

Monday, February 27, 2012

READ - The Old Testament: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

God makes a covenant with Abram that his descendants will become a great nation with special blessings from God. The change in Abram's name to Abraham seals that covenant. But God does not stop just with Abraham – his wife Sarai (Sarah) is God's chosen vessel to bear the heir who will bring this great nation.

REFLECT-

• God offers us many unexpected blessings which we sometimes cannot see clearly from where we are. When God made this covenant with Abraham, he was an old man and Sarah was an old woman who had been barren. They were amazed at God's promises, but yet they trusted him. So must we.

PRAY-

Lord, I praise you that you work miracles – big and small – all around us. Help us to trust you and follow your guiding hand. Amen.

Tuesday, February 28, 2012

READ - The Epistle: Romans 4:13-25

Paul draws on God's covenant with Abraham here to make his plea to the Roman Christians to settle differences between Jews and Gentiles in their church. He points out Abraham was not yet circumcised (the mark of a Jew) when God made the covenant with him to be a great nation and his faith and trust in God was what sealed that covenant, not some law.

REFLECT-

• Are there differences among people in our congregation which we need to put aside in order to love one another and do God's work together? Are there old habits or narrow ways of thinking that we need to change because they may exclude people seeking God?

PRAY-

O God, please shape my faith so that I may be an encouragement and a witness to others, not a stumbling block. Amen.

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

READ - The Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

Jesus was not the kind of Messiah the people were expecting. He very publicly predicts his rejection, suffering, death and resurrection not only to his disciples but to the crowds who followed him. Peter brashly began to argue with Jesus, but Jesus makes clear that this is the pathway by which God will offer salvation to his people.

REFLECT-

• Our culture values self-gratification and self-fulfillment. Our own comforts and pleasures are priorities. Yet, Jesus' teaching and example shows us otherwise. The pathway of a faithful Christ follower may be difficult and loving God and others must be our first priority rather than pleasing ourselves.

PRAY-

Father, help me to live simply, loving those around me, sharing what I have with those in need, and comforting those who suffer. Amen.

Thursday, March 1, 2012

READ-

The Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31

The psalmist addresses the worshiping congregation and invokes praise for God. He offers thanksgiving for God's mercy, care for the poor and afflicted in the past and challenges the congregation to remember the power and might of their God and to serve him with obedience.

REFLECT~

• Regular worship of God within a family of believers is important. We need reminders of God's goodness to us in the past through the words of scripture, prayers lifted together to raise our praise, thanksgiving and needs to God, and collective words of repentance offered for our sin. It's not optional for the faithful believer.

PRAY-

O God, thank you for this body of believers who gather each week to raise our voices and prayers to you. Help me to love, encourage and support those brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

Friday, March 1, 2012

ACT-

Disciplines for Lent:

•Gratitude

Today I am most grateful to God for ______.

• Fasting

Today I will give up ______ in self-denial.

• Repertures

• Repentance

Today I ask forgiveness for ______ and ask God's guidance in turning away from that sin.

• Giving

Today I set aside \$	from my a	ıbundance	to give to	someon
who is suffering or in need	d through			