



Monday, September 26, 2011

READ - The Old Testament: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

The commandments given to Moses for God's people are still foundational to our faith and many systems of justice for nations around the world today. Living within the framework of these laws, we still have great freedom and the opportunity for a good life.

REFLECT -

- If we are truthful, most of us take only some of these laws seriously in our daily lives. The commands about the Sabbath day, honoring our parents, and coveting things have generally been discarded by our culture as archaic and no longer relevant. What would it mean in your life to try to be obedient to ALL God's commandments?

PRAY -

Lord, help me to be intentional and faithful in living according to all your commandments. Amen.

Tuesday, September 27, 2011

READ - The Psalter: Psalm 19

This psalm is divided into two distinct sections – vs. 1-6 proclaiming the glory and majesty of God's good creation and its reflection of the Creator; vs. 7-14 emphasizing the importance of obedience to God's commandments and always seeking God's presence in our daily lives.

REFLECT -

- Many days, we are so caught up in the busyness of our lives that we fail to take notice of the outrageous beauty and remarkable construction of God's creation. The sunrise and sunset, a majestic mountain, the rolling waves of the ocean, and the tiny wings of a hummingbird are all reflections of God's amazing love and creative power. Take time today to notice these things and give thanks!

PRAY -

O God, thank you for this beautiful world in which we live. You have provided it for us to enjoy and to care for. Help me do my part in caring for your good creation in the way I live and the choices I make. Amen.

Wednesday, September 28, 2011

READ - The Epistle: Philippians 3:4b-14

As we consider the ten commandments in these lections, Paul's warning to the Philippian church is for us as well. Living according to God's commandments does not "earn" us righteousness in God's eyes. Only through our faith in Christ do we become righteous through his sacrifice and God's mercy.

REFLECT -

- We, like Paul, must be mindful every day of "pressing on" toward the goal of righteousness through Christ, living according to Christ's teaching and example so that others may learn of his love and grace through us and also share in that righteousness. How can you do that today? Make a special effort in some way.

PRAY -

Father, in all the things I do, say and think today, help me to glorify you and share your love in meaningful ways with those around me. Amen.

Thursday, September 29, 2011

READ - The Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

This parable told by Jesus refers directly to the vineyard in Isaiah 5 which did not bear fruit because of its workers (the people of Israel) and Psalm 112 from which Jesus quotes regarding the rejected cornerstone. His hearers would have easily understood his meaning – the Jewish religious leaders who rejected the prophets and finally Jesus would be punished.

REFLECT -

- In what ways do we as "churchy" people sometimes get caught up in religiosity and self-righteousness and fail to "bear fruit" in terms of really loving God and loving other people? The ways we spend our time and money are often clear indicators of our real priorities.

PRAY -

O God, help me to make your priorities my priorities. Help me to live into Jesus' commands to love one another with my time and resources. Amen.

Friday, September 30, 2011

ACT -

Focus Verse: Exodus 20:4

You shall not make for yourself an idol.

Old Testament idols were often made from stone or precious metals in human or animal forms. Yet idols can come in all sorts of forms. Anything in our lives which we give priority over loving God and loving other people becomes our idol. For many in our culture, amassing material possessions and seeking constant entertainment and pleasure are idols. Living simply, sharing our resources, and placing the needs of others before our own as Jesus taught can prevent our worship of those idols. What may be an idol for you? What can you do to change that? What can you do differently in your daily walk to make God central in your life? Time spent in prayer, worship, reading scripture and showing care and compassion for others are good places to start that process.