



Monday, October 21, 2013

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 65

The psalmist recounts all the ways in which God has blessed people and his good creation. We are forgiven and provided for out of God's gracious love. God restores and replenishes the earth on which we rely for life through the rain, the growing season, and the remarkable workings of nature God made possible.

**REFLECT-**

- Take a few minutes and write down all the ways in which God has blessed you. Walk outside and take the time to enjoy the breeze, really look at the beautiful sky and trees and see the birds and animals that live all around us.

**PRAY-**

Lord, I give you thanks and praise for all the blessings of life. Make me mindful of them each day as they are expressions of your love for us. Amen.

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

**READ-** Old Testament: Joel 2:23-32

The prophet Joel offered these words during a time of great trouble for the people of Israel. They had been visited by a great swarm of locusts which had wiped out their crops, a sign which would have been interpreted as God's judgment for their unfaithfulness. Joel provides hope in the rain and restoration; yet he cautions that the day of final judgment is coming.

**REFLECT-**

- We need hope in time of trouble, but we also need to remember that we will be accountable before God someday. Have you committed yourself entirely to Christ or is there a part of your life in which you are still trying to manage all by yourself? We do not know when "our souls will be required of us" – the time is now to give God complete allegiance and obedience.

**PRAY-**

Father, take my life completely and use it for your glory. Amen.

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

**READ-** The Epistle: II Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Paul closes his second letter to Timothy indicating that he knows his death is near and he rejoices that God has allowed him to stay faithful to his call to preach the good news to all people. He has endured much suffering in that process, but he rejoices as he looks forward to being with Christ eternally – that is his reward.

**REFLECT-**

- All of us must face death. We may fear the suffering that may precede it or the unknown of what lies after it; yet we have the assurance of Christ's intercession for us and the same promise that Paul believed of eternal life if we are faithful and obedient.

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to live each day as if it were my last, serving you in whatever ways you call me, with confidence of my salvation. Amen.

Thursday, October 24, 2013

**READ-** The Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

Jesus told this parable to caution against self-righteousness, religiosity, and lack of humility – all deadly sins. Of the two men praying in the temple, it was the despised tax collector who received God's mercy, not the self-righteous Pharisee who believed he had earned God's favor by his own actions.

**REFLECT-**

- Those of us who are "churchy" people must heed carefully this parable. We may come to believe that if we attend Sunday School and worship and put something in the offering plate that we somehow have earned God's favor over those who do not.

**PRAY-**

O God, be merciful to me a sinner! Amen.

Friday, October 25, 2013

**ACT-**

Focus Verse: Joel 2:23a

Be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God.

Spend time today counting your blessings and giving thanks to God. Take note of all the good things you encounter – a hot cup of coffee, a hug from a friend, a song you love on the radio – and offer God thanks on the spot. Don't just offer a blanket prayer of thanksgiving today. Pay attention to each gift that comes your way and praise God for it then and there. With that attitude of gratitude is likely to come a lifting of your spirits in general – more patience, more perseverance, more hope and more generosity – because you realize how VERY much God has done for you. If you can, write down the things you give thanks for throughout the day and review those in the evening with another prayer of thanks. Be glad today and rejoice in the Lord your God! Amen.