



Monday, August 15, 2011

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 124

This psalm is one sung by faithful Jews as they made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, reminding them of God's faithfulness to their people at all times.

REFLECT-

- When times are hard and our life is filled with pain, we sometimes tend to forget how good God has been to us, carrying us through dark times in remarkable ways. Scriptures like this one serve as a reminder that God is always with us, supplying our needs and will always be there.

PRAY-

Lord, I thank you for your constant and abiding love for me and for the world and your gracious care in the past. Amen.

Tuesday, August 16, 2011

READ- The Old Testament: Exodus 1:8-2:10

Jacob's family has multiplied into a great Hebrew nation after moving to the land of Egypt during the famine. They have become so large that they have become a political threat to the new Pharaoh, so he commits genocide in order to diminish their strength.

REFLECT-

- The two midwives in this story saved many lives through their courageous act of civil disobedience. The mother and sister of the baby Moses saved his life in a risky venture. Has there been a situation in your life in which you said "No" to power because you believed in the cause so strongly? Did you suffer for your words or actions? Did others join you in standing up for that cause? Perhaps there is a place now in your life for which you need that courage.

PRAY-

O God, give me the courage and strength to speak out and take action where there is wrong and injustice so that your will may be done. Amen.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011

READ- The Epistle: Romans 12:1-8

Animal and even human sacrifices were common in Paul's day as offerings to God and the various pagan deities. But in this passage, Paul says that God wants "living sacrifices", not dead ones; for our lives to be used to do his will and for his glory using the gifts God has given us.

REFLECT-

- Paul cautions about pride and arrogance – thinking that we are better than others. Yet he then encourages us to use the talents, abilities and resources God has given us fully. What are the gifts God has given you to be used for his glory? Are you using them fully? If not, why not?

PRAY-

Father, help me to become aware of and engaged in the ways in which you want me to serve you as a "living sacrifice". Amen.

Thursday, August 18, 2011

READ- The Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus and his disciples come to the powerful Gentile city of Caesarea Philippi where there was a huge pagan temple to the pagan god Pan and he chooses that spot to ask them just who they think that he is. Peter – with divine guidance – announces to the group that Jesus is indeed the Messiah for whom they have waited.

REFLECT-

- In response to Peter's response, Jesus gifts him with the "keys to the kingdom of heaven" and the power to "bind" and "loose" within the course of human events. If we believe and trust in Christ, we have those same "keys" and that same power to share the gospel and to show God's love to others through acts of compassion and justice. Have you accepted your "keys" yet?

PRAY-

O God, help me to share my faith by my words and actions in ways that are pleasing to you. Thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Friday, August 19, 2011

ACT-

Focus Verse: Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

In what ways are you conforming to the ways of our culture that are preventing you from knowing God's will and living into it? Are you conforming to this world in the ways you spend your time and money or in your relationships with other people? What needs to change in your life so that you can be open to God's transforming power? During your day, focus on how God would have you to spend your time and your money and how God would have you to treat the people you encounter.