

## "Oasis"

After supper on Sunday I sat down to write this devotional. I was tired. I had spent a good portion of the afternoon outdoors, enjoying the weather and doing a bit of yardwork. I took a look at the scripture passages given in the Lectionary for Monday. First was a psalm of David, pursued by enemies, crying out to God for rescue. Next were two resurrection stories, one about Elijah in the Old Testament, and one about the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. Then I sat down and watched a half hour of bad news on the television. More people getting sick and dying, hospitals stretched to the limit, forecasts for an even longer period of restricted social mobility.

Sometimes I don't feel particularly inspired or helped by the scriptures. Yes, I could draw parallels between David in dire straits calling out to God and our situation in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, but I was exhausted of that. Yes, I could see the stories of God's power over even death, but did I expect a modern day army of Elijahs and Pauls to come sweeping through the morgues?

So my mind drifted back across my day. Laurie and I had planted two grape vines. The instructions said to water them when they arrived, and to water them when we placed them in the ground. Water. Essential for life.

For several weeks now I have been pondering the image of an oasis as a metaphor for a congregation. An oasis is a place where water can be found in a desert. Some oases are fed by streams, and some by springs welling up. Lush green vegetation thrives. They are places where weary travelers can stop for rest and refreshment before going back out into the desert to resume their arduous journey.

And then it occurred to me that that is the very thing that happened in the morning. After two weeks of physical isolation and limited social interaction, we were able to come together and worship. Internet technology allowed us to hear and (for most) see each other. It was not a perfect simulation of a "real" Sunday morning worship, but it was refreshing nevertheless. I got the feeling that people were soaking in the lifespring of fellowship.

Rest and refreshment for our souls. Thank you God for speaking to us in many ways.