



Monday, July 2, 2012

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 48

This psalm reflects just how important Jerusalem came to be to the Jewish people – they felt that God actually lived there among them. For them, the temple there contained God’s power and protection for them as God’s people.

REFLECT-

- Unfortunately, the sinful choices of Israel and Judah’s kings resulted in their overthrow by foreign nations, the destruction of the temple, and the exile of the Jewish people. How might America learn from that example? Do we place too much of our faith in our economic and military strength and not enough in God?

PRAY-

Lord, as we celebrate the birth of our nation this week, help us to always be mindful of the intent of our founders – that America should be a place of religious freedom, peace and justice. Amen.

Tuesday, July 3, 2012

READ- The Epistle: II Corinthians 12:2-10

Paul emphasizes his weaknesses in this passage – including his “thorn in the flesh” to teach the Corinthians that they must place their faith in God alone, not in prophets or teachers who sought to give themselves positions of prestige or prominence through their own work.

REFLECT-

- Jesus taught repeatedly that humility should be our goal – the “last shall be first”. Paul seeks to teach this to the Corinthians in this letter. If we become proud or arrogant of our Christian works or how “religious” we are, we are not following Christ’s example. Is our church guilty of that in the ways we conduct our worship or ministry?

PRAY-

Father, please keep us focused on you in all we do as a church – in praise, thanksgiving, service, study and prayer. Amen.

Wednesday, July 4, 2012

READ- The Old Testament: II Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

David reigned over Judah for seven years headquartered at Hebron. After the death of Saul, the elders of Israel chose to make him king of both Israel and Judah based on his excellent military record under Saul. Under David’s leadership, Jerusalem was taken from the Jebusites, a pagan people, and became his stronghold and the center of worship and power.

REFLECT-

- From the time Samuel anointed David when he was but a shepherd boy, the Spirit of God was with him. God’s blessed his work in Saul’s military and he made wise decisions. Because of this, it was apparent to the people that God had anointed a new king for them.

PRAY-

Loving God, on this Independence Day, we pray that your wisdom and guidance be poured out on the leaders of our nation so that America may be a blessing to the world. Amen.

Thursday, July 5, 2012

READ- The Gospel: Mark 6:1-13

Jesus returned home to teach in his hometown of Nazareth and is rejected by the people who knew him as a boy. Perhaps they found it hard to believe that a carpenter could possibly teach with the wisdom and authority that Jesus did – therefore, he must be a fraud. This experience helped to prepare his disciples for the rejection they would also encounter as they traveled about teaching and healing.

REFLECT-

- Sometimes it is easier to witness our faith to those we don’t know as well rather than our friends and family, who know us “warts and all”. Sharing the gospel through words is important; yet the way we live each day can also be a powerful witness. Does fear of rejection keep you from sharing your faith with others?

PRAY-

O God, help me to remember that my life is a witness to my faith. Govern my words and actions according to your will so that others may come to believe. Amen.

Friday, July 6, 2012

ACT-

Focus Verse: II Corinthians 12:9

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.

What makes you feel most weak and vulnerable? What are the fears and worries that keep you awake at night? Is it a broken relationship, your health, concern for someone you love, financial worries or some other hardship? Paul says that it is precisely in those places of our greatest weakness, that through God’s grace, his power is shown and God is glorified. Today, as those fears rise up, offer a prayer entrusting them wholly to God. Then be watchful for how God’s grace and power are working in ways you might never anticipate.