

## **April 21**

### Daniel 6:1-23

Daniel was dedicated to God, first and foremost, but he was also a loyal servant of the king and the king was appreciative – so much so that it made other servants of the king jealous. They plotted against Daniel, but their plot did not work because God protected Daniel, even from a den of lions.

#### *Question to Consider:*

As with the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, this is a story that seems hard to believe. Let's assume that you believe it, anyway. Since we Christians are called upon from time to time to explain why we believe the way we do, how would you explain your belief to a disbelieving friend?

#### *Prayer:*

Almighty God, I believe that all things are possible with you. Help me to remain strong in my faith in you, even when others may disbelieve. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## **April 22**

### Jonah 1:1-17

The book of Jonah is unusual in that it is primarily about the prophet and not his message. God called upon Jonah to go to Assyria, an enemy of Israel, and preach to the people of Nineveh. Jonah didn't want to go and the first part of his story is told in these verses.

#### *Question to Consider:*

Jonah was refusing to do what God wanted him to do. If God called upon you to go to a difficult place and carry out a difficult, seemingly hopeless assignment, would you do it?

#### *Prayer:*

Loving God, the day may come when you ask me to do something that I don't want to do. When it comes, I pray that I will say "yes" to you. I pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

## **April 23**

### Jonah 2:1-10

Jonah realized he had done wrong and his prayer to God is found in these verses.

#### *Question to Consider:*

When was the last time that you prayed? What, or who, did you pray for?

#### *Prayer:*

Merciful God, I hope that I can grow as a person of prayer – always looking to you for guidance and trusting you each day. I pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

## April 24

### Micah 6:6-8

The prophet Micah is believed to have lived about 700 years before Jesus. In this short passage, he reminds us that God wants us to love Him and to love one another.

*Question to Consider:*

How might you “act justly” this week?

*Prayer:*

Gracious God, I know that I have many opportunities to love mercy and act justly in my life, and if I would be more merciful and just, the blessings would be considerable. Help me to grow as a person of mercy and justice. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**Our readings now move to the New Testament.** Obviously, there is much more to the Old Testament than what we have read and you will be blessed if you explore those other writings. For now, we move to the New Testament and encounter the stories of Jesus, the letters of Paul, and the story of the church as it was just beginning. Because we are moving through the Bible “from front to back” we begin with the story of Jesus’ birth. Come back to these stories in December and re-read them. The Bible is God’s living word and even familiar stories can have something new to teach us. We will jump around in the gospels a bit so that we follow the chronology of the story of Jesus.

## April 25

### John 1:1-18

In this opening to the Gospel of John, known as the “prologue,” we are told that “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The “Word” refers to Jesus, God in the flesh, who came to live among us, and the term we use for that incredible act of God is “the Incarnation.”

*Question to Consider:*

Why would God have chosen to become a person and live among His people?

*Prayer:*

Loving God, your love is hard for me to imagine. It is hard to believe that you would choose to come to earth and live among us, but you did and I thank you. Help me to truly appreciate the fact that you – the Lord of the Universe – chose to live among us. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.