



## Daily Meditations September 23-28, 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, 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 20:

*Grant us, O Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

### Just Do the Next Right Thing Monday, September 23, 2019

#### Psalm 80

*"You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved." Psalm 80:6-7*

At a time when our national political discourse seems to be sinking to new lows, our prestige as the free world's strongest voice for democracy is fading, our allies no longer trust us and our adversaries seem to be strengthening, it is useful to step back and realize we've been here before.

Things were not going well in ancient Israel for the psalmist's audience, either. How do we convince God to "let your face shine, that we might be saved?" It occurs to me that for us to see God's shining face, his face must be turned toward us and our faces must be turned towards God. We are repeatedly assured in Scripture that God's face is always turned toward us; we must be the ones who are looking away. Perhaps a first step is to stop fretting so much over our own problems and look for God in the face of our neighbors who need our help. As one of the members of our Bible study group put it, "Just do the next right thing." If we can live moment by moment always trying to do the "next right thing," eventually we will find ourselves stringing together a lifetime of moments where the face of God is shining on us.

### Remembering Tuesday, September 24, 2019

#### Psalm 78:1-39

*"They forgot what he [God] had done and the miracles that he had shown them." - Psalm 78:11*

Many of us are reading Richard Rohr's latest book, *The Universal Christ*. In the opening pages, he recounts Caryll Houselander's "vision" of seeing

Christ in everything she encounters. But she finds that after a few days the vision faded. "Christ was hidden again; indeed, through the years to come I would have to seek for Him, and usually I would find Him in others - and still more to myself -- only through a deliberate and blind act of faith."

When we look carefully at our lives, we can see that the living Christ has poured out so many blessings on us...but we forget. We get so caught up in our daily round of urgent problems and worries that we forget all the good things God has done for us. That's one good reason for us to reconnect with each other at least every Sunday in worship...to help us remember!

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## Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

### Psalm 119:97-120

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." - Psalm 119:95 KJV*

I've quoted this verse from the King James version to help us recognize how familiar it is to us. It also is the name of a well-loved hymn we frequently sing. In *The Universal Christ*, Richard Rohr reminds us that "light is not something we see directly; it is more *something by which we see other things*. In other words, we have faith *in* Christ so we can have the faith *of* Christ. We need to look at Jesus until we can look out at the world with his kind of eyes. The world no longer trusts Christians who "love Jesus" but do not seem to love anything else."

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## Recipe for Peace?

Thursday, September 26, 2019

### Psalm 83

*"Let them know that you alone, whose name is Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth." - Psalm 83:1*

These are turbulent times. All political discourse, both here and abroad, seems to be more and more an exercise in conflict, with adherents of both the left and the right moving farther to the extremes. The language of our political discourse is becoming more coarse and demeaning of those who disagree with each other. And now that the genie of prejudice, racism, and hatred are out of the bottle, it is difficult to know how to put it back in again.

But the Bible reminds us that the current wave of political tribalism is not new. In today's reading, the psalmist calls for God to punish a long list of Israel's enemies. The writer of Psalm 83 ends with the right prescription -- recognizing that only Yahweh is sovereign over all the earth -- but his call for punishment and shame for Israel's enemies scarcely seems to be a recipe for peace.

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## A Psalm for Every Emotion

Friday, September 27, 2019

### Psalm 88

*"Wretched and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am desperate." - Psalm 88:15*

It is often said that the Psalms contain the full range of human emotion, from joy, hope, adoration, and praise to anger, terror, depression, despondency, and hopelessness. Perhaps that is the reason that the monks at most Benedictine monasteries sing the entire cycle of 150 psalms twice a month. It reminds us that no matter what is going on in our lives, we can find a psalm that is appropriate for our emotional state. It is a

## Prayer Moses

Saturday, September 28, 2019

### **Psalm 87, 90**

*"Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil." - Psalm 90:13-15*

The remarkable thing about Psalm 90 is its epigraph: A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. This is the only psalm in the Psalter that is attributed to Moses. Almost all the rest are ascribed to David.

Think back over Moses' extraordinary life of service to Yahweh, from the time of his calling from the burning bush, through the terrifying confrontations with Pharaoh conveying Yahweh's demand to "let my people go," through the awesome parting of the Sea of Reeds to let the people of Israel escape from sure destruction at the hands of Pharaoh's army, through the years of frustrating whines and complaints by the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, to the final frustration of not being allowed to accompany the Israelites into the Promised Land. It is not hard to understand Moses' final request in this psalm to "make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us." Moses probably felt that Yahweh still owed him many happy days on his account!

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