



Monday, January 23, 2012

READ - The Old Testament: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Here Moses tells the Israelites that another prophet will be raised up who will bring them God's word as he has done in leading them out of Egypt through the desert. He warns them not to be led astray by false prophets who make claims for God which do not come true or prophets who claim to serve other gods.

REFLECT -

- The Israelites were living in the midst of many pagan peoples who did not know God and who worshiped idols. We live in a society – even in America – in which many of those around us do not know or serve our God. We must know and rely on scripture, prayer, and the counsel of Christian friends to discern God's will and to do it.

PRAY -

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

Tuesday, January 24, 2012

READ - The Epistle: I Corinthians 8:1-13

Animals were routinely sacrificed to idols in Corinth. A portion of the animal carcass would be burned as a sacrifice and the balance would be sold in a market near the pagan temple. Paul acknowledges that since idols do not really exist, that there is nothing morally wrong with eating the meat. But if eating it causes a fellow Christian to doubt their faith, it should not be done.

REFLECT -

- What practices or choices do you make which might potentially be a stumbling block to a fellow Christian? Is there something another Christian may have done that caused you to doubt your faith or discount their faith?

PRAY -

O God, may my words and actions be a testimony to my faith, not an impediment to others who believe. Amen.

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

READ - The Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

The people who heard and saw Jesus on this day recognized him as someone with real authority not only through his words, but by his actions in healing the demoniac. The fact that the unclean spirit cried out to Jesus recognizing him as the "holy one of God" was something they had never before witnessed. This Jesus was someone different and very special.

REFLECT -

- Jesus' work continues now through the activity of Holy Spirit. When miraculous healing takes place, when the poor are fed and clothed, when care and comfort is offered to the sick or grieving, Jesus' teaching and care continues. Our role is to be aware of those things, lift them up as a testimony to others, and to be agents of Jesus' care and compassion to those around us.

PRAY -

Father, thank you for the authority you give each of us through the Holy Spirit to continue Jesus' ministry in the world. Amen.

Thursday, January 26, 2012

READ - The Psalm: Psalm 111

This psalm of praise reminds us of God's faithfulness to care for his people. Through the ages, he has provided for our needs and lifted us up in times of suffering. In response, we should regularly offer him our praise and thanksgiving for his love and care.

REFLECT -

- This psalm has been used in corporate worship for centuries. When you come to worship on Sunday morning, what would it mean for you to worship God with your "whole heart"?

PRAY -

O God, forgive me when I fail to fully acknowledge and give thanks to you for all your blessings and care. Amen.

Friday, January 27, 2012

ACT -

Focus Verse: I Corinthians 8:1b

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Paul here refers to persons in the Corinth congregation who thought they had more knowledge about the ways of Christ than their fellow Christians. That led to hurt feelings, conflict, and discord within that church family. His affirmation that "love builds up" must be our byword. We all have different views on how things should be done in the church, yet our love for one another as Christians must come before those things. Anything that separates us from one another in loving relationship needs to take a back seat. The same goes in our own family. Old resentments and petty irritations must be set aside so that we can forgive and love. Who can you "build up" in love today? Take the opportunity to reach out, forgive, and let love overcome your differences with someone. You may be surprised how God will bless even the smallest effort.