 or 84:1-8; Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a; Matthew 2:13-15,19-23

Jeremiah 31:7-14

In Jeremiah we hear of Israel's people crying out to the Lord for help. God hears them and they are gathered up and returned from exile. How the people praise the Lord! Israel embarks on a journey out of captivity. Although the way is long, it is level and along streams. There are not only healthy people on this journey. All people come along including those who are weak, unable to see or walk. There are also pregnant mothers; their impending births symbolize a new start. This journey is a new start with abundance for all. People will celebrate with praise and dance! Their sorrow will be replaced with happiness!

- Where in your life do you feel you have been exiled?
- How has God delivered you from exile?
- Where is your promised land?
- What will your promised look like?

Psalm 84 or 84:1-8

This Psalm tells us of God's loving power. It illustrates how we desire God's love. God provides shelter in the temple. A place to sing praises but also a place of refuge for everyone; even the birds are safe there. We can find happiness with the security that God gives us and those who trust in God are blessed. Besides shelter we need water to sustain us. The pools of water at the temple are necessary for life and with the pools and God we shall not thirst. God provides for us. We praise God and call out in our fervent prayers for God is the Almighty.

- How do you experience God's love in your life?
- How do you express the happiness you find in God's presence?

Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians we hear of God's strength, grace, and immeasurable power. God brings blessings for a future filled with glory and power. We are chosen to be God's children. God finds us to be holy and without blame. Our sins are forgiven and God fully accepts us. We have not only gained an inheritance, we are also sealed by the Holy Spirit. God knows us well and we pray that we may be enlightened. We seek wisdom and revelation in order to know God better. We as humble people strive to know God better. We believe.

- How might you know God more fully?
- How has your life been blessed?

Matthew 2:13-15, 19

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and he obeyed. The angel told him of the dangers to his family. Joseph loved his family and he did everything to protect them. He and his

family fled into Egypt for temporary refuge. The death of King Herod meant some safety so they moved on to Israel. The family was heading to Judea but found out King Herod's son was there. This was another threat. So instead, they went to the district of Galilee and settled in the town of Nazareth. This town was of ill repute but despite this, Jesus became known a Nazarene.

- How do you listen to God?
- How has God guided you?

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