



Monday, January 7, 2013

READ- The Old Testament: [Isaiah 43:1-7](#)

Isaiah spoke words of hope to the people of Israel who had been living in Babylonian exile for half a century. King Cyrus of Persia was about to overthrow the Babylonian king and he would release them to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple.

REFLECT-

- Even when our lives seem at their lowest point, that all is lost, the bible affirms that God can do great and wondrous things for those who love him. This passage affirms how much God loves us and can use all things for his good will.

PRAY-

Lord, for those who are suffering today, show them the light and warmth of your encouraging word. Comfort them and give them hope. Amen.

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

READ- The Epistle: [Acts 8:14-17](#)

Phillip, one of the seven deacons appointed to care for widows and orphans, took his ministry into Samaria. As a result, many came to believe in Jesus as the Christ, so Peter and John went to them to offer Christ's baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

REFLECT-

- Samaritans and Jews despised one another. Yet the people of Samaria came to know Christ because a Jewish man reached out in love to them. Who are the "despised" in our community whom we avoid? How can we reach out to them, show them the love of Jesus, and let them hear the good news of Christ?

PRAY-

O God, we are called by Jesus to seek out the poor, those who suffer, and those who do not know Christ. Help our congregation to find loving ways to reach those persons in our community and the world. Amen.

Wednesday, January 9, 2013

READ- The Gospel: [Luke 3:15-17, 21-22](#)

The preaching of John the Baptist was so magnetic and so unlike anything the people heard from the Jewish establishment, that many were convinced he was the Messiah. After he clearly states he is not, Jesus comes to the Jordan, is baptized by John, and very publicly receives God's blessing as "my Son, the beloved". His public ministry is underway.

REFLECT-

- John focused on repentance of sins and God's judgment and he clearly believed that the Messiah would be the "enforcer" of God's judgment. Yet we know from Jesus' ministry that God's Spirit is about much more than judgment – gifts of mercy, teaching, preaching, wisdom, prophecy that work to bring God's Kingdom.

PRAY-

O God, help me to use the gifts of the Spirit given to me to do your work in the world, just as John the Baptist did, just as Jesus and his disciples did. Amen.

Thursday, January 10, 2013

READ- The Psalter: [Psalm 29](#)

One of the oldest psalms, this passage emphasizes God's ultimate power over all creation and offers praise and worship to God on behalf of God's people. The closing benediction of the passage asks for peace and strength for God's people with confidence that God will provide.

REFLECT-

- Paying attention to nature – the change of the seasons, the rivers, mountains, night sky and shining stars, animals and beautiful plants - and reflecting on the miracle of God's good creation cannot help but remind us of God's power and majesty. Yet he cares for us and loves us. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name!

PRAY-

Father, I give you thanks and praise today for the wonder of creation and for your great, great love for all your people. Amen.

Friday, January 11, 2013

ACT-

Focus Verse: [Isaiah 43:4-5](#)

You are precious in my sight and honored and I love you... do not fear, for I am with you.

"Do not fear." The angel said it to Mary, to Joseph, to the shepherds as they tried to understand the plan God had for the birth of his Son in a miraculous way. Often we may feel overwhelmed by something difficult happening in our life. That is the time we need to remember God's great love for us and that we need never fear because God is with us always. Share these verses today with someone who needs to hear them and offer them that assurance. Pray for that person(s) and support them in whatever ways you are able.