



Monday, December 19, 2011

**READ-** The Old Testament: Isaiah 52:7-10

In Isaiah's time, this passage likely referred to the return to Jerusalem of the exiles from their captivity in Babylon. Yet the prophet's words foretold something much greater – the coming of a Savior who would change everything for God's people.

**REFLECT-**

- In these days before Christmas, Isaiah's words remind us of the deep joy and peace available to us who claim Christ as our Savior. In our Christmas celebrations, we must keep foremost in our minds the love of Christ and how we can share it with a hurting world. What can you do in that vein today?

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to be aware of all the ways you bless us and live in a way that shares those blessings with others. Amen.

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

**READ-** The Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-12

The writer of Hebrews here lays claim to the central truth of Jesus Christ and his divine place in God's plan to redeem humanity and all creation. For his Jewish audience, he connects the words of the ancient prophets with the life, ministry, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus as God's ultimate action of love and redemption for the world.

**REFLECT-**

- Verse 3 tells us that by closely observing Christ – his words and deeds - as he walked among us through the words of scripture, we can know what God is like. With that in mind, what traits of God did Jesus exemplify? Does that change your image of God?

**PRAY-**

O God, thank you for sending your Son so that we may know you more fully, learn how you want us to live, and be reconciled in loving relationship with you. Amen.

Wednesday, December 21, 2011

**READ-** The Psalm: Psalm 98

This psalm celebrates the triumph of the Lord, his power in restoring order and justice and in vindicating people who have suffered. The celebration is not for an earthly king, but gives all the glory and honor to God for all the ways in which he blesses and redeems his people and creation and looks forward to that ultimate redemption on judgment day.

**REFLECT-**

- Offering our praise, honor and thanksgiving to God on a daily basis is a very important part of our relationship with God. It makes us more observant and mindful of all the ways in which God works for good in our lives. Lift your offering to God now.

**PRAY-**

Father, thank you for your love and care in my life. Help me to be an instrument of your love and care to those around me. Amen.

Thursday, December 22, 2011

**READ-** The Gospel: John 1:1-14

In the opening words of John's gospel, he asserts that Christ has been at God's side from the very beginning and was then sent by God in human form to bring light into a world of darkness and sin. Many rejected his love and power and sought to destroy him; yet many also believed in and accepted him.

**REFLECT-**

- As we celebrate Christ's birth, we also must embrace the whole of his life, teaching, death and resurrection to truly accept him as our Savior and Master. The joy of the manger is just the beginning of our walk with Christ. What is most important to you in what you know of Christ's earthly ministry?

**PRAY-**

O God, thank you for the gift of your Son. Amen.

Friday, December 23, 2011

**READ-** Sermon Text: Luke 2:1-20

Jesus is born to a poor couple in a place far from home. And God's angels heralded his birth to equally poor shepherds on a Judean hillside. What an act of assurance their visit must have been for Joseph and Mary, who were operating purely on faith at that point.

**REFLECT-**

- God works miracles through the most unlikely people and circumstances if we will but trust Him to do so. God works through us to do more than we can ever imagine if we will step out in faith. God worked through a poor couple and simple shepherds to bring his Son into the world. Let him be born in your heart today!

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to trust you as fully as Joseph and Mary so that you may guide us all to do your good and perfect will. Amen.