



Monday, July 21, 2014

**READ-** The Psalter: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b

This is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving for God's faithfulness. The psalmist calls us to remember all the ways in which God has blessed us and the wonderful works of his hand in the world.

**REFLECT-**

- God's covenant with Abraham and Jacob was fulfilled in the person and life of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, not just the Jewish people, but all people are included in that covenant of God's love and faithfulness.

**PRAY-**

Lord, I thank you for your steadfast love and your eternal desire for all people to be reconciled to you. Help me to be faithful. Amen.

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

**READ-** The Old Testament: Genesis 32:22-31

The time has come for Jacob to face up to his deceitful past. He is traveling with his wives, children, servants and all his herds and the next day will meet his brother Esau after a 20 year separation. Jacob sends his family across the river and stays alone all night, wrestling as God shaped him into a new man – not Jacob the deceiver; but Israel, the leader.

**REFLECT-**

- It is often in times of struggle, trial or suffering that God shapes and changes us into stronger, more faithful people. We learn that we are not in control and that we must trust and rely upon God. Like Jacob, our path ahead is often frightening and uncertain. Yet if we seek God's blessing by living faithfully, God will provide for us abundantly through his grace.

**PRAY-**

O God, it is our tendency to constantly wrestle with you for control over our lives. Help me to surrender my life and will to yours, to seek your guidance and to live in obedience. Amen.

Wednesday, July 23, 2014

**READ-** The Epistle: Romans 8:26-39

When we have no words to express our prayer, the Spirit breathes that prayer for us. In one of Paul's most eloquent and comforting letters, he assures the Roman church that nothing and no one can separate them from God's love. No matter how bad things seem, God will prevail.

**REFLECT-**

- Paul uses the word we translate as "predestined" in this passage which seems to imply that God has already chosen those who are saved and those who are damned. Yet John Wesley's idea of God's prevenient grace which is offered to all persons, even before they know it, is what Jesus promised and demonstrated.

**PRAY-**

Father, long before I claimed my faith, you chose me, you loved me, you pursued me. You are within me and all around me. I am yours. Amen.

Thursday, July 24, 2014

**READ-** The Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Jesus uses simple, common images to illustrate a divine concept for his disciples. The kingdom of God in our lives now exists in the small and ordinary – like a mustard seed or grain of yeast – but it will one day be full of majesty and glory. It is so valuable, we should be willing to give ourselves completely to attain it. Finally, God is the righteous judge.

**REFLECT-**

- The kingdom of heaven begins in our lives the moment we accept Christ as our savior and claim his promises. It exists in the fabric of our daily lives – in our work, rest, relationships, words and actions. Claim the treasure now! Be mindful of the abundance of God's grace in your life each day. The kingdom of heaven is present now!

**PRAY-**

O God, give me a sense for the beauty and joy of your presence each day of my life and to share that blessing with those around me. Amen.

Friday, July 25, 2014

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse:** Romans 8:28

**We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.**

This text has also been translated, "God makes all things work together for good" and "in all things God works for good". We know from our life experiences that all things that happen are NOT good, even for those who love and serve God faithfully. Yet often we see good things come from even the worst of circumstances. Today, be an agent for God's goodness in the world. Take every available opportunity to be kind, generous, loving, forgiving, and trusting. Claim joy in God's good creation by paying attention to the song of the birds, the beautiful blue sky, the breeze stirring in the trees. God is working for good in you today!