



Monday, July 8, 2013

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 82

This psalm reflects the ancient world belief in council of divine beings in which various gods controlled certain things. The psalmist calls on the God of Israel to punish the other divine beings for their lack of concern and care for those in need who are suffering.

REFLECT-

- The idea of lots of different gods is something that is foreign to our culture, but we CAN learn from this the importance that God places on taking care of the poor, needy, oppressed and suffering who are around us. If God feels so strongly about this, then it should be our priority as well. Are you actively doing that?

PRAY-

Lord, thank you for all of my blessings and empower me to share what I have with those who are in need in some way today. Amen.

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

READ- Old Testament: Amos 7:7-17

As many of the prophets in Hebrew scripture, Amos has a difficult message to deliver – one that the powerful king and his priest do not want to hear. God has sent him to proclaim their destruction as punishment for disobedience to God's ways. The rich and powerful lived as they wished and the poor went without in that society. Amos' prophecy came true.

REFLECT-

- If Amos came to speak to our congregation this Sunday, how might we compare to the people to whom he prophesied in this passage? In what ways would he find us not living up to God's will for us in terms of sharing what we have with those in need?

PRAY-

Lord, we don't like to dwell on your judgment and punishment. But stories like that of Amos let us know that you do hold us accountable. Help me know your will and give me courage to do it. Amen.

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

READ- The Epistle: Colossians 1:1-14

This letter to the church at Colossae expresses praise and thanksgiving for the spiritual growth of that church by using a metaphor first used by Jesus – that of "bearing fruit". Jesus called himself the "true vine" and said that we as his follows are "branches" and that we are here to "bear fruit".

REFLECT-

- Read John 15:1-8 and compare Jesus' language to that contained in the epistle reading for today. Where and how are you "bearing fruit" in your spiritual growth and witness? What areas of your life need "pruning" so that you might "bear more fruit"?

PRAY-

Lord, I want to grow in my faith and be productive in sharing that faith with others through my words and actions. Help me bear fruit for you. Amen.

Thursday, July 11, 2013

READ- The Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

Jesus once more answers a Jewish religious authority who tries to trap him with a parable, forcing him to answer his own questions through the moral of that story. Samaritans were despised by Jews which made the outcome of this story a particularly hard pill to swallow for his questioner.

REFLECT-

- How often do we turn away from helping someone right in front of us because we are afraid or don't want to get involved or because they don't smell or look very pleasant? Jesus' parable is plain. The Samaritan acted as personal risk, inconvenience and cost to himself. At your next such opportunity, how will you respond?

PRAY-

Gracious God, help me to overcome my fear, prejudice, and reluctance to help someone in need and just reach out to help in some way. Amen.

Friday, July 12, 2013

ACT-

Focus Verse: Luke 10:29b

He asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

When you think about that question, who comes to mind? We often think of someone as our neighbor only as those who physically live near us. Yet, from the story he told, Jesus had a much broader concept of who our neighbor is. As you go about your day today, try seeing everyone you encounter – grocery clerks, pharmacists, car repair technicians, friends and family. Make eye contact with strangers, offer a smile and encouraging word. Be helpful to someone who looks like they might need a hand whenever you have the opportunity. Approaching your day in this way opens you to many blessings. Practice "Neighbor Love" today.