



Monday, July 15, 2013

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 52

The psalmist clearly is invoking God's judgment and punishment upon someone who has wronged him. Firmly rooted in the popular idea at that time that the righteous are showered with blessings and the evil are punished by God, this passage is clearly asking for vengeance and justice.

REFLECT-

- At one time or another, all of us have likely railed out at God demanding to know why someone who has done bad things prospers while good people suffer. God's justice and judgment does not come at our request – it happens in God's time and in God's way, not ours. We must trust God to handle those things.

PRAY-

Lord, please take away my resentment, anger and pain and help me to leave judgment in your hands! Amen.

Tuesday, July 16, 2013

READ- Old Testament: Amos 8:1-12

Amos' vision of a basket of ripe fruit comes with a prophecy of destruction for the people Israel from God. God is disgusted with the way the rich and powerful people treat the poor in their midst, cheating them and forcing them into slavery. Amos' prophecy did come to pass.

REFLECT-

- A consistent theme throughout the Old and New Testaments – in the Law, the Prophets and from Jesus – is God's special concern for the poor, oppressed, suffering and needy people. This story should get our attention because our society tramples and ignores those people, just as the Israelites did in Amos' time.

PRAY-

Father, give me a generous heart and an awareness of those who are suffering or in need around me. Help me to share what I have with others and show compassion for those who are hurting. Amen.

Wednesday, July 17, 2013

READ- The Epistle: Colossians 1:15-28

The first five verses of this letter is a beautifully written statement of faith in Christ – who he is, what he came to do, and what he will do in the future. The next three verses celebrate Christ's saving work for us on the cross and challenge us to hold fast to the faith. The last verses proclaim Christ as Savior to everyone – including the Gentiles.

REFLECT-

- Focus on the first five verses. What does it mean that Christ is the "image of the invisible God" (vs. 15a)? In what ways do "all things hold together in him" (vs. 17a)? What would we know about the nature of God if Christ had not come? How does that shape and inform your faith?

PRAY-

Gracious God, thank you so much for sending Jesus – the divine coming to us in flesh so that we may know and love you more fully. Amen.

Thursday, July 18, 2013

READ- The Gospel: Luke 10:38-42

This passage finds Jesus visiting in the home of his good friends Lazarus, Mary and Martha. As always, a crowd comes to see Jesus and Mary sits listening to him teach while her sister Martha rushes about preparing for their meal. When Martha protests Mary's lack of help to Jesus, he affirms Mary's choice and encourages Martha to stop and listen as well.

REFLECT-

- Jesus was not rejecting Martha's service; he was reminding her that a balance of work and service, prayer, reflection and learning is needed to nurture our faith. Where in your life are things too busy, too filled up so that there's not time to spend with Jesus? What can you simplify so that there is time to feed your soul?

PRAY-

O God, help me order my priorities so that each day I have time to "sit at Jesus' feet", to listen, to pray, to read my Bible. Keep me in balance. Amen.

Friday, July 19, 2013

ACT-

Focus Verse: Psalm 52:8a-9

| trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. | will thank you forever because of what you have done. | In the presence of the faithful | will proclaim your name, for it is good.

Make today a day of thankfulness to God. Take the time today to be aware of all the blessings with which God gifts you. The smile of a child, a beautiful night sky, a meal with a friend, good health, a safe place to live, a melody that sends chills down your spine, a fresh tomato, a hug. Take time today to look, listen, appreciate, share – and give thanks to your loving Creator from whom all things come.