

Daily Bible Readings for August 1 (10th Sunday after Pentecost)
(Today's Date: July 25, 2010)

Monday—Read Hosea 11:1-11

Hosea preaches to Israel, urging God's people to remember that they are God's people, that they are owned and claimed by God. This remembrance will lead Israel to repent and return to the Lord. Hosea compares God's love for Israel to the love parents have for their children. Whether teaching toddlers to walk or dealing with a child's rebellion, good parents continue to love their children as they try to lead them to life. In the same way, God's love will not let Israel go. What in God's character and covenant prompt him to turn from his plan to destroy Israel (v. 9; see Deuteronomy 4:27-31)?

Tuesday—Read Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

The teacher of wisdom who wrote Ecclesiastes sees that working for mere accumulation of wealth turns life into an empty game, a "vanity of vanities." Nevertheless, he asserts in the next verse, it is good to find enjoyment in one's work because such enjoyment is a gift from God. Where has the teacher searched for wisdom (vv. 12-14)? Where have you searched for meaning? Who is said to be the real beneficiary of someone's work (vv. 18-21)? Do you see your work as a gift from God, as drudgery, or both?

Wednesday— Read Psalm 49:1-12

What do you think is the "riddle" of which the psalmist speaks? In what do some people trust (vv. 6, 11)? What reality are they missing? How is that world view expressed today? Do you believe "the best things in life are free"?

Thursday—Read Colossians 3:1-11

Life in Christ includes a radical reorientation of our values. Just as the newly baptized shed their old clothes in order to put on new garments, so Christians are called to let go of greed and take hold of a life shaped by God's love in Christ. How is setting your mind and heart on Christ related to what he has already done for us (v. 1)? We get all too used to "earthly nature" clothing. Which aspect of your old nature feels like a comfortable old T-shirt to you now? Why is it difficult to shed or remove?

Friday—Read Luke 12:13-21

In God's reign, the "rich will be sent away empty." Jesus uses a parable to warn against identifying the worth of one's life with the value of one's possessions rather than one's relationship with God. What was your greatest ambition when you were 18 years old? What is your greatest ambition now? In what way can you be "rich toward God" (v. 21)? What is the lesson for you from this parable?

Prayer throughout the week

Benevolent God, you are the source, the guide, and the goal of our lives.
Teach us to love what is worth loving, to reject what is offensive to you,
and to treasure what is precious in your sight, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.