



Monday, June 23, 2014

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 13

The psalmist cries out to God for help, for comfort, for strength and for God make his presence known. The writer feels abandoned by God, yet expresses hope and expectation (vs. 6) that God will respond because of his bountiful blessings in the past.

**REFLECT-**

- Think back to a time in your life in which you felt like God was absent. It may have been a time of pain and suffering when it seemed as if God did not provide for your needs. As you reflect on that time now, can you see ways in which God was caring for you?

**PRAY-**

O Lord, I give you thanks that you never abandon me and that you always care for me in ways that I sometimes cannot see or appreciate at the time. Open the eyes of my heart so I may know your ways more clearly. Amen.

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

**READ-** The Old Testament: Genesis 22:1-14

It is hard to fathom the depth of Abraham's obedience in this story. Without protest, Abraham takes his beloved son Isaac, whom God had miraculously provided in Abraham and Sarah's old age, and follows God's instruction to kill him as a sacrifice to God. At the last minute, God prevents Isaac's death and provides an animal instead.

**REFLECT-**

- Although it's difficult to believe that God would require Abraham to kill his son, we learn here the importance of our obedience to God. God wants us to trust him completely and to do – inasmuch as we can understand – what we believe to be his will. Do you feel God has ever tested you through some difficulty?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to trust you, to seek your will in all things, and live in a way that is obedient. Amen.

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

**READ-** The Epistle: Romans 6:12-23

The apostle Paul admonishes the Roman church that since they have received unearned grace through Christ, they must live in a radically different way in response. They must live in ways that reflect the righteousness of Christ rather than the sin of their culture.

**REFLECT-**

- Slavery was common at that time. All Paul's listeners would understand that a "slave of righteousness" must be completely obedient to Jesus' example and teachings. Slaves had no freedom to make their own choices. Our culture and nation prizes individual freedom and personal liberty. In what important area of your life are you a slave to sin, choosing your way instead of God's?

**PRAY-**

Father, please forgive me when I live in ways that do not honor you and are not within your will. Amen.

Thursday, June 26, 2014

**READ-** The Gospel: Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus prepares his disciples for the challenges and joys they will encounter in sharing his message with the world in the days ahead of them. As Christ-followers, they will represent Christ to everyone they encounter by their words and actions.

**REFLECT-**

- If we claim to be a Christian, there is responsibility and accountability that goes with that claim. The words we speak and our actions toward other people, and the choices we make reflect the nature of our commitment to Christ. Do you represent Christ well to those you encounter in your daily life?

**PRAY-**

O God, help me to be good representative of Jesus in my words and deeds today. Amen.

Friday, June 27, 2014

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** Matthew 10:42

Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.

Jesus was constantly aware of the needs of those around him as he traveled and taught. He stopped what he was doing and helped those who were hurting or needy in some way. He expects his disciples to do likewise. As you go about your day, be intentional about noticing those you encounter. You may be able to encourage someone, to meet a need, to ease someone's suffering in some way, but only if you are paying attention and are willing to take the time to do so. Look for ways to offer that "cup of cold water" to someone who needs it. When you do, Jesus is there.