

June 25th Readings

GENESIS 50:1-26

EXODUS 1:1-2:10

MATTHEW 16:13-17:9

PSALM 21:1-13

PROVERBS 5:1-6

My God Is So Great

A favorite children's Bible song is, "My God is so great, so strong and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do." They are in good company in their belief that God is strong. Noah, Job, and Moses knew God's strength. The apostles saw God's greatness demonstrated through Jesus' power over nature, illness, and even death.

Christ's determination to provide a way of salvation for us and His conviction to fulfill God's entire plan is what gave Him the ability to endure that mockery of a trial. It gave Him the courage to hang on that cross. It gave Him the right to cry out, "It is finished." Indeed, His suffering was finished, but our salvation was not yet assured. Jesus died – everyone dies.

Oh, but when He came from that tomb! When He was restored to life, that was the miracle of all miracles! That was the miracle that gives us hope of salvation.

In Psalm 21, David said, "Be exalted, O Lord, in Your strength! We will sing and praise Your power.

So...little children sing, "My God is so great, so strong and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do for you."

June 26th Readings

EXODUS 2:11-3:22

MATTHEW 17:10-27

PSALM 22:1-18

PROVERBS 5:7-14

I Am Who I Am

God answered Moses' question in words that are short; in such a simple sentence. Yet, the depth of that answer has confounded man for all time. Moses knew he wanted to know God better. He had spent more time with God than any other human, yet he wanted to see His glory. God knew Moses could not live through such an experience, so He let Moses see His back.

Then Jesus came to this earth in a human body. He came to give us a way to know more about God. He said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus let people see his face; he let them touch him, and he touched them. He used many names to describe himself; here are a few:

Way, Truth and Life

Good Shepherd

Bread of Life

Great High Priest

Savior

Resurrection and Life

How long could we study each of these names and still not know all about God? For the rest of our lives! But, you can know this: we have seen the face of God.

June 27th Readings

EXODUS 4:1-5:21

MATTHEW 18:1-20

PSALM 22:19-31

PROVERBS 5:15-21

The Good Shepherd

This area has been sheep and goat country a long time. I know almost nothing about sheep ranching, but I have heard ranchers express negative thoughts about the intelligence of the animals. "They are born just looking for a place to die!" Maybe, when Jesus was telling the story of the shepherd who had 100 sheep and one had gotten lost, he got a lot of sympathetic nods from the shepherds in the crowd. Jesus indicates that the shepherd would search for that one sheep even if it were cold or hot, day or night. He would go to dangerous places to find that lost lamb.

Jesus does not have to prove to us that he is a good shepherd. He has already laid down His life for us (yes, we are the dumb sheep in this story). I wonder if the shepherd ever got tired of looking for lost sheep. I wonder if he ever wished he had taken up another profession. I wonder if he ever considered, even just for a moment, not going after that stubborn sheep that would not stay with the herd.

How about, just for today, we try to be sheep that Jesus would be happy to have in his flock?

June 28th Readings

EXODUS 5:22-7:25

MATTHEW 18:21-19:12

PSALM 23:1-6

PROVERBS 5:22-23

The Lord Is My Shepherd

The 23rd Psalm is a favorite of many people. It is such a calm and comforting picture; you probably have a vision of how the green pastures and quiet waters look. Like most of the Psalms, it was written from the past experience of the writer. David had served as a shepherd. He knew what the sheep needed, what would help them to be at peace. When he spoke of the lurking dangers, he put the shepherd between the sheep and whatever the trial might be: dark places, treacherous pathways, or wild animals who only wanted to kill and destroy the sheep. He spoke of the relationship the shepherd had with his sheep. They were dumb animals, so far beneath his intellect and abilities. Yet he cared for them; he loved them enough to risk his life for them. When they desired to go astray, he had to use the rod or staff to bring them back into the fold, but that was in their best interest also.

Let's thank the Lord for this care he provides, so we can claim that promise: "And I will live in the house of the Lord forever."

June 29th Readings

EXODUS 8:1-9:35

MATTHEW 19:13-30

PSALM 24:1-10

PROVERBS 6:1-5

One More Night with the Frogs

God had just begun to bring plagues upon Egypt. The plague of water to blood had lasted seven days. Then Moses went to Pharaoh with the warning of the plague of frogs. Pharaoh was told how frogs were going to be EVERYWHERE! But Pharaoh did not believe.

So, the frogs came; millions of frogs. Pharaoh called for deliverance from the invasion. Moses replied, "I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you ... to be rid of the frogs." Pharaoh replied, "Tomorrow."

TOMORROW!! Pharaoh, are you crazy? You want to share your pillow with frogs another night? You want a frog staring up at you from your cereal bowl in the morning? You want to hear one more "squish" as you step on the slimy creatures? Why?

Why, indeed. Why do you live with your "frog" one more day? Why do you carry it in your pocket another minute? Pharaoh could have been done with frogs that instant if he had asked Moses to pray to the Lord. Why don't you ask the Lord to help you with your frogs? Breakfast will be a lot better!

June 30th Readings

EXODUS 10:1-12:13

MATTHEW 20:1-28

PSALM 25:1-15

PROVERBS 6:6-11

Become a Servant

The wedding was going well until the preacher asked the bride, "Do you take this man for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness or in health?" She replied, "I'll take better, richer, and healthy."

Some of Jesus' apostles were asking for the same "cafeteria style" of life. (Matthew 20:24) They wanted to be up front; to be the ones served, not the servants. Interesting – they had been with Jesus three years, had they ever seen that attitude in Jesus? He definitely had all

authority; he had said that. But he served... the sick, the sinful, the poor and the hungry. He was saddened that the apostles still had this mindset. Remember at the last supper when He washed the apostles' feet? Trying again to show that a life with Jesus means a life of selflessness, of service.

Not a popular idea in our culture. Apparently not so in the days of Jesus either – or any other time! God gives us the choice to exalt ourselves, but it will be a short-lived victory. Are you in this race for the 50 yard dash, or for the 20k endurance race? Choose wisely – your eternal life depends on it.

July 1st Readings

EXODUS 12:14-13:16

MATTHEW 20:29-21:22

PSALM 25:16-22

PROVERBS 6:12-15

In God's Own Time

We are an impatient people. We fuss at our computers; we carry our phones with us because we might miss an important call; we are frustrated with slow drivers because we are IN A HURRY!

God does not work that way. Do you suppose He is ever tired/sad at how we push against His will because we are so impatient? “Jesus, You said that You would return and take us home out of all this mess. Where are you? It has been thousands of years!”

I wonder what Abraham thought when God told him to not worry; his children would only be in captivity for 400 years. Four hundred years! How many of Abraham's descendants lived and died under Egyptian captivity? How could that be fair?

“The length of time the Israelites lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the Lord's divisions left Egypt.... All the Israelites did just what the Lord commanded. And on that day the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt” (Exodus 12:40, 50).

Be patient... God keeps his promises – on His timetable!