

Read - Think - Pray

Proper 8A, 27 June - 1 July 2011, Prepared by: Angus Kelly

Monday

Psalm

Psalm 13

Think:

'How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?'

Some people have a constant positive experience of God's presence. Others don't.

Those who don't often feel that there is something wrong with them; but maybe they're just different.

Pray:

If you're someone who feels God's presence constantly, or more than others - ask God to help you use that gift to bless those around you. Most importantly do it sensitively.

In my experience many people feel far from God most of the time. If you're feeling far or disconnected; keep praying that you would know God's constant love more and more.

Tuesday

Old Testament

Genesis 22:1-14

Think:

When reading passages like Genesis 22 it is important to remember that texts like this came from a world that saw things very differently to the way we see them. Child sacrifice was quite common in Abraham's time; and even later it was rife among the Israelites - and so in Isaiah 57:5 people are condemned for sacrificing their children.

What is important is the symbol of what Abraham does; he offers all of his hopes and dreams - embodied in Isaac - to God.

Pray:

Pray that God would give you 'hopes and dreams' in keeping with his will.

Pray that we would be able to surrender our hopes and desires into his hands.

Wednesday

Epistle

Romans 6:12-23

Think:

Paul got into trouble with one section of the church because he advocated the abolition of the law - he encouraged Gentile converts not to get circumcised or follow Kosher diets. In response - some said he was anti law - promoting self indulgence.

Paul argues for freedom from sin, apart from the law, this freedom comes naturally when we continually offer ourselves completely to Christ.

Pray:

How have we sinned?

Have we desired things we should not have desired?

Have we not loved as we should have loved?

Confess your brokenness to God - and ask that he would help us to offer ourselves completely to him.

Thursday

Gospel

Matthew 10:40-42

Think:

These verses appear in the context of Jesus' sending out his disciples to proclaim the Kingdom as a part of his ministry.

As we live the Kingdom life - not everything is easy. Sharing what we have - caring for those who are difficult to love is hard work.

But Jesus promises a worthwhile reward - Paul in Romans yesterday called that reward 'eternal life.'

Pray:

Life can seem quite empty.

It doesn't reflect the fullness of 'eternal life.'

Pray that God would help us to have the courage to share what we have (not just our 'stuff' but our gifts and resources). And know our reward.

Friday

Next week's gospel

Matthew 11:16-30

Think:

16-19 speaks of how quickly we complicate simple things. Jesus comes offering love - and in our criticism we only see how it will not work; we are blinded to God's action in the world. The result is 20-24.

On the other hand - we can come to Jesus like children; in our weariness and brokenness and be fed.

Pray:

Lord, help us to stop being so complicated.

Help us to take you at your word.

Know that we are loved.

And learn to live as you called us to live.

Amen.

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