

May 30th Daily Devotional:

Today's Psalm is number 18. It's a long one, but some of its verses may sound very familiar: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised...." How and when has God been a rock for you?

Tomorrow is Pentecost, and so I want to share this poem by Jan Richardson. May it be both a blessing and a challenge.

THIS GRACE THAT SCORCHES US

A Blessing for Pentecost Day

Jan Richardson

from Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons

Here's one thing
you must understand
about this blessing:
it is not
for you alone.
It is stubborn
about this.
Do not even try
to lay hold of it
if you are by yourself,
thinking you can carry it
on your own.
To bear this blessing,
you must first take yourself
to a place where everyone
does not look like you
or think like you,

a place where they do not
believe precisely as you believe,
where their thoughts
and ideas and gestures
are not exact echoes
of your own.

Bring your sorrow.

Bring your grief.

Bring your fear.

Bring your weariness,
your pain,
your disgust at how broken
the world is,
how fractured,
how fragmented
by its fighting,
its wars,
its hungers,
its penchant for power,
its ceaseless repetition
of the history it refuses
to rise above.

I will not tell you
this blessing will fix all that.

But in the place
where you have gathered,
wait.

Watch.

Listen.

Lay aside your inability

to be surprised,

your resistance to what you

do not understand.

See then whether this blessing

turns to flame on your tongue,

sets you to speaking

what you cannot fathom

or opens your ear

to a language

beyond your imagining

that comes as a knowing

in your bones,

a clarity

in your heart

that tells you

this is the reason

we were made:

for this ache

that finally opens us,

for this struggle,

this grace

that scorches us

toward one another

and into

the blazing day.