



Monday, August 5, 2013

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23

This psalm reminds us of God's great power and the coming judgment each of us will face in which God will hold us accountable for our faithfulness or our disobedience. The language in verse 22 is fierce – those who forget God will be “torn apart”.

**REFLECT-**

- Most of us don't like to think about our accountability to God for the way we live. But this psalm reminds us that we will all be held responsible for our relationship with God and for living according to God's will, which means finding ways to care for our neighbors who are in need or hurting.

**PRAY-**

Author of all creation, I am grateful that you care for me. Help me to keep my face turned toward you and help me to be obedient to your will for my life. Amen.

Tuesday, August 6, 2013

**READ-** Old Testament: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Isaiah tells the people of Judah that God is not pleased by their empty religious rituals because the rest of their lives are not lining up with his will. Their lack of concern for the poor, the oppressed, the hurting people among them overshadows any kind of worship they may offer. Isaiah tells them if they don't change their ways, they will be destroyed.

**REFLECT-**

- Every Sunday, we gather for our religious rituals – singing hymns, praying, hearing a sermon. Yet if the lives we live outside of that hour on Sunday morning don't include care and compassion for those in need, those who are hurting, will God be pleased?

**PRAY-**

Lord, give me eyes to see and courage to act when I can help someone in need. Help me to make your priorities my own. Amen.

Wednesday, August 7, 2013

**READ-** The Epistle: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul is providing encouragement to people who have endured persecution by those living around them for their Christian beliefs. He holds before them the example of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob who left everything because they trusted God's promises and encourages them to look to eternal things that last.

**REFLECT-**

- It's easy to get caught up on the everyday trials of life and lose sight of our eternal future. The relationship we have with God now, which is built by prayer, study of scripture, worship and caring for our neighbors, will determine how we will spend eternity. Paul's reminder is as true for us today as it was for those early Christians.

**PRAY-**

Father, help me not to be swayed by my own problems and the influence of our culture. Help me to keep my eyes and heart firmly focused on you. Amen.

Thursday, August 8, 2013

**READ-** The Gospel: Luke 12:32-40

The Gospel passage reiterates themes already explored in the other lectionary readings, but these are Jesus' words to us about how we should use our material goods – to help those who are in need – and about always being ready for our own day of judgment. Those who live each day in close relationship with God, trying to follow the teachings of Jesus WILL be ready when the knock comes at the door.

**REFLECT-**

- Jesus tells us to live simply, using our resources to meet our needs, not on extravagant things that do not have eternal worth, and to use anything beyond that to help those who are in need. This runs counter to our capitalist, consumerist American culture. How do you reconcile it in the way you live?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to simplify my life, to let go of those things I do not need, and to share freely what I have with those who are without. Amen.

Friday, August 9, 2013

**ACT-**

Focus Verse: Luke 12:40

You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

None of us knows the day or hour that we will find ourselves face to face with our Maker. Jesus uses many metaphors in his parables to let people know that we must live each day so that we will be ready for our hour of judgment at any time. Take stock of your day as it passes. What have you done today that draws you closer to God? What were the nature of your prayers? Did you read your Bible today? If so, what did you draw from it that informs your life? Did you help or care for someone today?