

Read - Think - Pray

Proper 19A, 12-16 September, Prepared by: Angus Kelly

Monday

Psalm

Psalm 103:1-14

Think:

This Psalm helps us to remember God's grace in dealing with us: '...as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.' It is important to work with God in learning to be the people we were created to be; but from time to time we will all fail - verse 14 encourages me: 'For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust.'

In your dealings with yourself and with others are you able to remember that we are dust and we need mercy?

Pray:

Spend some time thanking God for the gracious ways in which he deals with us; and commit yourself to reflecting God's grace in your dealings with others.

Tuesday

Old Testament

Genesis 50:15-21

Think:

The moment we often dream of - the opportunity for revenge! The day the school bully arrives at your office looking for work; the person who cut you off in the traffic just now is now behind you and its tempting to go slow...

When Joseph (whose brothers sold him into slavery) is in power over them he chooses to be merciful and kind.

Pray:

In verses 17 and 18 as Joseph declares forgiveness for his brothers they all have a good cry. I suppose the tears are of joy the celebration of reconciliation - but perhaps also of pain, as the brothers remember the evil, and Joseph, the trauma he experienced.

Are there areas of pain in your life for which you need to ask the Lord for healing?

Wednesday

Epistle

Romans 14:1-12

Think:

14:10 stands out for me here: 'Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.'

It is obviously much easier for us to criticise and judge others than our selves; a critical spirit creeps up on us at every opportunity; Paul encourages us to

remember that it is God who does the judging - in the mean time we must guard our motives.

Pray:

The Psalm spoke of God's removing our transgressions from us; our Old Testament reading recounted Joseph's mercy to his brothers - and the passage from Romans encourages us to leave judgment to God.

Ask god to help us become less critical of others and more intentional in practicing grace.

Thursday

Gospel

Matthew 18:21-35

Think:

This story speaks for itself in the way it challenges us. Someone is forgiven a great debt - but in his greediness refuses to forgive the debts of others. We want the benefits of living in God's Kingdom - but not the responsibility.

Pray:

Jesus taught us to pray:

'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

Friday

Next week's gospel

Matthew 20:1-16

Think:

Mercy triumphs over justice in this story; everybody needs a days wages - enough to feed oneself and one's family. The farmer pays everyone enough even though some worked a whole day and others only worked a few hours.

Its not fair some cry - but it is merciful.

Pray:

This passage rubs against most of our sensibilities; and Jesus meant it to - but he was teaching us about love and mercy.

Pray that we would learn to live with God's sense of mercy and love in our dealings with others.

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