



Wednesday, September 5, 2012

READ - The Old Testament: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

This proverb deals with injustice, particularly in how persons use their material resources. All that we have comes from God and those who have abundance are intended to share it with their neighbors. Again, God's concern for the poor is emphasized in this passage.

REFLECT -

- All through the scriptures, we are told of God's concern for the poor and those who suffer; injustice caused by those in power which oppresses persons of low economic or ethnic status is always condemned. As God's people, we are challenged to share what we have and rise up against any kind of injustice or oppression.

PRAY -

Lord, open my eyes and ears so that I do not become calloused to those who are hurting around me. Make me an instrument of your love. Amen.

Monday, September 3, 2012

READ - The Psalter: Psalm 125

This psalm is an affirmation of God's constant and loving presence with his people. The psalmist pleads with God to bless those who follow his commands and live in righteousness and to punish those who do not live according to God's will.

REFLECT -

- Unfortunately, both blessing and sorrow befall both the righteous and those who are evil. Our assurance is that God is with us to guide and strengthen us in whatever circumstances our lives may bring. Has that been your experience?

PRAY -

O God, I thank you that you walk before to guide me, beside me to strengthen me, and behind me to uphold me. Amen.

Tuesday, September 4, 2012

READ - The Epistle: James 2:1-17

James cautions Christian believers that in response to their faith in Christ and the mercy shown to them, they must in turn show mercy and hospitality to others, regardless of their status in society. He chastises the early church for treating affluent guests one way and poor persons yet another. We must put our faith into acts of compassion and care.

REFLECT -

- Many Protestant Christians feel that if they have accepted Jesus as their savior, no further response is expected of them. James makes clear here that "lip service" to God is not enough. We are to love one another, not just in words, but through our actions. Be aware of opportunities for you to love a neighbor who is a stranger today.

PRAY -

Father, help me to take the time and step outside my comfortable habits so that I can help someone who is hurting. Give me guidance, courage, and a generous spirit. Amen.

Thursday, September 6, 2012

READ - The Gospel: Mark 7:24-37

These two stories of healing by Jesus are challenging. His response to the Gentile woman who begs him to heal her daughter seems harsh, implying that his message was only for the Jews. He tells the deaf man whom he heals not to tell anyone. Why?

REFLECT -

- Jesus understood his mission to be first to the Jewish people, then to expand to the Gentiles. When he was approached by this woman, he believed that time was not yet come; but she challenged him and he recognized the depth of her faith. Are there some who we feel are more deserving of God's grace than others?

PRAY -

O God, help me to remember that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. All are beloved and invited to accept him. Amen.

Friday, September 7, 2012

ACT -

Focus Verse: James 2:8

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

This verse cites Leviticus 19:18 in which the Israelite is commanded to love and care for his neighbor. At that point, the neighbor was only considered to be a fellow Israelite – Gentiles were excluded. Yet through the teachings of Jesus and the activity of the Holy Spirit through Peter and other disciples, all persons are our neighbors and fall under that command. The verse is couched in an admonition not to judge one another. We have all sinned in one way or another and are in need of God's mercy. If we can set aside our judgment of one another, that frees us for kindness, generosity, and compassion for all whom we encounter. Today, look for chances to offer neighborly love to someone different than yourself.