



Monday, September 23, 2013

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16

The psalmist compares God's love and care for us to a mother bird who protects her chicks under the cover of her wings. Jesus used this same image as he spoke of the people of Jerusalem, "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Matthew 27:37)

**REFLECT-**

- The fierce protectiveness of a mother bird for her brood is an image that would have been very familiar to those in the time this psalm was written, but may be lost on our modern culture. Birds and many other animals will sacrifice their own life to protect their young. That's how much God loves us.

**PRAY-**

Thank you for your great fierce love for us which never leaves us to face the trials of life alone. Amen.

Tuesday, September 24, 2013

**READ-** Old Testament: Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15

The city of Jerusalem is under siege by the Babylonians the Jeremiah is under house arrest for attempting to leave the city. Following God's leading, he buys a piece of property that is now occupied by the Babylonians which had been in his family and puts the deed in a safe place, signifying that despite current circumstances, their people had a future in this place. Jeremiah's actions spoke of God's plan for their redemption.

**REFLECT-**

- We all need hope. Even in the direst circumstances, we need something in the future to look forward to. In what do you place your hope when troubles surround you? Does your hope in Jesus Christ give you the anchor you need?

**PRAY-**

We praise you, O Lord, that we have hope, both now and for eternity in your great love for us through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

**READ-** The Epistle: I Timothy 6:6-19

For proponents of the "prosperity gospel" of our faithfulness being rewarded by material blessing, this passage certainly is not supportive of that perspective. Echoing Jesus' warnings about the dangers of wealth and greed, the writer cautions Timothy to live simply and focus on staying true to his faith in Christ Jesus.

**REFLECT-**

- If you have more than you need in material things, what are you doing on a regular basis to share with those around you who are needy? Do you tithe your income to the church? Do you give to the Samaritan Fund? Do you work for Habitat for Humanity or at our church's food pantry?

**PRAY-**

Father, give me a generous and compassionate heart so that I may live simply, focus on you, and share what I have with those in need. Amen.

Thursday, September 26, 2013

**READ-** The Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

The gospel passage brings us Jesus' parable about the rich man who did not share what he had with the poor beggar Lazarus in his lifetime and then begs Abraham for mercy in eternal torment. The message is stark and clear – not showing compassion for those in need is a quick ticket to eternal punishment with no hope of reprieve.

**REFLECT-**

- Abraham emphasizes the point that the scriptures are full of commandments to us to share our material possessions and to help those who are needy. Jesus spoke about it repeatedly in conversations with his disciples and in parables as he taught. Why do we have so much difficulty "getting it"?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to make your priorities my priorities. Help me to live into Jesus' commands to love one another with my time and resources. Amen.

Friday, September 27, 2013

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** I Timothy 6:11-12a

**As for you, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith;**

Each day, we have a choice about how we receive what life brings our way. Paul told Timothy to "pursue" – to go after, to choose intentionally – these ways of living. He understood that choosing to live in these ways will sometimes feel like a battle with the evil forces in this world that oppose those things. As you go about your day, live with intention so that those around you might see "godliness, faith, love endurance, and gentleness". That will be your testimony of your faith today. Fight the good fight of faith in all you do today!