



Monday, March 11, 2013

**READ-** The Old Testament: *Isaiah 43:16-21*

The prophet Isaiah tries to give the Israelites living in captivity in Babylon hope that there will come a day when God will rescue and restore them to their homeland, just as he did in the exodus from Egypt (vs. 17 refers to the parting of the Red Sea).

**REFLECT-**

- Likewise, we are always able to hope because God is always able to “do a new thing” (vs. 19) in our lives if we keep ourselves open to his will and are obedient. What “new thing” might God be doing in your life today? How will you respond?

**PRAY-**

God of the past and the future, help me to hear your voice and be obedient to your will in my life. Give me courage and strength when I am afraid. Amen.

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

**READ-** The Epistle: *Philippians 3:4b-14*

Paul, who considered himself to be very righteous under Jewish law, recounts how everything changed for him by knowing Jesus and understanding what his life, death and resurrection did for humankind. He encourages the Philippians to put aside everything in their past and focus strictly upon Jesus and following his commandments.

**REFLECT-**

- What in your life do you need to let go of, put behind you or change in order to follow Christ more fully? If we claim to be Christians, we cannot hold onto sinful habits or old grievances. What holds you back from giving your complete allegiance to Christ?

**PRAY-**

Forgiving Father, free me from the things that keep me from loving you with my whole heart. Amen.

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

**READ-** The Gospel: *John 12:1-8*

Jesus shares a meal again with his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus just a short time after he raised Lazarus from the dead. While he is there, Mary expresses her love, appreciation, and devotion to Jesus by anointing his feet with expensive ointment. Jesus dismisses Judas' criticism of her actions, knowing that he would soon be facing death.

**REFLECT-**

- Mary offered an extravagant gift to Jesus in gratitude for all he had done for her and her family. You too have been blessed by the Savior. What gift, what offering or expression of thanksgiving do you offer him? Love and obedience are all he desires.

**PRAY-**

Giver of all good things, I thank you for my abundant blessings. Help me to live in such a way that honors and glorifies you. Amen.

Thursday, March 14, 2013

**READ-** The Psalter: *Psalms 126*

Throughout the Hebrew scripture, the writers were quick to remember the times when God came to their aid, rescued the Israelites from oppression and hardship, restoring them as his favored people. God's past actions offered hope and comfort when times were hard.

**REFLECT-**

- This text is the basis of the old hymn “Bringing in the Sheaves” (vs. 6) and offers images of God's final harvest when our times of weeping and suffering will be past and God will gather us in to eternal life with him. Would you be prepared for God's eternal harvest if it came today? If not, what needs to change?

**PRAY-**

O Lord, I thank you for the comfort and peace that comes with knowing you love us and want us to be with you forever. Help us to live today so that we may have the joy of eternal life to come. Amen.

Friday, March 15, 2013

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** *Philippians 3:13b*

**This one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.**

Perseverance is a very important Christian virtue. Sometimes we get tired and become discouraged because life brings great disappointments and hurts. Paul suffered much in his lifetime, but he never lost heart because of his faith in Christ. We must encourage one another, just as Paul did the Philippians. Help someone you encounter today who is struggling to keep the faith. Offer kind words or some act of kindness; pray with and for that person. We “press on toward the prize” in Christian community. Offer the gift of encouragement to another Christian today.