



Monday, July 16, 2012

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 89:20-37

This psalm calls to remembrance God's covenant with King David in a time when the Jewish people were in exile and it seemed that God had forgotten that covenant. The psalmist expresses trust and confidence that God will not abandon those promises even though they are passing through a time of trouble and desolation.

**REFLECT-**

- The stories of the bible help us to remember God's promises and how God has cared for his people and his creation throughout the ages. In difficult times, we need to read and remember so that we can maintain our trust in God. God walks beside us, holding us up in those difficulties.

**PRAY-**

Lord, I give you thanks that you are always with us, loving us and giving us just what we need. Amen.

Tuesday, July 17, 2012

**READ-** The Epistle: Ephesians 2:11-14

Paul is speaking to both Jewish and Gentile Christians in this passage encouraging them to put their cultural and historical differences aside and come together as one body in Christ. He assures them that Christ's sacrifice has provided salvation for them all and there should no longer be barriers between them.

**REFLECT-**

- As "churchy people", we sometimes believe that we have God's favor. Paul's letter should be reminder to us that God loves all persons – even those who are very different than us – and wants them to accept the gift of salvation. Learning to accept those folks with love as God's beloved children is our responsibility!

**PRAY-**

Father, help me to reach out to all those I encounter today who need to know Jesus, treating them with love, respect and care. Amen.

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

**READ-** The Old Testament: II Samuel 7:1-14a

King David, after reunifying the nations of Judah and Israel under his reign, establishes Jerusalem as their capital city, builds a home there, and now wants the ark of the covenant to have a permanent place for worship. He seeks guidance from the prophet Nathan and the answer is not what David expected.

**REFLECT-**

- In this passage, God makes a covenant with David and his people to care for them forever. From David's lineage all future kings will come – even that king born in a manger in Bethlehem. This passage reminds us that God is faithful and keeps his promises. His desire is to love us, bless us, and for us to be faithful to him.

**PRAY-**

Lord, thank you for your love for your people down through the ages. Just as you guided David in right paths, I ask for your guidance today. Amen.

Thursday, July 19, 2012

**READ-** The Gospel: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

The disciples are returning from the surrounding towns where they have done ministry as Jesus taught them. They hope to have a time of rest and retreat together, but word of Jesus' ministry has spread and the crowds follow them. Jesus does not turn them away – rather he responds with compassion and care.

**REFLECT-**

- Finding time for rest and prayer time with God is critical to our spiritual health. However, the needs of folks who may need our care and compassion do not always come at expected or convenient times.

**PRAY-**

O God, give me patience and a tender heart so that I may help those whom I encounter today who need my help. Amen.

Friday, July 20, 2012

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** Mark 6:31

Jesus said, to the disciples, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."

Jesus is speaking to the disciples of Sabbath time. We often confuse Sabbath with Sunday worship, but the Sabbath spoken of in the ten commandments is a time set aside to be quiet, to rest, and listen for God's voice. Have you ever set aside a day for that purpose? In the busyness of our lives, that takes planning and intention. Set aside a day for Sabbath time – no work, no distractions. Light a candle and sit by your window or find a beautiful spot outdoors. You may want to read the bible or a devotional book; you may want to write down your thoughts and reflections in a journal. Walk slowly, breathe deeply, really look at God's good creation – and give thanks.