



Monday, February 17, 2014

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 119:33-40

The psalmist shows a hunger to know and understand God's laws and asks God to help him then to be obedient to them. He asks that God will help him not be distracted by the "vanities" of his culture, so that he may stay focused on doing God's will.

REFLECT-

- What does it mean to follow God's commandments in the scripture with you "whole heart" (vs. 34)? Do you sometimes go through the motions of living as a Christian for others to see, but inside your heart is not in what you are doing?

PRAY-

O Lord, give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart today. Amen.

Tuesday, February 18, 2014

READ- Old Testament: Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18

Moses reminds the people what God expects them to do in order to be holy, as the God they worship is holy. The list includes care for the poor and disabled and most of the concerns covered by the original ten commandments. Notice the recurring reminder, "I am the Lord."

REFLECT-

- In an agrarian society, providing for the poor meant leaving some of the harvest in the field for them to glean and giving to those who beg. In our society, how do you help to provide for those in need? How do you share from your plenty with those who have very little?

PRAY-

Lord, give me a generous heart, help me to live within my means so that I may share what you have given me with those who are in need. Help me to love my neighbor as myself today. Amen.

Wednesday, February 19, 2014

READ- The Epistle: I Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23

Paul is once more reminding the Corinthian church to stay focused on the central teachings of Jesus Christ and not to be distracted by those who claim wisdom in the culture around them. He urges unity among them, saying that they are "God's temple" collectively and should behave in a way that reflects God's holiness.

REFLECT-

- In what ways does the "wisdom" of our culture run counter to the teachings of Jesus Christ? What that is considered wise in our culture is "foolishness with God" (vs. 19)?

PRAY-

Father, help me to seek out your wisdom in my daily life and give me the courage to do your will. Help our church family to stay focused on you and work together to do your will. Amen.

Thursday, February 20, 2014

READ- The Gospel: Matthew 5:38-48

Among the hardest of Jesus' teachings to actually live out, Jesus tells us not to retaliate against those who abuse us, to go beyond what people ask of us, to give to all those who beg from us, and to love and pray for our enemies.

REFLECT-

- We are called to a higher standard as Christians. We see these behaviors lived out by Jesus and he calls us to do likewise. These actions are definitely counter to our culture's ideals of justice, equity and individual freedom.

PRAY-

O God, only with your help and strength can I hope to live in a Christlike way today. Help me to reflect Christ's humility, kindness and compassion in all I do and say today. Amen.

Friday, February 21, 2014

ACT-

Focus Verse: Matthew 5:44

I say to you, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you".

This language of Jesus may sound extreme to us – few of us have persons we would characterize as "enemies". However, most of us do have difficult relationships – a friend who has betrayed our trust, a relative who has hurt us in some way, a co-worker or fellow church member whose behavior or words really get under our skin. We may be holding onto an old hurt or grudge, ready to resurrect it and nurse it at the slightest opportunity. Take a moment now and make a list of those persons. Then, one by one, lift them to God in prayer asking God to restore and heal your relationship with them. Reflect for a few minutes, listening for God's guidance. Is there some word or action needed from you to help begin healing and reconciliation between you and those persons? If so, ask for God's help.