



Daily Meditations

November 2-7, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, 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 26

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prologue

Lately, I have been praying the Lord's Prayer in expanded fashion. After each phrase, I pause and meditate upon the words or talk to God about what I find there for the given day. This week I would like to approach the Psalms in light of this prayer. The Psalms were the hymns and prayer book of the Hebrew people. When his disciples asked Jesus how to pray, he gave them the prayer we know so well, but I believe it was already there in their ancient stories and songs. Please pray the Psalms with me this week.

Our Father, God Most High

Monday, November 2, 2020

Psalms 56-58

*"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!
Let your glory be over all the earth!" - Psalm 57:5 & 11*

"Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." As we begin the Lord's Prayer with this phrase, we are reminded that our Lord God is as close as a loving father and yet omnipresent, everywhere, and to be regarded as holy, set apart.

Praying Psalm 57, we plead with God the Father to be merciful to us in confidence that he will be our refuge, that we will ultimately be safe in the shadow of God's wings. There may be storms of destruction all around, but the loving Father God

will fulfill his purpose for his beloved children. God will send forth from heaven and save. This Holy and Mighty God is to be exalted above the heavens. May his glory be over all the earth!

Our Day is in God's Hands

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us." - Psalm 62:8

Psalms 61-62

Turning to our own needs we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." We find this plea when we pray Psalm 62. Our God is a God of relationship, and his desire is that we draw near. Sometimes that requires waiting for him alone in silence. Then we might see his salvation and know that we can turn to him as a rock and a fortress. We will not be "greatly shaken." We can trust in him at all times and pour out our hearts before him; he is our refuge.

The prayer for daily bread is a good place to pray for the daily needs of others as well. We have a powerful God who longs to be in relationship with each of his beloved, a God of steadfast love. This is something we can count on day by day. "Trust in him at all times, O people."

The Whole Earth is Filled with God's Glory!

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Psalm 72

"For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity of the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy." - Psalm 72:12-13

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What will this be like? The time when God's kingdom comes in its fullness. We are told that the mountains will bear prosperity for the people, God will defend the cause of the poor and give deliverance to the children of the needy. This will be a time when God will deliver the needy, the poor, and the weak from the oppression and violence. Are they not each precious to Lord God?

In this prayer "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," I hear a call to action. Yes, the day will come when God takes care of all of this, but in the present, God is calling us to help. We can surely do this in our prayers by remembering all the many categories of needy in our community and world today. Some of us are able to give funds that help the many fine organizations whose mission is to help others. Perhaps our own St. Stephen's Church will find new ways to reach out and deliver the needy.

After all, *"Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which He looks Compassion on this world."* - St. Teresa of Avila (attributed)

God is Our King

Thursday, November 5, 2020

Psalms 70-71

"My mouth is filled with your praise, and with your glory all the day." - Psalm 71:8

"For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever." This concluding phrase that gives all glory to God is not in the original text of Matthew's gospel. It was added later as a fitting conclusion. NT Wright tells us it was already well established as part of the prayer a century or so after Jesus' day. According to Wright, it's inconceivable in the Jewish praying style that Jesus would have intended the prayer to conclude with "deliver us from evil."

Praying with Psalm 71, we learn that our task is to praise God continually. To fill our mouths with his glory all day long. We can tell of his righteous acts and his deeds of salvation, though they are far more than we can count. St. Paul reminds us of this when he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). Our God has taught us from our youth, and in our old age he will not forsake us. So let us praise him on musical instruments and with our lips so that our lives and our souls may shout for joy. Constant praise is not my usual orientation, but I'm sure going to try it.

God is Our Deliverer

Friday, November 6, 2020

Psalm 69

"Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters." - Psalm 69:14

"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." Temptation is real, evil is real, and we need deliverance.

We skipped right over this difficult part of the prayer, but Psalm 69 brings us back to it. Here the psalmist expresses distress in a time when it seems the water is up to his neck, and he is weary with crying out waiting for God. We have all known these times and will likely know them again. The times when we feel like we're sinking in the mire, the deep waters or the pit.

You may even feel this way today about your personal life or the state of God's people, God's world. Or perhaps a friend or loved one is in dire circumstances. During these times in life, we can rely on God's steadfast love and his abundant mercy. This also brings us another way to use the prayer that Jesus gave us. Today our son, David, had surgery. The surgery was successful, thankfully, but this morning I use the Lord's Prayer to pray for him in this way. "David's father who art is heaven hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come for David, thy will be done for David" and so on. This use of the prayer was taught to me many years ago by a dear priest friend. It's a good way to bring the prayer close, to make it personal. Perhaps, you know someone you can pray for this way today.

Bring Gifts to God

Saturday, November 7, 2020

Psalm 75-76

"let all around him bring gifts" - Psalm 76:11

As we end the week, let us think again of God's kingdom and give thanks, for he is near at difficult times, and truly we are in some of those times. Yes, when it seems that the earth totters, it is God who keeps the pillars steady. Let us sing praises to his name and declare his faithfulness. For our Lord is glorious and more majestic than the mountains. Let all around him bring gifts. And here we are in stewardship season. Consider prayerfully the gifts you can bring to God through the worship and ministries of St. Stephen's Church.

You might have noticed that we skipped "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Confession wasn't prominent in this week's Psalms readings, but when you need it, look at Psalm 51, great King David's humble confession before the God he loved. David was one who knew that no matter what he did, God maintained steadfast love for him. That's true for you and me too!

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