



Monday, August 20, 2012

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 84

The psalmist celebrates the temple in which he may worship and find God's presence. He invokes a celebration of God's power in praise and thanksgiving and affirms God's care for his good creation and for all who love and serve him.

**REFLECT-**

- The Jewish people believed at one time that God resided in the temple in Jerusalem. With Christ's coming, we now understand that God's presence is throughout all creation and his Spirit resides in each of us. Yet it is still important for us to come together often to offer God our worship. How important is Sunday worship to you?

**PRAY-**

O God, I thank you for being part of a community of faith in which I can worship, pray, study, serve and offer care to those in need. Amen.

Tuesday, August 21, 2012

**READ-** The Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-20

Paul uses military imagery here as a metaphor to help believers understand they must prepare themselves to do battle with the forces of sin and evil in this world. He then invokes them to constant prayer for all fellow Christians and for himself that he may speak with boldness.

**REFLECT-**

- If pieces of military armor are not a helpful image for you, lift out the merits which Paul says we must seek from God: a spirit of truth, righteousness and peace; courage to share with others what Jesus has done in our life; and a firm faith in our salvation through Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, these merits are ours to employ to overcome evil and sin in and around us.

**PRAY-**

Father, I thank you that you strengthen me in all circumstances. Help me to speak your Word and to show your love today. Amen.

Wednesday, August 22, 2012

**READ-** The Old Testament: 1 Kings 8:1-11, 22-30, 41-43

Solomon builds an extravagantly beautiful temple for God and dedicates that structure with a prayer for God's guidance and provision. He also affirms God's covenant with his father David that his descendent will sit on the throne as king over Israel.

**REFLECT-**

- Although Solomon began his reign as a king faithful to God's desires, that time was short-lived and the temple eventually was destroyed. He took pagan wives who brought pagan idols and Solomon lost his fidelity to God. God is faithful, but we are so easily distracted. What is distracting you from your faithfulness?

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to stay focused on you and your will so that I may make you and your promises known to all those whom I meet. Amen.

Thursday, August 23, 2012

**READ-** The Gospel: John 6:56-69

As in last week's gospel passage, Jesus continues with the metaphor of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. His disciples struggled to understand what he meant – spiritual bread and the cup of his sacrifice on the cross, which was yet to come at this point in time. Many of his disciples turned away because they could not accept this radical teaching.

**REFLECT-**

- Christians who really engage the scriptures regularly often struggle to understand many things contained in them. Even those early followers of Jesus who saw and heard him had difficulty understanding the concepts he taught. Yet we should take heart that after his death, resurrection and ascension, the disciples understood. They persevered in the faith without complete understanding.

**PRAY-**

O God, keep me faithful as I wrestle to understand your Word, as I struggle with the evil in this world, and as I seek to do your will. Amen.

Friday, August 24, 2012

**ACT-**

Focus Verse: Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.

What does it mean to be "strong in the Lord"? It does not mean that you are immune from heartache and sorrow, from suffering or illness or loss. It does not mean that you can "fix" your own problems and those whom you love. It does mean that you trust God in all circumstances, that you lift your concerns and praise to him in prayer, and that you forgive and love others as best you can. What challenge faces you today? In what ways do you need God's strength today? Sit quietly and feel his peace flow through you as you begin your day. It is from that quiet peace that your strength may be drawn. Go now, and be strong in the Lord.