



Wednesday, August 1, 2012

READ - The Old Testament: || Samuel 11:26-12:13a

The prophet Nathan convicts King David of his sin through the use of a parable. He communicates God's displeasure with the evil David has done and warns him that there will be a heavy price to pay.

REFLECT -

- We are often stubborn and defensive about acknowledging and confessing our sin. David quickly recognized right and wrong in the parable; yet needed the courage and candor of a trusted friend to acknowledge his own sin. As Christians, we must be willing to do that for one another in love. Is there sin in your life that you have not acknowledged?

PRAY -

Lord, forgive me for sin in my life that I continue to hold onto. Give me the courage to acknowledge it and then to change my ways. Amen.

Monday, July 30, 2012

READ - The Psalter: Psalm 51:1-12

This psalm is known as a "penitential psalm" since its focus is on personal sin, guilt, repentance and God's mercy. Only God can take away the guilt of sin, restore a "clean heart", and teach us "wisdom" in our "secret heart". Not the wisdom of the world, but God's wisdom which enables us to see, understand and live in loving ways.

REFLECT -

- Do you have sin in your life for which you have asked God for forgiveness, yet you continue to hold onto the guilt of that sin? The psalmist asks to be "purged" of his sin, to be washed "whiter than snow". To receive this, we must be completely open to God to remove our sin and replace it with the joy of God's salvation.

PRAY -

O God, I give you thanks that you are a merciful and loving God. Take away my sin and create in me a clean heart and a willing spirit. Amen.

Tuesday, July 31, 2012

READ - The Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-16

Paul urges spiritual maturity so that they may "live into" the spiritual gifts for ministry that God has given to each. He also encourages unity within the community of faith so that they can love, support and encourage one another.

REFLECT -

- Paul emphasizes that Christians were never intended by Jesus to go it alone. We are each given specific gifts for ministry which are intended to work in concert with the gifts of other Christians so that the gospel may be shared and the needs of all might be met. Are you using the gifts God gave you for ministry? What work might God have for you to do that you have not yet explored?

PRAY -

Father, please use me in the work of your Kingdom today. Amen.

Thursday, August 2, 2012

READ - The Gospel: John 6:24-35

Amazed by the feeding of the five thousand and the works of healing Jesus has performed, crowds begin to seek Jesus out to find out how they can have access to such mighty power. He tries to help them understand the nature of the great gift he has come to offer.

REFLECT -

- As people living in a very materialistic culture, we must constantly remind us of what is important in God's Kingdom. These people wanted remarkable acts and free bread; we want bounty and blessing from God. Christ offers us spiritual food to nourish our souls. We must be focused on him to receive it, not allowing the distractions of this world to steer us wrongly.

PRAY -

O God, feed me today with that "bread of life" so that I may never be hungry for your presence and power. Amen.

Friday, August 3, 2012

ACT -

Focus Verse: Ephesians 4:15

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Speaking the truth in love can be a tricky business. Just as Nathan had to find a creative way to get King David to acknowledge and repent of his sin, finding ways to tell someone we love that something in their life needs to change can require care and lots of prayer. It takes courage because we risk hurt feelings, anger and rejection. It must be undertaken with a humble heart, not judging or condemning, but telling the truth as carefully as possible. Before someone cares what we say, they must first know that we care. Is there someone to whom you need to "speak the truth in love" today? Pray for God's guidance and then step out in faith.