



Monday, December 15, 2014

**READ-** The Old Testament: || Samuel 7:1-11, 16

King David, after reunifying the nations of Judah and Israel under his reign, establishes Jerusalem as their capital city, builds a home there, and now wants the ark of the covenant to have a permanent place for worship. He seeks guidance from the prophet Nathan and the answer is not what David expected.

**REFLECT-**

- In this passage, God makes a covenant with David and his people to care for them forever. From David's lineage all future kings will come – even that king born in a manger in Bethlehem. This passage reminds us that God is faithful and keeps his promises. His desire is to love us, bless us, and for us to be faithful to him.

**PRAY-**

Lord, thank you for your love for your people down through the ages. Just as you guided David in right paths, I ask for your guidance today. Amen.

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

**READ-** The Epistle: Romans 16:25-27

As Paul concludes his letter to the Romans, he offers a doxology of praise and then a benediction. It offers glory to God for the gospel of Christ, celebrates that salvation is now available to all people, and encourages the Romans to be steadfast and obedient in their faith.

**REFLECT-**

- Paul says that God is able to strengthen us (vs. 25). For what do you need strength today? What trouble or trial do you face? Do you recall times that God has given you unexpected strength before? Do you trust God to carry you through?

**PRAY-**

O God, I praise you that you always provide the strength that we need in difficult times. Help me to be an encourager for others who may be struggling in some way. Amen.

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

**READ-** The Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

The trust and obedience shown by the young girl Mary is remarkable. Imagine a teenager trying to understand a visit and prophecy from an angelic being, the news that she will become pregnant out of wedlock and that the baby will become king of their people.

**REFLECT-**

- Put yourself in Mary's place. Think about how you would have felt in those circumstances. Would you have been able to respond as she did? What is God calling you to do right now that seems intimidating or impossible to you? How will you respond?

**PRAY-**

Lord, give me the trust and obedience that Mary had so that I may serve you to the best of my ability, just as she did. Amen.

Thursday, December 18, 2014

**READ-** Sermon Text: Luke 1:39-45

After Mary's visit with the angel, she goes to see her cousin Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptist. Once again, Mary is provided with assurance that the child she is carrying is indeed the long-awaited Messiah through the words of Elizabeth.

**REFLECT-**

- These women had much in common. Something miraculous and unexpected had happened to both of them. The babies they were carrying were part of God's plan of redemption for the world, yet both would suffer and be killed by those they came to redeem. Both women were obedient to God's will and rejoiced at God's blessing in their lives. In what way do you need to submit your life to God's will today?

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to know your will and give me courage to do it. Amen.

Friday, December 19, 2014

**READ-** New Testament Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55

Constructed in the same format as many of the psalms of praise in the Hebrew bible, Mary's song of praise to God extols God's mercy and special concern for the poor, a condition she knew firsthand. Her words foreshadowed her son's concern and compassion for the poor, those who are oppressed and who suffer.

**REFLECT-**

- Mary rejoiced and praised God for something remarkable that was happening in her life. What is happening your life today in which you can see God's hand at work? Have you offered God praise and thanksgiving for those things? Do it now.

**PRAY-**

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Amen.