**Day 11: Terror in the land**

Read: Matthew 2: 16-28

Jesus’ birth had side effects – King Herod’s insecurity fueled his fear, and as prophecy is fulfilled, Joseph takes his little family and runs for their lives, and fear plays out…

Guided reflection:

1. Has anyone ever tried to hunt you down to destroy you?

2. What must it have been like to know that your baby was killed because the king was afraid he was a threat – your tiny baby?

3. Once again, prophecy is fulfilled by Joseph making wise decisions. We do not know how long they were in Egypt, but now the holy family takes up residence in a new community. What is it like for you to have to move from one place to another?

Guided prayer:

*“O Guiding Light, you promise to show us the way and to guide us if we seek your will. Just like Joseph, help me be wise to those around me who live in fear. I pray for people who are in danger because of someone else’s fear and hate. Amen.”*

**Day 12: Jesus at 12 yrs old**

Luke 2: 41-52

The task of the life stage of a teenager is to pull away from his/her parents and to begin to own their own thoughts and ideas. Jesus was no exception!

Guided reflection:

1. Can you remember when you began to think differently than your parents? What was the issue at hand?
2. Jesus is defining his purpose in life: to be about “His Father’s Business” – If you were Mary or Joseph, what would your reaction be?
3. reread Vs 52 – this is the only story from Jesus’ birth to adulthood – take some time to imagine what Jesus was like as a young lad…

Guided Prayer:

*“Holy and wise Parent God, I thank you for the people in my past who allowed me to think my own thoughts about my purpose in life. For those who stifled my dreams, I forgive them. Right now, protect our youth as they begin their time of self discovery. Amen”*

**Day 13: John the Baptist**

 Matt 3: 1-6; Mark 1: 1-6, Luke 3: 1-6

Now we begin the portion of Matt, Mark and Luke that collectively tell the story of Jesus’ whereabouts and teaching. Most days I will give you all three of the various references that describe that particular story. All three bring John the Baptist into view as the forerunner of Christ.

Guided reflection for day 13:

1. Do you recall, from day 2, what John’s life purpose was to be… do you see it fulfilled here?
2. Do you need to “repent” to prepare yourself for Christ in your life?
3. The way John is described to have dressed and eaten, seems like the first hippie!

Guided prayer:

*“Loving God, I would imagine John the Baptist would still have the same message for us today: Repent, prepare your heart for Christ! Help me to anticipate your work in my life –open my eyes to see where I have crooked ways that need some straightening and where I have rough edges that need some smoothing out! Let it be so! Amen!”*

**Day 14 : John’s Preaching**

Matt 3: 7-10, Luke 3: 7-14

Just take time to read the Luke portion. Luke adds a description of not only his style and content of his preaching, but adds some specific instructions to special interest groups.

Guided reflection:

1. It does not appear that John has attended any “How to win friends and influence people” seminars! What would you think if you heard this man?
2. Looking at vs 10-14 – what were the specific lifestyle changes each group was required to do to show their repentance?
3. In the 12 step recovery for alcoholics (AA), one of the steps is to name where your actions have wounded another and then go and make amends. Try it! Make your list and follow through plan!

Guided prayer:

*“Thank you, God, for blunt people who do not hesitate to speak the truth. But just as important, help me to hear the places where I need to repent and make a life style change. Amen”*

**Day 15: John preaches about Jesus**

Matt 3: 11-12. Mark 1:7-8, Luke 3: 15-18

John has no ego in what he is about – he knows he is helping folks get their hearts ready for the main course – he is just the appetizer, but Jesus is the entrée!

Guided reflection:

1. If you had been John the Baptist, would you have been able to see your place in spiritual history and focus your “disciples” away from yourself?
2. What are the two kinds of baptisms John announces? Consider: Water washes from the outside in, the spirit cleanse from the inside out!
3. What can you do to help others prepare their hearts for Christ?

Guided prayer:

*****“All Wise God, help me to know my place in our spiritual history. Where am I to be helping someone else get ready to launch their ministry? Help me open doors for others without thinking about what is in it for me. Amen”*