



Monday, September 19, 2011

**READ-** The Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7

Once again, the Israelites complained to Moses about their living conditions in the desert. How quickly they forgot that God provided food – manna and quail – just as they needed it. At God's instruction, Moses stood before the elders of the people and struck the rock with his staff and water was provided, just as God promised.

**REFLECT-**

- The people of Israel did not trust God to supply their needs. How much do you trust God to provide for you? Do you evaluate God's faithfulness in your life by whether things are going well for you? Do you blame God when things are hard and painful?

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to hold fast to my faith in your love and provision for me – even when things in my life are difficult. Thank you for your faithfulness. Amen.

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

Remembering the stories of God's faithfulness to his people is a recurring theme throughout the Bible. The psalmist reminds us of God's provision for the Israelites during the Exodus so that we turn may trust in God's faithfulness to us.

**REFLECT-**

- Sharing the stories found in the Bible of God's great works and mercy is important. We must read those stories regularly and share them with our children and grandchildren. They are the bedrock of our faith and our assurance of forgiveness and salvation.

**PRAY-**

O God, I thank you for your holy scriptures, for the stories of your great love for those you created. Help me to write them on my heart so that my faith and trust in you may be strong. Amen.

Wednesday, September 21, 2011

**READ-** The Epistle: Philippians 2:1-13

In one of Paul's most eloquent and straightforward letters, he encourages unity, humility and mutual service in the church at Philippi. Vs. 5-11 were well-established by then as a Christian hymn defining Christ's person and work in the world. Vs. 12-13 challenges us to do the work that Christ began in the world through the power God gives us.

**REFLECT-**

- What causes discord and conflict in our congregation today? Likely the same things that prompted Paul to write these words – selfishness, greed, desire for power and to have our own way, and lack of care and compassion for others. In what ways do you serve the needs of other people? In what relationships do you need more humility and compassion to follow Jesus' example?

**PRAY-**

Father, forgive me when I am selfish, greedy, and arrogant, pursuing my own desires at the expense of those who need my care and compassion. Amen.

Thursday, September 22, 2011

**READ-** The Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

The religious authorities tried to trap Jesus by challenging his authority to speak on behalf of God. In typical form, Jesus answered their question with a question and then immediately told a parable which emphasized that we cannot just give lip service to our faith; it is through our actions that we truly do God's will – a direct challenge to the religious authorities who were questioning him.

**REFLECT-**

- If we really believe the teachings of Jesus, then we have work to do each day of our lives – caring for the sick, those in need, those who are the outcasts. It's not enough to be Sunday morning pew-sitters who only give lip service to our faith. It's how we live our lives that truly shows the depth of our faith in Christ.

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to look for ways today that I can live out my faith – sharing the good news of your love in tangible ways with my neighbors. Amen.

Friday, September 23, 2011

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** Philippians 2:12b-13

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you to both will and to work for his good pleasure.

How will God be "at work in you" today? Be especially aware today of opportunities God is offering you to do his work in the world. Some may be outside your "comfort zone". Be bold – God will "enable" you!