



Daily Meditations July 29 - August 3, 2019

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 1 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Pat Gillory, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT, PROPER 12:

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

I Am with You

Monday, July 29, 2019

[Psalms 56, 57, 58](#)

"O Most High, when I am afraid, I put my trust in you." - [Psalm 56:2b-3](#)

This verse from Psalm 56 reminds me how limited my prayer life is! I mean, I pray often, several times during the day...but when I'm worried or anxious, particularly about those I love, then I *really* begin to pray! But Jesus makes it clear that he is always with us, in good times and in bad, even "to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:30).

So why do I worry so much?

Rock of Ages

Tuesday, July 30, 2019

[Psalms 61, 62](#)

"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation..." - [Psalm 61:1-2a](#)

As my soul was "waiting in silence" this morning after reading this psalm, the image came to mind of Old Baldy, the towering rock overlooking all of Wimberley. As it is in the Holy Land, we here in the Hill Country are surrounded by rock: limestone cliffs, river bottoms and outcroppings, as well as an overabundance of rock underlying the too-shallow soil of our gardens. This image of rock resounds throughout Scripture: "Rock of Ages," "There is no Rock like our God," "You are my Rock and my salvation." "On

this Rock I will build my church"... just to name a few. In uncertain times like this, when we seem to be surrounded by senseless violence and voices of hatred and bigotry we look desperately for a Rock to cling to...and we have One.

As Julian of Norwich wrote in the late 14th century: "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well." And she wrote that in the midst of bubonic plagues, continuing warfare, and grinding poverty.

America!

Wednesday, July 31, 2019

Psalms 72

"May there be an abundance of grain in the land; may it wave on the tops of the mountains; may its fruit be like Lebanon." - [Psalm 72:16a](#)

At the glorious Fourth of July concert with the Wimberley Community Chorus and the Hill Country Band, we all sang together.

*O beautiful, for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain...*

The composer of "America the Beautiful" must have had today's psalm in mind when he wrote those stirring lyrics. What a joy it was to sing together with our audience this hymn to our great country! It was truly a time to set aside our partisan and political differences, which are raucous and profound in these pre-election days, and indeed pray that God may shed his grace on us all -- Republican, Democrat, rich, poor, long-time resident or newly arrived immigrant. Amen!

Searching for God

Thursday, August 1, 2019

Psalms 70, 71

"O God, do not be far from me..." - [Psalm 70:12a](#)

The psalmist is here expressing a familiar sentiment: that God has somehow moved away from us, and it is up to us to somehow convince him to come back. Even Jesus in his anguish desperately called out "My God, why have you forsaken me" (Mark 15:34), right before his death and resurrection.

The first words that Jesus speaks in the Gospel of Mark are "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand..." (Mark 1:15). In a dialog with one of the scribes, the scribe tells Jesus that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord with all your heart, understanding and strength, and to love one's neighbor as one's self." Jesus replies that the man "is not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34).

How close is God to us? Jesus tells us "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). So, the answer to the psalmist plea seems to be: If you are feeling that God is far away or has abandoned us, then reach out in love to help someone...there we will surely find God.

Rescue Me

Friday, August 2, 2019

Psalms 69

"But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me. With your faithful help rescue me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters." - [Psalm 69:13-14](#)

The beginning of this verse belies its ending. The prayer begins asking for God's help and seems to say "No rush. I'll just wait patiently for you to get around to helping me." But the remainder of the verse is probably a more authentic understanding of the Psalmist's dilemma: "No rush, Lord, but I'm sinking in quicksand and my enemies are lighting the fire under the pot of boiling oil!" As Psalm 69:1 puts it, "the waters have come up to my neck!"

How true this is for me. Usually my intercessory prayers are rather calm and measured, asking for safe travel or health or protection for my loved ones. But let one of them fall seriously ill or be in trouble, and I'm praying fervently and asking God to intervene right now! But the real message of this psalm gives patient assurance that God will act, but just not on my timetable. I have to learn to live with that.

The Earth Totters

Saturday, August 3, 2019

Psalms 75, 76

"When the earth totters, with all its inhabitants, it is I who keep its pillars steady." - [Psalm 75:3](#)

As I write this, southern California is being shaken by a powerful magnitude 7 earthquake, followed by even stronger aftershocks. One local resident near the center of the quakes told of sleeping outside with his family, because they feared their home might come crashing down around them.

About 50 years ago I lived only five miles from the San Andreas fault, the major contributor to the devastating San Francisco earthquake of 1906. During the two years I lived there, I never felt a tremor. Aside from the physical destruction they cause, one of the most terrifying aspects of earthquakes is the anxiety and uncertainty and randomness.

It is truly a time to surround the victims with our prayers, and to reach out to help where we can.

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