

The Monday Morning Exegete Presents:

EPIPHANY

Volume 1 Issue 1

8 Epiphany, Year A

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MONDAY AM EXEGETE:
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God probably does his own tattoo work. Who does yours?

The God who has his love for us tattooed on his hands is waiting for us to realize we're bound to him.

THIS WEEK'S EXEGESIS INCLUDES

THE COLLECT

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who care for us: Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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WEEKLY WORD STUDY

Oligopistos, meaning 'of little faith'. Why this word? The collect directly connects faithlessness with fear, and overcoming fears is one of the reoccurring theme in this week's readings.

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THE EXEGETE'S TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPEL

Who is *master*? God or Affluence?

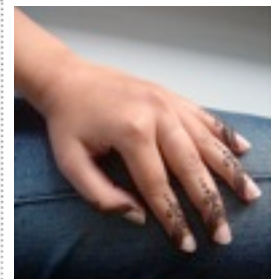
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"My number is 174517; I will carry the tattoo my left arm until I die." -Holocaust Memorial



What exactly does God have written?



A beautiful manicure, isn't it?

"Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands."

Weekly Word Study: ὀλιγόπιστος

Strong's G3640: ὀλιγόπιστος (oligopistos) Biblical Usage: of little faith, trusting too little Etymology- from ὀλιγος (G3641) & πίστις (G4102)

Oligos - biblically used as: little, small, few; of number, time, degree and intensity. Found 43 times in NT. 7 in Mat, 4 in Mar, 5 in Luk, 10 in Acts, 11 in the letters, 5 in Rev.

Pistis - from πείθω (patho, meaning to bind. Biblically used as: to persuade, to be persuaded, to trust, to have confidence, to be confident. Also to obey, believe, agree, make a friend, yield, and assure.)

Found 5 times in NT:

Mat 6:30 this passage. Mat 8:26 to the disciples. Calmed the sea. Mat 14:31 to Peter. Pulled him out of the sea. Mat 16:8 to disciples. Complaining about their memory & general lack of perception about his teachings. Luk 12:28 Lukan version of this passage.

WHY THIS WORD?

The collect for the day directly connects fear with faithlessness: "Protect us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties..." Isaiah is all about God's refusal to forget us, the Psalm is about resting in God, the Epistle about being in this deep and trustworthy relationship with God, and the Gospel is about choosing God or choosing worldly fears and wealth which seems to hinge on faith, or lack thereof.

WORD STUDY SUMMARY:

We're bound to God and Jesus gets annoyed when we forget and prove we've forgotten by living as if God doesn't make a difference in our lives.



Matthew 6:24-34

To get the ball rolling...

8 EPIPHANY COLLECT

Fear nothing but the loss of God. This is a deliciously powerful statement that has the key to unlocking so much of our stress and anxiety, so long as we don't then turn around and flip out about losing God. God can never be lost. We may occasionally close our eyes to God's presence, we may sin and feel the strain that sin puts on our relationship with God, but God is going no where and can never be lost. So we can go ahead and fear nothing, but never forget to have our chief concern being our relationship with God.

ISAIAH 49:8-16A

"See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands..." God has his/her love for us tattooed on his/her hands. Even millennia ago, people were apparently writing on their hands to remember stuff. It's wonderful and astounding to imagine that of all the things that God could have written on his/her hand as a quick reminder, it would be 'Love the Humans'. Then again, maybe he/she needed to be reminded...

PSALM 131

Images of deep humility coupled with surrender, safety, and peace. It's a four verse long Hebrew Zen Koan.

πείθω means to bind, but in the New Testament it's used for persuade, trust, confidence, making friends, obeying, yielding, and assuring.

What does it mean to bind ourselves to people, thoughts, ideals... to God?

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1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5

“Think of us this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries... [the Lord] will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.” Some things seem clear to us, so very clear, but so much is hidden in darkness--we aren’t supposed to rail against this, neither are we supposed to render judgment. We’re supposed to be trustworthy stewards of God’s Mysteries.

MATTHEW 6:24-34

(This passage is in the midst of the on the Mount.) Let your main concern be that of the Kingdom of God and his/her righteousness which is your righteousness (Matthew 5:38-48: “I say to you, love your enemies...so that you may be children of your Father in heaven... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.) Concern yourself most significantly with stewarding the mysterious of a God who has his/her love for us tattooed on his hands. Everything else will follow.

The Exegete’s Somewhat Liberal Translation of the Gospel

Who is your master? God or Affluence?

Because if you bind yourselves to God, and seek to truly be his child, acting like the father, attempting to be perfect in the ways the father is, then all this other stuff, food, money, clothes, shelter--which, duh, of course God knows you need--is going to happen to you without you stressing out and giving yourself an ulcer about it, which is what happens when Affluence is your Master, not God (who is all in all, including but seriously not limited to affluence; there’s even bigger things in there like compassion and justice, for instance). And anyway, being so fearfully preoccupied with the past and future... isn’t the present moment beautiful and entrancing enough for you?

THE LECTIONARY

ISAIAH 49:8-16A

Thus says the LORD: In a time of favor I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages; saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves." They shall feed along the ways, on all the bare heights shall be their pasture; they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. And I will turn all my mountains into a road, and my highways shall be raised up. Lo, these shall come from far away, and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene. Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones. But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me." Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.

PSALM 131

O LORD, I am not proud; * I have no haughty looks.
 I do not occupy myself with great matters, * or with things that are too hard for me.
 But I still my soul and make it quiet, like a child upon its mother's breast; *my soul is quieted within me.
 O Israel, wait upon the LORD, * from this time forth for evermore.

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1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

MATTHEW 6:24-34

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the

WHEN ELSE HAVE WE SEEN THESE?

In the Revised Common Lectionary, (Episcopal Edition), this is the only time we'll see this reading from the Hebrew Scripture, this Psalm, and this reading from the Epistle. The Gospel reading can also be heard on Thanksgiving in years A and B.

THE CREDITS

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