

Jesus & the Gentiles

Begin with PPRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Monday, 6/23/08 – Read Isaiah 49:5-6

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: This week let's look at the way Jesus related to people who were not Jews. But we begin with one of the Hebrew scriptures grand predictions of the character of the messiah: "I will give you as a light to the nations." God's good news is not just for the Jews or any one group or race. It is for the nations. ... Right now Christian faith is spreading rapidly in Asia, especially in China. ... Do you think of Christian faith as a universal faith? Or do you think of it mainly in American or European terms? ... What difference would it make if we took seriously that the good news is for "the nations"?

Tuesday, 6/24/08 – Read Matthew 2:1-12

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: When Jesus was still an infant, he was visited the wise men -- probably Persian astrologers. God's activity in Jesus began even in his infancy. God's reaching out to all God's people began while Jesus was still a baby. These foreigners were welcomed at the cradle of the infant Lord. ... How does that strike you? In your heart will you welcome the foreigners as the holy infant did?

Wednesday, 6/25/08 – Read Matthew 15:21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: In today's reading Jesus discovers great faith in this Canaanite (Gentile, non-Jewish) woman. Notice her persistence and the way she responds to Jesus. ... Have you ever discovered faith in someone you did not expect to have faith? What was that discovery like for you? Did you have to re-evaluate your classifications of people because of that discovery? Did you have to change an attitude?

Thursday, 6/26/08 – Read Matthew 8:5-13

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Look at the way this Roman centurion responds to Jesus! Here is another example of the way people responded to Jesus. Jesus is already bringing light to the nations -- in the person of this Roman. Do you see God's light for the nations being brought to people today? Can you think of a specific example? Is there a way you can support the spread of God's light for the nations?

Friday, 6/27/08 – Read Luke 10:25-37

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The punchline of Jesus' famous story of the "good Samaritan" is in verse 33. The good, religious people (the ones expected to be compassionate) didn't respond to the beaten man. It was the Samaritan who responded with compassion. Samaritans were not "real Jews." They were descendents of those who had intermarried with Assyrian invaders. They were considered "half-breeds" -- impure ethnically and racially. And the point is: it was a Samaritan who demonstrated God's compassion. ... When have you been

surprised by the expression of compassion by someone you didn't expect?

Saturday, 6/28/08 – Read Mark 15:33-39

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: At Jesus' birth the presence of the wise men shows that God's light for the nations reaches out to ethnic "foreigners." And in today's reading, at Jesus' death, it is a Roman centurion who sees God's light in Jesus. At Jesus' birth and at his death, God reaches out to the nations through him. ... Our church's mission projects (the water project in Kenya, the anti-aids project in Malawi) are current expressions of God's light reaching out to the nations. Is there some additional way you could see God's light reaching out to the nations?

Sunday, 6/29/08 – Read Acts 8:26-40

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: One of the early converts to Christian faith was this Ethiopian described in today's reading. Persians were welcomed to Jesus' cradle. During his life, people of Canaanite, Samaritan, and Roman ethnicity responded to Jesus in faith. And now the good news of God's light reaches the Africans! ... What could we do (what could you do?) to welcome more of God's human family into the light of the good news? Do some of our attitudes need to be different? How about our actions?

My Faith Journal, June 22, 2008

Hugh Bowen's Message

What do I want to remember out of today's message?

What action do I intend to take as a result of today's message?