



Monday, July 14, 2014

READ- The Psalter: Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

God knows us down to the most intimate details of our life. There is nowhere we can go, nothing we can do or think or say that God does not know. The psalmist celebrates God's faithful presence with us, pursuing us, leading us, walking beside us.

REFLECT-

- Although there may be times in our lives when we feel God has abandoned us, this psalm can be our assurance and affirmation that is never the case. Awareness of God's presence requires us paying attention. In what ways have you felt God's presence and activity in your life over the last 24 hours?

PRAY-

Lord, I thank you for your gracious and ever-faithful presence in my life. Amen.

Tuesday, July 15, 2014

READ- The Old Testament: Genesis 28:10-19a

Jacob is running away after tricking his father into giving him his brother's Esau's blessing as the elder child. His mother Rebekah, fearing for Jacob's safety, sends him away to relatives in the old country. Alone in the desert, Jacob has an encounter with God and receives God's promise of many good things. Jacob is not deserving – God is gracious.

REFLECT-

- Jacob is so awed by his experience that he erects a stone monument marking the place where he encountered God. Is there a "holy place" that you have marked in your memory? A mountaintop, a quiet place beside a stream, a seaside beach? Perhaps your grandmother's kitchen table? How did you experience God's presence in that place?

PRAY-

O God, keep me watchful for those holy moments in my life when you draw very near in a powerful way and use them to mold my faith. Amen.

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

READ- The Epistle: Romans 8:12-25

Paul acknowledges to the Roman church the brokenness of human beings, their culture and society, and even the natural world. But despite our sin that has created this brokenness, we are God's beloved children and have the promise of a new creation through Christ.

REFLECT-

- It was tough for those Roman Christians to keep the faith in their circumstances. It is tough for us today at Christians to live in ways that are counter to our culture. We must have hope. Paul reminds us here of a hope that is eternal. In what area of your life do you need that hope today?

PRAY-

Father, it is hard for us to be patient. When there is so much suffering and evil in the world, sometimes we get discouraged. Renew our hope. Amen.

Thursday, July 17, 2014

READ- The Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Jesus uses an example all his listeners would have understood here to teach them about judgment. Those who are good and faithful exist side-by-side with those who reject God. Yet it is God who does the final sorting out of the "wheat" from the "weeds", not human beings.

REFLECT-

- Although the teaching is simple and straightforward, it is so hard to live out. People hurt us, disappoint us, frighten and disgust us at times. We want fairness and accountability. Yet Jesus says firmly, "That's not your job." The next logical step is forgiveness.

PRAY-

O God, forgive my tendency to judge other people, keeping me ever mindful that they too are your beloved children. Amen.

Friday, July 18, 2014

ACT-

Focus Verse: Genesis 28:15a

[And the Lord stood beside Jacob and said,] "Know that I am with you wherever you go."

This assurance of God's presence which God gave to Jacob as he faced an uncertain future is also offered to us as his beloved children. Jacob feared the anger of his brother and the possible loss of his life and his family. Yet God came to him in the silence of a lonely place and assured him of his presence and faithfulness. This gave Jacob courage to face his brother knowing that whatever happened, God would be with him and would sustain him. What challenges are you facing today? Of what are you fearful? Open your heart to invite God's spirit to fill you, allow his loving arms to lift you up and face this day with confidence that God will provide for your needs and will make a way – if you will watch for his leading – to allow love to prevail and his will to be done in your life. Go about your day with that in mind.