



Monday, August 12, 2013

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

The psalmist compares the people of Israel to a vine planted in rich soil and carefully tended by God so that, for a time, it grew and flourished. The ravages of that vine represent the attacks from other nations on Israel and the psalmist pleads for God's intervention and care for his people

REFLECT-

- Often, bad things happen in our lives for which we have no explanation. Just when it seems that God has blessed us so richly and things are going so well, our perfect world falls like a house of cards. It sometimes feels as if God has turned his back on us. What is your prayer at those times?

PRAY-

God, help us to hold firm in our faith so that even in difficult times, we may be confident of your love and care for us. Amen.

Tuesday, August 13, 2013

READ- Old Testament: Isaiah 5:1-7

The prophet Isaiah fleshes out the story of the vine which does not produce, expanding the metaphor to an entire vineyard which God gives great care, but the fruit produced is only hard, small wild grapes. In response to God's love and protection, the people of Judah had gone their own way, not living in God's will – and would be punished.

REFLECT-

- Sometimes the difficult times in our lives come as a result of our own poor choices, our sinful behavior, and our disregard for God's will for us. God expects us to "bear fruit" with the blessings, resources and abilities given to us and we will be held accountable.

PRAY-

Lord, help me to be mindful today of living in such a way that I use my time and resources wisely to serve those in need and to share my faith with others so that you may be glorified. Amen.

Wednesday, August 14, 2013

READ- The Epistle: Hebrews 11:29-12:2

Paul cites examples of Hebrew bible heroes who did remarkable things because of their faith; but then he also describes people who suffered terribly because of their faith. He reminds us that all those faithful ones who went before us (the "great cloud of witnesses") are now following Jesus because of what he has done for us all.

REFLECT-

- All of us have people who have influenced our faith because of their example, their witness, their teaching and guidance. Who in that "great cloud of witnesses" has been important to you in shaping your Christian faith? Who might you be influencing?

PRAY-

Father, make me mindful that the way I speak, act, treat other people, offer care and compassion, and share what I have today may be an example of faith for someone who needs to know you. Amen.

Thursday, August 15, 2013

READ- The Gospel: Luke 12:49-56

Jesus speaks hard words in this passage, warning us that following him will not be easy and may even separate us from people whom we love who are not faithful to Christ. If God's will is truly lived out, there will sometimes be conflict; injustice, greed, hatred and evil must be challenged by God's people. We must not remain silent; we must act.

REFLECT-

- What is happening in your community or nation right now that is contrary to Jesus' teaching about us loving God and our neighbors? What can you do to rise up and take a stand or to reach out and help someone who is suffering that might make a difference?

PRAY-

O God, make me willing to speak out and act against the things happening in my community which are not in your will. Amen.

Friday, August 16, 2013

ACT-

Focus Verse: Hebrews 12:1c

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Each day when we wake we have a new and fresh opportunity to live faithfully for Christ. Some days when we rise, our heart is heavy with grief, sadness or fear, and we are discouraged. Some days, there is so much uncertainty ahead of us, we don't know the next step to take. Our life is a journey that requires the stamina of a long distance runner who continues to persevere in the race even through difficulties. Today, run your race knowing that Christ is right beside you, encouraging, guiding, strengthening you so that you finish the day faithfully. You do not run that race alone – Christ and other Christ followers are on that same journey with you. Let **US** run together with perseverance today!