



Monday, July 19, 2010

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 85

So often in the Psalms, the writer remembers a time when God restored the people after times of trial and calls upon God to do that for them once again. Because of God's love and faithfulness to prior generations, the psalmist draws comfort and assurance that God has not abandoned us and will bring about peace and righteousness.

REFLECT-

- Whenever you are going through a time of trial and your prayers seem unanswered and things don't seem to be improving, the psalms can provide great comfort and assurance that God IS working and IS with us, even if we cannot see or feel it. Can you think of a time of your life when you look back that this was true?

PRAY-

Lord, help me trust you even when things are tough and I can't see the work of your hands. Thank you that you are always there for me. Amen.

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

READ- Old Testament: Hosea 1:2-10

God used Hosea, the woman he chose as his wife, and the children she bore him to illustrate the depth of his anger with the people of Israel for adopting the pagan customs of the people around them. Hosea marrying a promiscuous woman represented Israel's unfaithfulness and the names of their children foretold God's punishment that awaited them.

REFLECT-

- In what ways are we "promiscuous" in taking on the values and customs of our culture which are not God's ways? Are we deserving of God's punishment just as Israel received?

PRAY-

Father, help me to see where my priorities, my actions and my words are unfaithful to your will and your ways and guide me to make changes where they are needed. Amen.

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

READ- The Epistle: Colossians 2:6-19

Verses 9-15 of this passage gave the people of Colossae a clear and compelling reasons not to give in to the pagan Greco-Roman society they lived in with its emphasis on philosophy and reason and its pagan festivals and rituals. The writer makes clear that by Christ's saving work on our behalf, we need nothing else except faithfulness for our salvation.

REFLECT-

- Compare the hope we have in Jesus Christ to the uncertainty with which the people lived in Hosea's time. We can have confidence that if we place our faith in Jesus and try to live according to his teachings, the temptations of our culture have nothing to offer us. Why then is it so hard for us to live that way?

PRAY-

Gracious God, thank you for sending Jesus so that we may know for sure what you are like and how you want me to live. Help me to remain faithful to you today. Amen.

Thursday, July 22, 2010

READ- The Gospel: Luke 11:1-13

Jesus teaches his disciples a simple, yet profound prayer to be prayed in community with other believers and then urges regularity and persistence in offering prayers to God.

REFLECT-

- Although God knows our every need even before it rises from our lips, Jesus emphasizes here the importance of talking with God often and expressing our deepest thoughts and concerns to him. God wants relationship with us, not information. Do you pray regularly and persistently? If not, why not?

PRAY-

O Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayers. Amen.

Friday, July 23, 2010

READ- Sermon Text: Acts 9:1-19

This dramatic story tells of the turning point in the life of the greatest evangelist in the history of Christianity. God took a man who was determined to destroy the Christian movement and changed his life through the courage and obedience of a man named Ananias.

REFLECT-

- There are many people whose hearts are hard and we think there is no way they could turn toward Christ. Saul held the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death; yet through God's power, he was responsible for spreading Christianity more widely than any other apostle. Do you know someone whose heart is hard? Pray for them that the Holy Spirit may change that heart for God.

PRAY-

God, thank you for the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. Help me to follow his example as a witness for Jesus Christ today. Amen.