



September 22, 2019
“Presence”

Daily Readings and Devotions for September 23-28

Monday, September 23 Read Psalm 79:1-9

The lack of devotion and faithlessness of the Israelites led to utter disaster and devastation. All that was left to them was heart-felt confession and God’s mercy. Why do we so often wait until things fail utterly before we trust in God and in God’s ways? _____

Reflect on some examples in your experience of where we put our own desires and goals above those of God? _____

Prayerfully consider: what are God’s expectations of you today? _____

Tuesday September 24 Read Amos 8:4-7

The Israelites in this verse are in a hurry to get their religious obligations over with so they can get to the more important business of making money and serving themselves, regardless of the consequences. How are those motivations still prevalent in the church today? _____

How do we serve God often with the bare minimum required and why do you think that is? _____

Wednesday, September 25 Read Luke 16:1-13

This is a difficult parable with many layers of meaning. At its core though is a reminder that we own nothing- not our materials goods, our time or even our lives. We are stewards of God’s bounty and ultimately it is that relationship that matters more than the time or goods we acquire. Meditate on vv.11-13. What do these mean, specifically, for your life and your priorities? _____

Where are *you* in this parable? _____

Why? _____

Thursday, September 26 Read Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

Note the way the prophet’s grief at the state of God’s People mingles with and reflects God’s own feelings. It reminds us that God gets no joy from seeing us go astray or from seeing the consequences we have brought on ourselves. Ours is a just but loving God. How might this understanding help us to be better disciples and evangelists?

Friday, September 27 Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7

The call to pray for secular rulers is a reminder that we are called to live in the real world as Christians, neither succumbing to its ways nor separating ourselves for being living witnesses to God’s power and presence. Prayerfully reflect on your life at home, work, school or in your neighborhood. What would those around you understand about Jesus through the way you live your life? _____

Saturday, September 28 Read Psalm 113

Just read this through a few times as your own personal prayer. In what ways is this psalm personal to you?

What does this passage tell you about God? _____

What does it tell you about humanity? _____

For Small Group Sessions:

1. Read Psalm 79:1-9 and Amos 8:4-7 aloud with your group then discuss your answers to the questions from Monday and Tuesday. Discuss the following with the group: Why is it so difficult to put God first? What might be some first steps to try to keep ourselves from the same mistakes as the Israelites in these verses?
2. Read Luke 16:1-13 aloud and share the questions and answers from Wednesday’s reading. Is Jesus calling us to be dishonest in our dealings here? If not, what is he calling us to?