



Monday, April 4, 2011

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 130

Anyone who has ever experienced deep grief or suffering can identify with the psalmist's opening cry in this passage. As human beings, we are not worthy of God's love and care because of our sin; yet the psalmist affirms that we must wait for God and we will not be disappointed. God is faithful even when we are not.

REFLECT-

- What is your soul "waiting on" right now to come from God? Peace? Strength? Guidance? Comfort? Waiting is hard – we want everything immediately. Yet God often teaches and shapes us through that time of waiting.

PRAY-

Lord, help me to stay focused on you, aware of the movement of your Spirit, so that when your direction comes, I may be ready. Amen.

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

READ- Old Testament: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel was a prophet called by God after Jerusalem was surrendered to the Babylonians. Israel felt they had lost everything and were as good as "dry bones" as a nation. There was no hope. In this vision, God breathes life into and restores those bones as he can for Israel.

REFLECT-

- Is there a place of "dry bones" in your life, in the life of our church or the community around us? A place that seems so far gone that even God could not restore it? Like Ezekiel, pray for God to restore and to breathe new life into that situation or place.

PRAY-

O God, use me to give life to the places of dry bones. Help me to be an agent of your Spirit who brings your love into desolate places around me. Amen.

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

READ- The Epistle: Romans 8:6-11

Paul here encourages Christians in the Roman church to Jesus' way of living – focused on God with the power of the Holy Spirit – rather than the way of the culture around them – focused on worldly pleasures and self-gratification, which only separates us from God and true joy.

REFLECT-

- Letting go of ego, pride and selfish desires is something with which we all struggle. Opening ourselves to the Spirit can be difficult because it requires time, attention, and a willingness to submit ourselves to God's priorities instead of our own.

PRAY-

Father, teach me how to clear away the things that prevent me from doing your will. Give me the insight, strength and courage to let them go. Amen.

Thursday, April 7, 2011

READ- The Gospel: John 11:1-16

When word arrives that Lazarus is seriously ill, Jesus appears to already know it and deliberately delays his departure so that his disciples and the mourners at the tomb will be witnesses of God's power through him. As usual, his disciples don't understand what is happening.

REFLECT-

- Although Judea was a dangerous place for Jesus and his disciples to go, they trusted him and followed him there and something remarkable happened that they did not expect. Is there some way in which Jesus is calling you to follow him that seems difficult? Can you trust him enough to respond? Amazing things can happen.

PRAY-

O God, we so often don't understand your plan and are afraid of what may lie ahead if we trust you. Help me to trust and follow you today. Amen.

Friday, April 8, 2011

READ- Sermon Text: John 11:17-45

Even in their grief, Mary and Martha testify to their love and faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Yet, like Ezekiel and the dry bones, they cannot conceive that Jesus has the power to raise their brother. The disciples and all the mourners see God's power expressed in the man Jesus Christ.

REFLECT-

- This miracle Jesus did served to write his own death sentence with the religious authorities. Jesus obviously knew the implications of his actions. He was obedient to God every step of the way. What does being obedient to God's will mean for you today?

PRAY-

O God, what do you have for me to do today? Guide my steps and help me learn to submit my own will to yours for I know that all things are possible for those who believe and follow you. Amen.