

WEEK FOUR

Monday, March 21

Reading: Isaiah 55:3 *Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.*

Thought: This is God talking to you. The prophet Isaiah has a timeless message in this verse and is telling you what you need to do to receive all that God will provide. We need to listen, we need to move towards God, and we need to hear God as well as simply listen. There are many ways that God sends messages. Trusted advisors such as our pastor can deliver those messages as can our spiritual friends and reading scripture. Don't let those messages drift by. Take the time to consider what those messages mean and where you are being called to be. Are you just listening or are you getting the message?

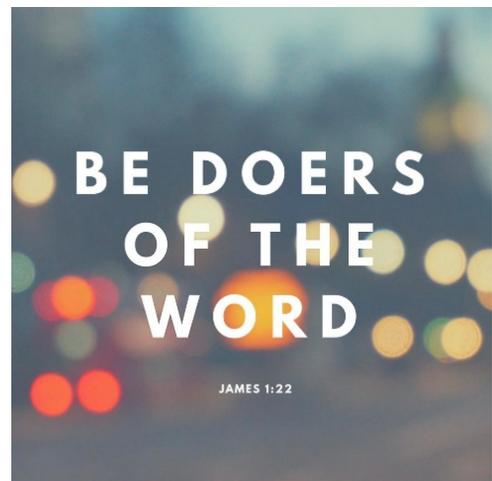
Prayer: Holy God – give me ears that hear and a heart that listens and is moved to follow you.

Tuesday, March 22

Reading: James 1:22 *Be doers of the word and not hearers only.*

Thought: We are hearing a message of journeying together as individuals within our congregation during Lent this year. This journey of faith involves a process of discerning where we are each called and led by God to serve, and in doing so discover more of who we are meant to be. Being faithful to God involves action as well as listening to and studying the word of God. This short verse in James says it all – we need to be doing the work of God as well as hearing the word of God. I repeat the question of JJ Soriano in his sermon of March 13, 'What is God saying to you and how will you respond?'

Prayer: Heavenly Father – I want to understand what you want me to do. Please tell me in a way I can understand and give me the wisdom to discern how to best act in obedience to you.



Wednesday, March 23

Reading: Psalm 63:1 *O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you*

Thought: I read somewhere that we are a body with a mind and soul, and when thought of this as I read this psalm I was reminded of another scripture ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ (Matthew 22:37). We seek God with our mind. We can also feel God with our body and in our soul. A feeling of physical fatigue in an otherwise healthy body may indicate a need for spiritual renewal. A feeling of spiritual unrest in your deepest self, your soul, definitely requires attention. Conversely, a feeling of boundless energy and renewed spirit can indicate that you have taken a step in the right direction on your journey of faith. Your body and soul may “hear” God more clearly than your mind. In the words of another wise person, ‘Let your mind understand what your body is telling you and your soul already knows.’ Are you listening with your body and soul to understand what God is telling your mind?

Prayer: Holy Spirit – help me to listen to your promptings with all my senses, including those I may be unconscious of.

Thursday, March 24

Reading: Psalm 63:6 *On my bed I remember you, I think of you through the watches of the night*

Thought: I recently became aware of the concept of a “second sleep.” Research indicates that it is normal for people to sleep in two intervals, that is, waking in the middle of the night for a period of time is a natural way of life. We can use this time to fret about our lack of sleep or in more productive ways. Sometimes I use that time to stretch my aging body, but more often I take some advice I was given long ago and use those midnight waking times to pray. I have found that this is a perfect time to ask God to care for my loved ones, to resolve conflicts and for personal guidance as well as to give thanks and praise for the blessings I have already received. What do you do when you wake in the night?

Prayer: Jesus – I know you are always with me, even in the dark when I am awake and can not sleep. Guide my thoughts to you and give me peace and rest.



Friday, March 25

Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:10-11 *And do not grumble - as some of them did – and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings to us*

Thought: This letter to the Corinthians is referencing the story of Moses and the Hebrews during their time in the desert after fleeing from slavery in Egypt. This warning about grumbling comes after a list of things to avoid, which includes idol worship, pagan revelry, and sexual immorality. Grumbling seems to be pretty innocuous compared to those more grievous sins, so you may wonder why it is included as something worthy of the death penalty. Well, I don't know about you, but when I grumble, I am usually indulging myself and it often results in justifying some unfitting action or thought. Sin is anything that separates us from God and is independent on "size." Any sin, any separation from God is something to be avoided no matter how inconsequential it may appear. What are some ways you can avoid grumbling?

Prayer: Loving God – forgive all my sins and help me to recognize them for what they are, whether they are large or small.



Saturday, March 26

Reading: Luke 10:40 *She (Martha) came to him and asked, "Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"*

Thought: Yesterday we read about grumbling and how it should be avoided. Here we have the story of Martha, who went one step further. She not only muttered under her breath, but she also gave voice and complained about what was bothering her. Jesus tells Martha that her sister has "chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her." It is interesting what Jesus doesn't say. He doesn't tell Martha that she should give up her preparations and do what her sister was doing. Jesus does say Mary has chosen something better, but he doesn't identify what that better thing is or what it is better in comparison to. Perhaps listening to Jesus was better than making dinner. Perhaps focussing on the spiritual side of life is better than being distracted by the duties of earthly life. Then again, perhaps Jesus was telling Martha that she had the gift of hospitality and that if she focussed on her serving instead coveting her sister's gift, she would find joy and satisfaction instead of envy. It is good to keep all this in mind as we seek out what we are to do in service for our church. Can you think of other explanations of what was 'better'?

Prayer: Jesus – you are the one I trust to tell me the truth when I need to hear it. Help me to understand what that truth is and what I should do in response.

Sunday, March 27

Reading: Luke 10: 41-42 *“Martha,” the Lord said, “You are worried about many things, but only one thing is needed”*

Thought: I am the kind of person that likes to have all kinds of things on the go. I also tend to get distracted. I learned long ago that an effective way to keep my life moving more smoothly is to identify every day the one or two things that I need to get done. Sometimes these things are pretty mundane. For example, the top of my list may be - tidy up and vacuum before the company arrives. This list keeps my earthly life in order. To keep my spiritual life in order I have made it a habit to do my devotions first thing every morning, and THEN outline the rest of the things I need to accomplish that day. I know that I get distracted by many things and those devotions are the one thing I truly need on an ongoing and regular basis. Do you have a one thing that you focus on? What is it?

Prayer: Jesus, companion of my heart and guide to my life – help me to identify the one thing that is needed and help me to focus and accomplish that which you desire.

