

## Tuesday after the Third Sunday in Lent, March 14, 2023

Recommended readings: p. 128, "August 19, 1791," pp. 129-133, "Other Persons," pp. 147-155, "Dispossession" (part 2)

In chapter three of the book, Tiya Miles describes how, after encouraging Native Americans to be slave-owners, the opinions of the government and the press concerning them then changed. "Jackson's second State of the Union address, in December 1830, advocated for the expulsion of Native people from their homes, towns, houses of worship, and seats of government.... Arguing that American progress was to be commended, not lamented, Jackson insisted: 'Philanthropy could not wish to see this continent restored to the condition in which it was found by our forefathers. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic?'... Some advocates for white occupation and Native expulsion used explicit racial arguments, challenging the unique status of Native people as citizens of tribal nations. The editor of one Georgia newspaper, for instance, insisted that Cherokees were 'a colored people' and therefore not due the respect accorded to sovereign tribes."

*Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me.... When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 1:10-20)*

How it must have hurt for the leaders of Israel, God's chosen people, to be identified as the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. How it hurts for us to witness how poorly our forebears lived out the ideals they espoused. But our God continues to act in the present moment, the moment of opportunity, inspiring us in each new day to cease doing evil and learn to do good.

### Prayer

God of hope, inspire us to create the communities we desire—places of justice and opportunity for all, places of respect and compassion, places illuminated by your love and your truth. Give us the courage to grasp the opportunities for change that you set before us. Amen.