



Monday, June 16, 2014

READ- Old Testament: **Genesis 21:8-21**

This is a disturbing story involving the patriarch of the Jewish faith, his wife, and his wife's slave. Sarah, convinced that she will never conceive a child, forces her slave Haggai to submit to Abraham until she becomes pregnant. In this passage, Sarah becomes so jealous of Haggai and Ishmael that she demands Abraham force them into the desert to die.

REFLECT-

- It seems that God endorses this cruelty by telling Abraham to do as Sarah demanded. Yet he does not leave Haggai and Ishmael to die. He hears their cries, provides water, and directs them to a new life. Can you remember a time in your life when you went through great hardship only to find a new and better life ahead? God hears our cries and answers our prayers.

PRAY-

O God, thank you for all the ways you love and care for us, especially in times of trouble and hardship. Amen.

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

READ- The Psalter: **Psalms 86:1-10, 16-17**

This psalm could easily have been Haggai's prayer to God to save her and her son as they wandered in the desert. This is a traditional lament which asks for God's attention, describes the nature of the trouble, and then pledges fidelity to God and confidence in his power to save.

REFLECT-

- Do you feel free to cry out to God when you are in pain or sorrow? Do you ask God to provide for your needs or on behalf of someone else who is suffering? God is always faithful.

PRAY-

Healing God, you know our every need. We cry out to you in our time of trial, claiming your promises of abundant life. Amen.

Wednesday, June 18, 2014

READ- The Epistle: **Romans 6:1b-11**

Paul opens this letter by asking a bizarre rhetorical question to grab the attention of his listeners: "Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?" He then reinforces that any righteousness Christians may have is strictly a gift of God's grace – we cannot earn it. It is in response to that grace that we lived changed lives, free from sinful ways. Jewish thought held that righteousness must be earned by following the law. Paul turned that thought upside down in this letter.

REFLECT-

- How has the way you live your life changed over the years as you have come closer to Christ and feel his power in your life? How does the joy and peace he offers influence choices you make, your words and your actions?

PRAY-

Dear God, in response to your gracious love for me, help me to live today with love, compassion, generosity, and kindness. Amen.

Thursday, June 19, 2014

READ- The Gospel: **Matthew 10:24-39**

Jesus lays out the cost of being his disciple to those who would follow him. He makes clear that his message will be rejected by many and those who would proclaim it will also be rejected and persecuted, first of all by those closest to them who found it blasphemous to Jewish religious beliefs. Yet Jesus assures his followers that God will be with them if they will only be faithful to their call from Jesus.

REFLECT-

- What has your faith in Christ cost you? Have there been people close to you who have rejected you because of your faith? Have you turned aside from things the world values (money, material possessions, entertainment) to remain faithful to Jesus' values?

PRAY-

O God, help me to always proclaim your good news freely to other people by sharing what Jesus has done in my life. Amen.

Friday, June 20, 2014

ACT-

Focus Verse: Matthew 10:32

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

As you go about your day today, in what ways might you "acknowledge" Jesus to the people you meet? Simple things like saying a blessing before your meals both at home and in a restaurant is a way to acknowledge Jesus before others. As you experience God's blessings or encounter moments of his grace, expressing how grateful you are to God for those things to other people is a way of sharing testimony to your faith. Today, look for opportunities to "acknowledge" Christ!