



Monday, September 8, 2014

READ- The Old Testament: Exodus 14:19-31

The dividing of the sea making an escape route for the Israelites is the finale in the dramatic exodus saga. God sent Moses to Pharaoh and overcame Pharaoh's hard heart with insects, plagues, the death of Egypt's firstborn children, and finally the destruction of the Egyptian soldiers.

REFLECT-

- God demonstrated his mighty power so that the people might believe that he is God and that Moses, as his representative, was due their respect and obedience. When has a "God" event taken your breath away and reminded you dramatically of God's power to do miraculous things?

PRAY-

Lord, I thank you that you are actively at work in our lives and our world. Use me in some way today to glorify you and to do your will. Amen.

Tuesday, September 9, 2014

READ- The Psalter: Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21

In response to God's triumph for Israel over Egypt's army, Moses' sister Miriam sings a song of praise to God. This is one of the oldest Israelite poems included in our scriptures. All the women joined her in joyful dancing celebrating God's triumph for them over those who had oppressed them for so long.

REFLECT-

- "Thank you, Lord, for saving us." That is the essence of this song of praise. How often in your life have you prayed some form of this prayer? God steps into our lives in the most amazing and unlikely ways and changes everything. Give thanks to God for all those times he has "saved" you.

PRAY-

O God, too often I take your loving care for me for granted and don't even stop to say "thank you". Thank you for all the ways, great and small, that you have shaped and redeemed me. Amen.

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

READ- The Epistle: Romans 14:1-12

In the melting pot of newly converted Gentiles with Jews in the young Roman church, there was much difference of opinion on acceptable behavior for new Christians. Some had an issue with eating meat that may have been sacrificed to pagan idols, there was often no way to know in the public market. They also had different ideas about when the Sabbath day should be observed. These differences caused friction in the congregation.

REFLECT-

- What are things that cause disagree between Christians today? What are the "hot button" issues that cause congregations to divide and Christians to pass judgment on one another today? Based on this text, what would Paul's advice to us be in that regard?

PRAY-

Father, help me to be loving – even to those with whom I may disagree – for you are the only true and righteous judge. Amen.

Thursday, September 11, 2014

READ- The Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus tells a parable to his disciples here to illustrate the HUGE importance of forgiveness in the kingdom of God. In a Jewish society which had become legalistic and quick to judge, Jesus illustrates the generosity of God's forgiveness to us which God expects us to show to others. If we do not, we can lose God's forgiveness.

REFLECT-

- God has forgiven you. Is there someone whom you need to forgive? Are you still nursing an old hurt or grudge? Do you justify your lack of forgiveness because that person does not "deserve it" or has not changed their ways?

PRAY-

O God, help me to offer forgiveness to these person(s) who have hurt me or done me wrong in the past. Take away my anger and hurt. Amen.

Friday, September 12, 2014

ACT-

Focus Verse: Exodus 15:2

The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him.

Too often we rely upon our own strength to get through the things we encounter in our lives. What would it mean to rely entirely upon God as your strength as you go about your day today? It starts with your prayers. What problems or concerns can you release to God right now? Offer them in prayer. What guidance or discernment do you need from God today? Ask for that now in prayer. Who do you know who needs God's strength for healing, sorrow or challenges in their life? Lift them up right now to God in prayer. What has God done for you recently – how has his strength carried you just when you needed it? Offer your praise and thanksgiving to God now in prayer for his saving power.