

Hebrew Scriptures: Hear words of hope in Ezekiel's vision 47:1-9

I was taken back to the Temple, where I saw a stream flowing from under the entrance. It began in the south part of the temple, where it ran past the altar and continued east through the courtyard.

We walked out of the Temple area through the north gate and went around to the east gate. I saw the water flowed east from the south side of the gate.

A guide walked east, then took out a measuring stick and measured 500 metres downstream. I was told to wade through the stream there, and the water came up to my ankles.

Then the guide measured another 500 meters downstream, and told me to wade through it there. The water came up to my knees. Another 500 meters downstream the water came up to my waist.

Another 500 meters downstream, the stream had become a river that could be crossed only by swimming. The guide said, "Ezekiel, mortal one, pay attention to what you've seen."

We walked to the riverbank, where I saw dozens of trees on each side. Then I was told:

This water flows eastward to the Jordan River valley and empties into the Dead Sea, where it turns the salt water into fresh water.

Wherever this water flows, there will be all kinds of animals and fish, because it will bring life and fresh water to the Dead Sea.

Pause

For the vision of the prophets.

We give thanks.

Gospel: Hear words of faith from the Gospel of Matthew 20:1-16

“The kingdom of heaven is like the owner of an estate who went out at dawn to hire workers for the vineyard. After reaching an agreement with them for the usual daily wage, the owner sent them out to the vineyard.

“About mid-morning, the owner came out and saw others standing around the marketplace without work, and said to them, ‘You go along to my vineyard and I will pay you whatever is fair.’ At that they left.

“Around noon and again in the mid-afternoon, the owner came out and did the same. Finally, going out late in the afternoon, the owner found still others standing around and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’

“ ‘No one has hired us,’ they replied.

“The owner said, ‘You go to my vineyard, too.’

“When evening came, the owner said to the overseer, ‘Call the workers and give them their pay, but begin with the last group and end with the first.’ When those hired late in the afternoon came up, they received a full day’s pay, and when the first group appeared they assumed they would get more. Yet they all received the same daily wage.

“Thereupon they complained to the owner, 12 ‘This last group did only an hour’s work, but you’ve put them on the same basis as those who worked a full day in the scorching heat.’

“ ‘My friends,’ said the owner to those who voiced this complaint, ‘I do you no injustice. You agreed on the usual wage, didn’t you? Take your pay and go home. I intend to give this worker who was hired last the same pay as you.

I'm free to do as I please with my money, aren't I? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

"Thus the last will be first and the first will be last."

Pause

For scriptures which challenge our thinking and living.

We give thanks.

Contemporary Reading: *Singing Yoongoorrookoo* from Tossed up by the beak of a Cormorant by Dr Anne Poelina and Nandi Chinna

I am Yoongoorrookoo, the singing Rainbow Serpent,
travelling high up in the sky and down through rivers,
the air land and the sea, the river and the soil.

I feel a great sadness now carried by many people
They cry out and ask, What is happening in our Nation,
In our Country, in our home?

I see below me floods and fires crisscrossing the land,
big storms and harsh heat.

Our knowledge of Country ignored by government and
bureaucracy

... Aboriginal voices being muted in their protection of our rivers,
Crying out, we need to be recognised.

Rivers must have a right to life and their contribution
To all other life must be respected.

Some are fearful the humans lead their own extinction

I have hope in human beings, for living water lives within them too
It's their life they must save if they are to continue living on Mother
Earth

Mother Earth covered in living waters cradled beneath the sky
I keep on singing as I believe a coalition of hope is coming.

Pause

For the gift and challenges of poetry.
We give thanks.