



Monday, May 23, 2011

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 66:8-20

The psalmist affirms God's steadfast love for us through the trials of life that we all must encounter. God hears our prayers and responds to our needs in the best ways – perhaps not OUR way, but what good and right for us. We are reminded to praise God for that assurance.

**REFLECT-**

- The psalmist identifies life trials as “tests” from God. Do you believe God sometimes causes difficulties to happen in our life? If not, how do you understand God's involvement in those trials? What has been your experience in that regard?

**PRAY-**

Lord, I thank you abiding and sustaining presence in our lives – through good times and bad – you are always faithful and steadfast. Amen.

Tuesday, May 24, 2011

**READ-** Acts of the Apostles: Acts 17:22-31

Paul was speaking here to an intellectually sophisticated audience of Greeks in the city of Athens. He uses an interesting approach to get their attention in his opening remarks – that they are “extremely religious” people. Yet he then goes on to make some very bold claims about who and what God is which would have been outside their belief system.

**REFLECT-**

- Many intellectually sophisticated people in our society have discounted or ignored God in what they believe to be true. Paul makes a philosophical argument here. What would you say to someone who wants proof of God's power and existence?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to be a living example of your loving presence to all whom I encounter. Help my words and actions to show others who and how you are so that they may want to follow you as well. Amen.

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

**READ-** The Epistle: 1 Peter 2:13-18

Peter was writing here to Christians who were being persecuted for their faith. He encouraged them to stay focused on doing good and living according to Christ's teachings and was quick to acknowledge that they will not be exempt from suffering. But he also reminds them of Christ's suffering on behalf of the world so that we could be reconciled with God.

**REFLECT-**

- American culture emphasizes living the “good life” – one of affluence, ease, fun and personal gratification. Jesus offers us a radically different kind of “good life” – one that is focused on God's righteousness and may not always be easy. Which “good life” are you pursuing?

**PRAY-**

Father, keep my eyes and heart true to your will. Give me the courage and passion to stand up for your truth in the midst of a culture which does not honor you. Amen.

Thursday, May 26, 2011

**READ-** The Gospel: John 14:15-21

Jesus tells his disciples that the way to express love for him is to live according to his teachings. He knows that will not be easy, so he assures them that when he is physically gone, they will receive power to do those things from the Holy Spirit. We as his disciples also have access to that power.

**REFLECT-**

- Jesus' commandments are not a set of black and white rules such as the Jews observed. Their foundation is love – for God and for one another – and they are lived out in Christian community, not on our own. We often feel weak and inadequate to live into Jesus' teachings, but if we will open ourselves to the Spirit and accept the power available to us, remarkable things can happen.

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to learn and live out Jesus' commandments of love. Make me a vessel filled with your Spirit so that I may pour out Christ's love on all whom I encounter. Amen.

Friday, May 27, 2011

**ACT-**

Focus Verse: 1 Peter 3:15-16a

**Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you and accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.**

Be alert today for conversations and situations where you need to take a stand or take action for what you believe. Do you hesitate for fear of offending someone? As you speak or act, be bold, yet gentle and reverent. Remember that God is present with you to guide and strengthen you.