



Monday, April 15, 2013

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 23

This psalm is so familiar to many of us that it's hard to hear afresh God's words of comfort, care and love for us. The image used by the psalmist – that of a shepherd and sheep – is not one that we know much about, so it requires some context about the relationship of a shepherd and his flock for us to understand fully the meaning of this psalm.

**REFLECT-**

- The shepherd spoken of here stays with his flock constantly, guiding them, providing them everything they needed to live, keeping them safe from danger. In turn, the sheep obey the shepherd's commands; they know his voice and will follow him. What does this image tell us about the nature of God? How can you apply it to your life?

**PRAY-**

Shepherd God, I am grateful that you are always with me. Amen.

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

**READ-** Acts of the Apostles: Acts 9:36-43

Peter performs a miracle in this story through the power of the Holy Spirit – raising a woman who is dead back to life, and we are told because of that act of power, people believed in Jesus Christ as their savior. Hence the name of the book – Acts of the Apostles. People came to believe in Christ because of the mighty acts performed by his disciples.

**REFLECT-**

- Can you think of occasions in your life where something clearly happened through God's power? Perhaps someone was healed and the doctor could not explain it; perhaps someone forgave an injury that is deep and painful. Do these "acts of God" increase your faith and raise your awareness to be looking for these "acts"?

**PRAY-**

God of miracles, help my eyes to be open to see your great power in my life and the lives of others and to praise your name in response. Amen.

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

**READ-** The Epistle: Revelation 7:9-17

John's vision of the final coming of Christ and the new heaven and earth continues here with his recognition of those who have endured great suffering on earth because they were faithful to God and stood firm in their beliefs in an evil and sinful culture.

**REFLECT-**

- What would you be willing to sacrifice or endure for your Christian faith? Our American culture is becoming increasingly non-Christian in moral, ethical, and spiritual foundations. In truth, those who stand firm as Christians are in the minority in our country today. Where in your life in the community is your faith not welcome? What should you do about that?

**PRAY-**

Father, give me the strength, courage and discernment to not ever be ashamed of my faith and to speak out and take action against evil and unbelief in my community. Amen.

Thursday, April 18, 2013

**READ-** The Gospel: John 10:22-30

This conversation which Jesus had with the Jewish authorities before his arrest shows them baiting Jesus to claim his Messiahship publicly so that they could put him to death for blasphemy. He then echoes the words of Psalm 23 in describing his followers as his "sheep" who hear his voice, obey, and follow him.

**REFLECT-**

- Are you one of Jesus' sheep who have become familiar with his voice by reading his words in the gospels? How can we know his voice if we don't ever hear it through the words of scripture? How can we obey if we don't know his teaching? Is reading scripture regularly a priority in your life?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to make your priorities my priorities. Help me to make time to read and study your holy scripture so that when Jesus calls, I may know his voice and be obedient to his commands. Amen.

Friday, April 19, 2013

**ACT-**

Focus Verse: Acts 9:41

He gave her his hand and helped her up.

After Peter performed the miracle of raising Tabitha from the dead, the passage says that he reached out to her and helped her up. We may not be able to raise someone from the dead, but we CAN reach out to someone who is hurting and lift them up in some way. A visit, a phone call, a kind word, an encouraging card or letter, a meal out with someone who lives alone. All of these simple things say, "I love you. I care about you. I am here for you." Someone you know needs you to reach out and lift them up. Take time and do it today.