



## DEVOTIONS AND NOTES FOR AUGUST 11-16

### Monday, August 11 Read Psalm 23

This is of course one of the most familiar passages in the Bible. Notice that in the first three verse the psalmist is talking about his relationship to God. At v.4, after having spoken about his relationship, it shifts to a prayer, actually speaking to God. What does this psalm say about God and what does it say about the psalmist? What might it mean to you?

### Tuesday August 12 Read Daniel 7

Daniel was written for a people who were in danger of compromising their faith, who were ruled by people who worshipped other gods. What would this story have meant to them? Are you ever tempted to compromise your values and beliefs to fit in? How is Daniel an example to us today?

### Wednesday, August 13 Read Isaiah 55:6-9

Even with all the revelations God gives us of Himself, we must never forget that the whole picture is neither given to us nor are we capable of understanding the entirety of God even if it were. How might we see such mystery as essential to a growing faith and relationship with God?

### Thursday, August 14 Read Luke 18:9-14

Describe the heart of the religious leader (Pharisee). Describe the heart of the tax collector (*these were often seen as traitors since they worked for the Romans and tended to be non-religious, therefore sinners*). Which is your heart more like? Why? Why did Jesus tell this story and what does God look for in us?

### Friday, August 15 Read Philippians 1:9-11; 2:3-4 & 4:4-9

Paul wrote this letter while in prison awaiting news of his possible execution. Why does Paul pray this (1:9-11) for his readers? How does 2:3-4 apply to you? Given what he is facing, why can Paul have the joy he relates in 4:4-9? What might God need to say to you in these passages?

### Saturday, August 16 Read Genesis 12:1-9

What does Abram's call teach us about age and God's call on *our* lives? Note that Abram's most exciting period was still *ahead* of him! What does this story tell you about God's expectations of you and how you use your blessings?

### Sermon Notes

#### *"The All-In-One Formula"*

1. If knowing God through Christ is the ultimate basis for Truth, then the Bible is God's self-revelation through the experiences and history of his people on earth.

*"Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live." -2 Timothy 3:16*

#### 2. It must be understood...

- A. ...in its internal and external context as a standard for life.

*"And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless." -Philippians 1:9-10*

- B. ...as a single message in multiple forms

*"And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross." -Colossians 2:13-14*

- C...as a mystery provoking further inquiry.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." -Isaiah 55:8*



## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

### PART ONE: A CLARIFYING CONVERSATION WITH GOD

1. **Read Psalm 23** Share: "This is of course one of the most familiar passages in the Bible. Notice that in the first three verse the psalmist is talking about his relationship to God. At v.4, after having spoken about his relationship, it shifts to a prayer, actually speaking to God. " Ask and discuss the following:
  - *What does this psalm say about God and what does it say about the psalmist?*
  - *What might it mean to you?*
2. **Read Daniel 7** Share: "Daniel was written for a people who were in danger of compromising their faith, who were ruled by people who worshipped other gods. "
  - *What would this story have meant to them?*
  - *Are you ever tempted to compromise your values and beliefs to fit in?*
  - *How is Daniel an example to us today?*

### PART TWO: NURTURING A SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING

1. **Read Luke 8:19-14** Discuss: Describe the heart of the religious leader (Pharisee). Describe the heart of the tax collector (*these were often seen as traitors since they worked for the Romans and tended to be non-religious, therefore sinners*).
  - Which is your heart more like? Why?
  - Why did Jesus tell this story and what does God look for in us?
2. **Read Isaiah 55:6-9** Share: "Even with all the revelations God gives us of Himself, we must never forget that the whole picture is neither given to us nor are we capable of understanding the entirety of God even if it were. (Eugene Peterson)." Discuss:
  - *How might we see such mystery as essential to a growing faith and relationship with God?*
3. **Look at these notes from last Sunday's sermon. Discuss the questions that follow.**
  - **The Bible is God's self-revelation through the experiences and history of his people on earth.**
    - *Look at the quotes from Eugene Peterson on page 2 of this study. Do you agree with this understanding of the Bible? Why or why not?*
  - **It must be understood...**
    - \* **...in its internal and external context**
      - *Why is the context or background for the Scripture important to our understanding?*
    - \* **...as a single message in multiple forms**
      - *Does this mean that there is no one 'meaning' for a given scripture? Why or why not?*
    - \* **...as a mystery provoking further inquiry.**
      - *Why might it be important that we do NOT always understand God?*