

Light Bearers in the Dark

Monday, 12/1/08 – Read John 1:1-5

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: This Advent season we are exploring the meaning of the light shining in the darkness – the in-breaking light of God in the coming birth of Jesus. The Gospel of John begins at the beginning of creation. We are reminded again that it is our almighty God, creator of all that has come into being, who enters human life bringing radical hope in the midst of much darkness in the world. In our present day, the darkness in our lives can take on many forms – unending busyness that leads to overwhelm and fatigue, economic crisis that threatens current ways of living, health issues, relationship breakdowns, so many people in need. As you peer forward into the month of December, reflect on all that you anticipate and have planned. What’s your attitude? Frustrated, tired, worried, resigned... or hopeful, patient, waiting with anticipation for the entering of God in your life. What will you do to make room for the light?

Tuesday, 12/2/08 – Read John 1:1-5

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Read John 1:1-5 again. See how this passage connects the *Word* of God in Christ with “life that is the light of all people.” Reflect on a time in your life that was difficult for you. Was there a sustaining word or phrase that helped get you through that time (e.g., “Hold my hand...” “Walk with me, Lord...” “One day at a time...”)? What guiding word or phrase do you choose for this Advent/Christmas season?

Wednesday, 12/3/08 – Read Isaiah 9:2

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Darkness is part of all human life. When you feel lost, alienated, and alone, or when someone you love (or you) is suffering with serious illness, daily living can feel heavy and shrouded in darkness. It can be hard to find the light - the promise and hope of God in the midst of our disease. Reflect back on a time when darkness seemed too present in your life. Where can you now see how the light of God shined on you in the midst of that time? What new wisdom did you gain that now lights your spiritual path today?

Thursday, 12/4/08 – Read Psalm 139:11-12

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: We humans are not comfortable in the dark. We prefer to see and know how it’s going to turn out before committing ourselves to something new. We want to be in control of the outcome. Advent reminds us that we are not in control, but we are also never alone or without hope. God will guide us into new territory. Think of a situation that you thought was a disaster but, in retrospect, you realize was a source of many blessings. What were the blessings? How might you rely on this experience during present or future life-disrupting situations?

Friday, 12/5/08 – Read Isaiah 42:16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Our human perceptions and conclusions judge some life situations as *light* (good, positive)

and some as *dark* (bad, negative). But today's reading suggests that our understanding of darkness is not the same as God's understanding. Can you think of an example where what seemed very dark was not so dark after all? Reflect on this difference and journal your thoughts.

Saturday, 12/6/08 – Read Matthew 5:14-16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: In today's reading from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares, "You are the light of the world." The light that is in Christ is in us also. We are called to "let (our) light shine before others." We are to be bearers of the light of life in a world filled with much darkness. How do you choose to be a light bearer of Christ's light in your world during the coming month - at home, with family, at work, with friends, in community, with people in need?

Sunday, 12/7/08 – Read John 1:1-5

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Reflecting back on this week's meditations, what would you share with someone about your intentions for this Advent/Christmas season? How will you be on the lookout for the presence of God's light in an otherwise dark world? How will you choose to be a bearer of that light to others?

My Faith Journal, November 30, 2008

First Sunday of Advent

Light Bearers in the Dark

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?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own 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.