

Monday: Psalm 68: 1-10, 32-25. Critical to interpreting this psalm are verses 5 - 6. This psalm can seem like a mindless triumphal rant, with a “spoils to the victor” kind of message. But this is not God “showing off” or simply flexing divine muscles. It is a metaphor of divine warrior, but this warrior comes to the side of the orphan and widow, the homeless and the captive. God, as so often in scripture, is on the side of those most vulnerable and needy. What does this tell us about our task?

Tuesday: Acts 1: 6-14. Have you ever heard the expression that “some Christians are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good”? That is at least in part the lesson from this text from Acts. The disciples are caught with their eyes looking “heavenward” when two messengers appear and confront them. They have work to do. They have a Holy Spirit encounter ahead. What might the Holy Spirit be ready to do in you this season?

Wednesday: 1 Peter 4: 12 - 14; 5: 6-11. Most people don’t look forward to suffering; it is usually something to be avoided. The author of this scripture says that followers of Jesus, even if they don’t look forward to it, should expect it. The readers of this letter were experiencing persecution because of their faith. It came in the form of at least verbal attacks, accusations of wrong-doing, and maybe physical attack. These, says the author, will be ways God “purifies” them, like metal refined by fire. When have you experienced suffering and challenges in ways that it changed you for the better? Do you think God uses suffering in this way?

Thursday: John 17:1-11. As Rick emphasized on Sunday, John’s gospel is filled with phrases emphasizing the “sending God.” This is often phrased as the “missio Dei” - the mission of God. Furthermore, as the “Father has sent the Son,” so the Son sends his followers. We too are sent. We represent the ongoing presence, work and will of God in the world, not just as individuals, but as the church, together. What has been your experience of being “sent” by God? Where do you think God needs you to go today?

Friday: Activity - Explore the theological idea of “missio Dei” more. You’ll find plenty of sources online. What would it mean for the church to put “mission” at the center, as its organizing principle, so that other aspects of church (worship, community, discipleship) then were guided by that. How would worship, community and spiritual formation be different? How would your walk of faith change?

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