



Daily Devotionals February 11-16, 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: Judy Aronow, Janice Bachardy, Pat Gillory, Frances McMaster, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T. Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

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

COLLECT EPIPHANY 5:

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Choose

Monday, February 11, 2019

[Isaiah 58:1-12](#)

"Is not this the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the throngs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" - Isaiah 58:6

Isaiah is excoriating his people for arguing over the procedural niceties of the proper way to fast as part of their religious duties, while their real concern should be outrage over the widespread injustice and lack of concern for the oppressed and the poor. His argument seems particularly timely for us as our television screens have been filled with heart-rending stories of unpaid government workers standing in lines of food pantries and filled with anxiety over their inability to pay their rent or buy needed medications, all because of a government shutdown over a political argument. Regardless of your political leanings, this is clearly a time for compassion for our citizens and neighbors in distress.

Ears to Dull to Hear

Tuesday, February 12, 2019

[Isaiah 59:1-15a](#)

"See, the Lord's hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you..." - [Isaiah 59:1-2a](#)

Isaiah seems to be answering the perennial question: "Why doesn't God hear my prayers and do something about this mess?" His answer is that the problem

isn't on God's side of the equation, but on ours. If you've ever tried Christian contemplative prayer or other forms of meditation, you know what Isaiah's talking about. Just sit calmly in a quiet place and try to listen for that still, small voice--what Ezekiel called the "sound of sheer silence." You will be overwhelmed with the noise and chatter of your own mind. In a world where we are always plugged in, always seduced by the next beep of our smartphone or that next enticing email, it's hard to disengage enough to realize that God is always here and always ready to listen. We are the ones with "ears too dull to hear."

Unbroken Chain

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

Isaiah 59:15b-21

"...My spirit that is upon you, and the words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouths of your children, or out of the mouths of your children's children, says the Lord, from now on and forever." - [Isaiah 59:21b](#)

Recently we had our monthly Family Worship Sunday, and as we all said the creeds and the prayers together, I was struck with the idea that there were as many as four generations repeating these sacred words together. And from the time of Jesus, it has always been so. The Word has been passed from generation to generation in an unbroken chain of Christian witness. May we always continue to celebrate that unbroken chain that binds us together.

Searching for God

Thursday, February 14, 2019

Isaiah 60:1-17

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." - [Isaiah 60:1](#)

"Rise and shine!" How well I remember those words from my father on many early mornings in my young childhood. Only much later as an adult have I realized the biblical origin of that greeting.

In this case, the cheerful greeting is from the prophet Isaiah to his people of Judah who have been in captivity in Babylon for 40 years. He is emphasizing to them that their long night of waiting for salvation is now over, and the Lord is about to lead them back to Jerusalem to begin rebuilding their lives. *Rise and shine indeed!*

Calling Back in Love

Friday, February 15, 2019

Isaiah 61:1-9

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted..." - [Isaiah 61:1-2](#)

If there was ever any doubt about his mission, Jesus made it clear in his inaugural sermon at his hometown synagogue in Nazareth. Fresh from his 40 days of contemplation in the desert after his baptism, Jesus chose this verse from Isaiah to launch his message of hope and compassion. He did not come as a triumphal Messiah, riding on a white horse to drive the hated Roman oppressors out of Palestine. He did not come to fulfill the promise of riches and

power to those who had the correct belief system. He came instead to bring good news to the downtrodden, broken people desperately in need of a message of hope and the good news that God had not forgotten his people, but contrary to all appearances he was calling them back to him in love.

Look for the Robins

Saturday, February 16, 2019

Isaiah 61:10-62:5

"For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations." -Isaiah 61:11

Even though it's the middle of winter, with tonight's temperature forecast to drop below freezing, there are signs of the coming spring. The robins have arrived on schedule, and flocks of goldfinches will soon appear, as well a few brave, early black-chinned hummingbirds. Bluebonnet rosettes, at least the ones the deer have overlooked, are springing up. Soon our Texas redbud trees will be covered with pink blossoms, a sure sign of spring. No matter whether the government is shut down, despite the divisive rhetoric emerging from Washington and our smartphone screens, God's creating again favors us with its beauty.

May the righteousness and praise that Isaiah is calling for spring up as well.

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