

# Monday, September 24, 2012

#### READ - The Psalter: Psalm 124

This psalm is one sung by faithful Jews as they made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, reminding them of God's faithfulness to their people at all times.

#### REFLECT-

• When times are hard and our life is filled with pain, we sometimes tend to forget how good God has been to us, carrying us through dark times in remarkable ways. Scriptures like this one serve as a reminder that God is always with us, supplying our needs and will always be there.

#### PRAY-

Lord, I thank you for your constant and abiding love for me and for the world and your gracious care in the past. Amen.

# Tuesday, September 25, 2012

### READ - The Epistle: James 5:13-20

James encourages his readers to take special care of those who may be sick or suffering, to pray for them and lay hands on them. This was unusual in that time for many of the sick or disabled were outcasts from the community and were avoided. He also emphasized the importance of prayer in healing, restoring those who had sinned, and bringing unity in the community of faith.

#### REFLECT-

• Can you think of someone who is sick or suffering to whom you could reach out in some way? A visit, a meal, a phone call or card AND your prayers for their healing could make a big difference to that person. Is there someone on your heart who does not know Christ? Pray for them and ask for the opportunity to demonstrate your faith in their presence.

### PRAY-

Father, I lift these persons on my heart and mind to your healing, comfort and strength. Make me an instrument of your loving care. Amen.

### Wednesday, September 26, 2012

### READ - The Old Testament: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

Queen Esther, whose Jewish heritage has been hidden, risks her life by asking for the king's protection for the Jewish people who have been condemned to extermination by Haman, who is one of the king's powerful advisors who has become angry with Esther's uncle Mordecai.

#### REFLECT-

• Before he selected Esther to be his queen, the king had his first wife killed because she refused to dance before a drunken feast of his friends. Esther steps out courageously to defend her people in one of the few biblical stories with a woman as the key actor. Is there a situation in your life now where you need courage to take a risk in order to bring justice or resolve a problem?

#### PRAY-

Lord, help me to do what is right, even if it is not popular or well-received by all concerned. Amen.

# Thursday, September 27, 2012

### READ - The Gospel: Mark 9:38-50

The disciples are disturbed when someone they don't know if performing miracles in Jesus' name. They believe they have exclusive rights to the power of Jesus, but he teaches them that anyone who believes and calls on his name has access to the power of the Spirit of Christ.

#### REFLECT-

• In the next section of the passage, Jesus uses some extreme examples to make the point that we must let nothing inhibit our relationship with him – any kind of sin or distraction we must put aside to keep our focus on him and our obedience to him. What may be a stumbling block for you in this regard?

#### PRAY-

Father, help me to see clearly what may be blocking my close relationship with you in some way and to set it aside. Amen.

# Friday, September 28, 2012

### ACT-

### Focus Verse: Mark 9:50

Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it?
Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.

When salt loses its flavor, it is no longer useful to season or to preserve foods. We cannot tell just by looking at salt whether it still retains its flavor, only as it is put to use. Sometimes we as Christians look the part and go through the motions of being "religious", but in reality we actually do little to further the Kingdom of God. Be salt and light today to those you encounter – loving others, praying for them, sharing what you have with those in need, and give glory to God with your words and action. Your "saltiness" will be evidenced by the way you live. And with that kind of living, comes the peace that only God can offer.