

OUR FATHER

August 1st, Sunday

10 Sunday after Pentecost
Peter's Deliverance from Prison

Theme: "Lord, teach us pray."

M/EW Psalm	116	L.S.	OT	Genesis 18.20-33
	OT	Genesis 18.20-33	Psalm	116.1-9
	NT	1 John 5.13-21	Epistle.	1 John 5.13-21
and/or Luke	11.1-13	Gosp.	Luke	11.1-13

Notice of The Transfiguration of Christ on 6 August

Jesus went on to say: Suppose one of you goes to a friend in the middle of the night and says, "Let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine has dropped in, and I don't have a thing for him to eat." (CEV) (Luke 11: 5-6)

In today's readings, as we focus on the subject of prayer, the Old Testament reading and the Gospel sets in focus the art of prayer. As Abraham pleads with the Lord five times to save Sodom, he literally haggles with God, manipulating the number of 'good' men in Sodom from fifty to five. In the Gospel, vv 6-8, the parable is all about of the request being made for a friend's sudden and ill timed visit. The fact of the matter is that the model for our prayers to God is set as praying or interceding (or haggling) for others, before we begin to pray for ourselves. As long as we ourselves are the focus of prayer, we tend to defeat the very purpose of prayer. In verses 2-4, the prayer which Jesus teaches us, the focus is certainly not on the self. The Lord's Prayer begins with the focus on God the Father. Even as the focus shifts on the periphery of the self, note that instead of 'I', the plural version of the personal pronoun is used – our, us, we. These words bring in the feeling of togetherness, even when prayed alone. It re-echoes the fact that it is we (and not I) which forms the body of Christ. Therefore, as followers and disciples of Jesus, it becomes our duty to intercede for others.

As the focus of our prayer changes from centripetal to centrifugal in character, may we be agents of change and transform and strengthen the communities we live in.

Prayer: Our Father, open our minds to the power that lies in our prayers for others. Amen.

A PROSPEROUS EXILE !!!

August 2nd, Monday

MW	Ps. 82	Jer.29.1-14	Acts 24.24-25.12
EW	Ps. 84	Jer.29.15-end	Matt.25.31-end

"I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for."(GNB) (Jer. 29: 11)

When Jeremiah began to prophesy that Israel's exile would be a long one, many prophets began to peddle their version of God's prophecy – a very short exile! Foreseeing this, God already warns the people in verse 8 that these prophets are liars and are not his messengers. He already has a plan for exiled Israel – seventy years in exile, but an exile during which they would prosper! Therefore, not only are they to build houses, plant gardens (or establish) themselves physically, but they are also to get married (only if they haven't!), and ensure that their children also do the same. Further, they are to seek and strive for peace – not only for themselves but also for their captors!

Most of the times when things are against us, we try and listen to those who are finding solutions which are convenient or suitable for us. Here we find that God's plan is not as easy as the 'other' prophets are promising. Contrary to popular belief and guidance, their stay in Babylon is going to be a long one. And even during that stay, they have a role to fulfill – vs. 7 – seek the prosperity and peace (*shalom*) of the city, because their own peace and prosperity depend on their captors well being! And this is the plan that God has for his people in exile. The people of Israel have a positive role to play even when things are going against them.

Prayer: Almighty one, when things are not exactly going the way we want, remind us then that we have a positive role to play in the lives of others. Amen.

THE JUSTICE OF PUNISHMENT

August 3rd, Tuesday

MW	Ps. 85	Jer.30.1-17	Acts 25.13-end
EW	Ps. 86,87	Jer.30.18-31.6	Matt.26.1-16

I punished you like this because your sins are many and your wickedness is great. But now, all who devour you will be devoured, and all your enemies will be taken away as prisoners. All who oppress you will be oppressed, and all who plunder you will be plundered. I will make you well again; I will heal your wounds, though your enemies say, 'Zion is an outcast; no one cares about her.' I, the LORD, have spoken." (Jer 30:15-17)

As Israel's judgement is delivered, and the exile is imminent, the Lord promises that his judgement and punishment of Israel would be fair and just. Even though Israel would be brought down to its knees and made weak, there will come a day when it would rise again. Right now, Israel is in a very sorry and pitiable state. Verse 12-14 stresses home the fact that "... *Your wounds are incurable, your injuries cannot be healed. There is no one to take care of you, no remedy for your sores, no hope of healing for you. All your lovers have forgotten you; they no longer care about you.*" And just at this point, when there seems to be no hope for Israel, Yahweh promises justice- all those who took advantage of Israel when she was weak, defenseless and had no one to protect her, now, all of them would be paid back in the same coin (vs.16). The Lord Yahweh will now be their protector. Even though Israel was under punishment from the Lord, He ensured that nobody took advantage of Israel's weak situation.

Normally, when anyone is going through a very bad phase, sometimes we may tend to spiritualise and justify his or her predicament as 'getting his due from God!'. But even in such a situation, we need to remember that God is still in control of that person's life and his sense of justice still prevails – even through his punishment.

Prayer: Lord God, guardian of justice for all, help me never to take advantage of anybody who is down and out. Amen.

GDP (GOD'S DISTRESSED PEOPLE)

August 4th, Wednesday

Dominic (Monk, Ev.), 122

MW	Ps. 88	Jer.31.7-22	Acts 26.1-18
EW	Ps. 89.1-19	Jer.31.23-end	Matt.26.17-35

Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labour, ... I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. (Jer 31:8-9)

In these verses, Yahweh promises the exiles that seventy years later, they and their families would be brought back to their home – Israel. As the rebuilding of Israel takes place, the Lord God will himself will bring back his people to their home. At the beginning of the chapter in verse one, we see that God has already decided what the future for Israel is going to be – his lordship of all the tribes of Israel and *they would be His people*. The once lost Israel which had become the laughing stock of all nations, would now be God's own people, a people with an identity- a nation. As this wonderful, promising and chosen nation is being built, let us see who are the people who are forming this fantastic nation. We get a glimpse of this in verse 7, and we realise that it is the blind, and the lame who are going to form God's glorious nation, mixed with the weakest of the weak and dependent on others for survival - the expecting mother and the woman in labour! They will not only form his nation, but the right concern and love will be shown to them – verse 9: *I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble.*

In our lives today, what or who makes a nation? Is it just economic independence coupled with powerful and successful individuals brokering power, or is it the weak, the handicapped, the infirm, those without hope, the mentally, physically and the spiritually challenged? During the Republic Day parade in New Delhi, the colourful floats representing the States always flaunt prosperity and economic stability. But where do the ever present weak and the infirm vanish? Here, God's plan is already laid out. In His nation, His people will majorly comprise of the weak and the infirm, and He in his wisdom will give them the proper respect and love and be a father over them.

Prayer: Father God, in a world that looks up to the powerful and ignores the weak, help us as citizens of your kingdom here on Earth to fight against those who take advantage of the weak. Amen.

GOD'S TRAITOR

August 5th, Thursday

MW Ps. 89.19-52 Jer.32.1-15 Acts 26.19-end
EW Ps. 90 Jer.32.16-29, 36-end Matt.26.36-56

At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah. 3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him, saying, "Why do you prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall capture it; (Jer 32:2)

As Jeremiah is held captive in his own country for allegedly making 'anti-Israel' statements, Nebuchadnezzar is attacking Jerusalem. King Zedekiah has the option of listening to Jeremiah or choosing to believe in what he wants to. Obviously what God's prophet has to say does not seem good to Zedekiah and therefore poor Jeremiah is incarcerated. Here, Jeremiah's prophesy for Zedekiah was to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, and that was why Jeremiah was languishing in jail. The role of the prophet was not easy. He was to be 'God's spokesman', not only when the prophecy was good but also when it went against the people of God (just as it has in today's reading). The prophet on the other hand, had to prophesy what God wanted him to say – even if it went against him. In order to show the unfaithfulness of Israel to Yahweh, the prophet Hosea was asked to marry a prostitute who would be unfaithful to him! Jeremiah in order to show that Yahweh had planned Israel to be in exile, went around prophesying with a yoke around his neck and shoulders! (Jeremiah 28)

At this point it would be good for us to think about what is our attitude to the will of God in our lives. As disciples of Jesus, when we are called to say and do what He wants in a time and age which need not recognise him, do we end up saying and doing what has to be said and done, rather than what could be said and done (and hence make our lives all the easier)?

Prayer: God of truth, give us the courage to always voice the right in front of wrong might. Amen.

STUCK UP ON THE PEAK OF OUR LIVES

August 6th, Friday

The Transfiguration of Christ

Theme: Thanksgiving for the Transfiguration of Christ, into whose likeness we are being transformed by the Spirit.

M/EW	Psalm 93	L.S.	OT	Exodus 34.29-35
	OT	Exodus 34.29-35	Psalm	84.1-2, 10-12
	NT	1 John 2.28-3.3	Epistle	1 John 2.28-3.3
	and/or	Matt. 17.1-8	Gosp.	Matt. 17.1-8

So Peter said to him, "Lord, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters- one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Mat 17:4)

As Peter, James and John go up the mountain (possibly Mt. Hermon or Mt. Tabor) to pray with Jesus, little do they know what would be in store for them. As the Transfiguration takes place, they are stupefied. To add to the excitement, Moses and Elijah appear and they are engrossed talking to Jesus. Captivated by the scene, Peter blurts out his intention to make three booths, one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. The presence of Moses and Elijah are not by chance. Both of them were the greatest prophets for the Israelites and represented the law and the prophets and used to converse with God on a mountain. More significantly, neither of them had a known grave. Moses and Elijah's presence and conversation with Jesus proved to the disciples that Jesus was sent by God. Ratifying this was the dense cloud which passed by and the voice which said, 'this is my son...listen to him'.

It is possible that when Peter says let us make three booths here, he with his limited human vision and insight wanted to capture that moment of an 'emotional high' and encapsulate it forever. But Jesus, in his ever so down to earth and practical approach, reminds his disciples that all of them, including Jesus have more important work to do down the mountain, where the needy people are. In our times of spiritual highs, do we tend to lose sight of the vision which brought that spiritual high?

As Jesus gently reminds his disciples to move down the mountain to return to the people who needed Jesus, let us also go down the Mountain and be of witness and service to the needy.

Prayer : Almighty God, grant us the unselfish spirit of service which comes from you. Amen.

O JERUSALEM!

August 7th, Saturday

The Holy Name of Jesus

MW	Ps. 93,95	Jer.33.1-11	Acts 27.1-20
EW	Ps. 94	Jer.33.12-end	Matt.26.57-end

I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honour before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.’ (Jer. 33:8-9)

Once again the word of the Lord comes to Jeremiah at a very inconvenient time – this time in jail. Once again, dreadful news if you were a resident of Jerusalem. The palace and most of the houses would be destroyed, and the people of Jerusalem would be killed fighting the Babylonians. In fact Jerusalem will be ravaged, destroyed and be sent to exile because of its disobedience. But after the people of both the kingdoms - Judah and Israel have served their sentence of exile, Yahweh would bring back the people of Israel and they would be rebuilt. The process of rebuilding would begin by cleansing the people from their past sins committed against Yahweh. Then, as forgiveness follows from Yahweh, Jerusalem, God’s City would be rebuilt not only from the construction point of view, but it would become a source of great happiness for others. Peace and prosperity would be poured down on Jerusalem.

Through the ages, the literal meaning of Jerusalem has been “city of peace” or the “possession of peace” or “foundation of peace.” But as we have been reading the book of Jeremiah, we come to the conclusion that even though Jerusalem is known as the city of peace and wellness, history proves it otherwise. Whether in the biblical times or during the Crusades or even during the birth of modern Israel, today Jerusalem always has been a city torn apart by war. But the same city, when cleansed, would be a source of great joy for God and it will have completeness (Shalom) and prosperity.

Prayer: Almighty God, cleanse us, so that we may be a source of delight to you. Amen.

HEAR TO OBEY!

August 8th, Sunday

11 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: God reveals his saving purpose through the signs which he sends.

M/EW	Psalm 78.1-17 or Isaiah 28.9-16 NT Ads 7.30-41 and/or Luke 11.27-32	Ls. or Isaiah 28.9-13 Psalm 78.10-17 2nd R. Ads 7.35-41 Gosp. Luke 11.27-32
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Notice of Independence Day on 15 August

While Jesus was still talking, a woman in the crowd spoke up, “The woman who gave birth to you and nursed you is blessed!” Jesus replied, “That’s true, but the people who are really blessed are the ones who hear and obey God’s message!” (CEV) (Luke 11:27)

Following the incident of Jesus healing the man who could not speak because he was possessed by an evil spirit, and by the teaching which followed it, a woman overwhelmed by his teaching blurts out a word of praise for his mother. Jesus, in his characteristic way redefines the concept of being ‘blessed’. As Jesus takes the focus off his earthly family and refocuses it on the Father, perhaps he is implying the fact that to be blessed is not just a state or point in life, but one comes to be blessed by doing, - the ones who hear and obey the message of God. The King James and the Revised Version translates obey as ‘keep’, which has been translated from the Greek as- to guard, to care for, take care not to violate.

Note the emphasis on the two words- those who **hear** and **obey!** Together, these two words reframe the concept of obedience to God. It is the combination of active hearing and dynamic obeying (not just a choice of any one) which is the state of blessedness. While the unnamed woman is trying to pinpoint the stimulus for Jesus’ astounding teaching, Jesus, on the other hand, focuses on the significance of how to be blessed.

Prayer: Dear Father, help us to sincerely hear and obey your call to us. Amen.

SLAVES FOR THE SLAVES
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

August 9th, Monday

MW	Ps. 98,99	Jeremiah 34	Acts 27.21-end
EW	Ps. 100,101	Jeremiah 35	Matt.27.1-26

You have disobeyed me by not giving your slaves their freedom. So I will give you ‘freedom’—the ‘freedom’ to die in battle, or from disease, or hunger. I will make you disgusting to all other nations on earth. (CEV) (Jer 34:17)

In this passage, the Israelites were to have freed their slaves – (their own country people) - men, women and children as they had promised earlier to Yahweh. Even after sealing a covenant with the Lord God in the Temple (which signified sealing the covenant in his presence), the Israelites chose not to honour their part of the bargain. The workers, who were to have been freed after every six years, now were spending their lifetime as slaves in their own country, working for their own countrymen. The people of Israel saw their workers as tools, rather than as their fellow human beings, cheap (or free) labour supplementing the dignity of life. While ignoring the rights of the slaves, the Israelites held their own wellbeing sacrosanct. This was the behaviour and attitude which made Yahweh angry. This is the reason that their cities would be destroyed and they would die one way or another.

In a country such as ours where labour is cheap and the dignity of these labourers even cheaper, what can be our attitude to the people who work to make our lives easier? In many of the ‘big and developed ‘ cities we see agencies which get people – mainly young girls from the tribal and backward areas to work. Child labour, whether in houses or commercial establishments are banned by the laws, but in how many of our own homes have we employed underage children? As we celebrate the International Day Of The World’s Indigenous People, let us not forget the Israelites who suffered because they became blind to the needs and rights of their own people.

Prayer: Almighty Father God, help us to remember that others need not give up their needs and comforts in order to meet our needs and comforts. Amen.

IDENTITY AND STATUS

August 10th, Tuesday

MW	Ps. 102	Jer.36.1-20	Acts 28.1-15
EW	Ps. 103	Jer.36.21-end	Matt.27.27-44

Then he went to the royal palace, to the room of the court secretary, where all the officials were in session. Elishama, the court secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Acbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials were there. 16 When they heard all the words, they turned one to another in fear. And they said to Baruch, “We must report all these words to the king.” (Jer 36: 12 - 16)

Jeremiah deputed Baruch, his secretary to record and read out the Lord’s prophecy in the Temple since Jeremiah was not allowed to enter the Temple. Maybe King Jehoiakim had something to do with it since he was not too taken in by Jeremiah’s warnings. As Baruch reads out the prophecy, the officials of the Temple realise the importance of the prophecy and feel it should be heard by King Jehoiakim. But they also know that Jeremiah’s and Baruch life would be in danger. Though Jehoiakim was a godless man, his officials were sincere to the Lord. The second time the scroll was read (vs. 8), it was read from Gemariah’s room. Since he identified with Yahweh, he probably allowed his official room to be used for the reading.

When the scroll is read in front of the King, he destroys the scroll by cutting it into pieces and throwing it into the fire.

Contrasting the king’s and the official’s reactions to the prophecy, we realise that Jehoiakim, as Yahweh’s chosen should have paid attention to the prophecy. When he chose to ignore the prophecy and destroyed it, he was adamantly going against the will of the Lord. While his officials realised the gravity of the message, Jehoiakim felt he could destroy God’s plan by destroying the message. Jehoiakim forgot that God was much more powerful than him, and would have his own way. Sometimes, like Jehoiakim do we forget the power of God and end up having no regard for God?

Prayer: Dear Lord, no matter what status you take us up to, may we always feel the importance of your need in our lives. Amen.

PROPHETING PROPHETS OR PROFITING PROPHETS?

August 11th, Wednesday

MW Ps. 104.1-23 Jeremiah 37 Acts 28.16-end
EW Ps. 104.24-end Jer.38.1-13 Matt.27.45-61

Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison? (19) Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land’? (Jer 37:18)

As the showdown continues between King Zedekiah and Jeremiah, with Zedekiah choosing to believe his ‘personal’ prophets who prophesied that the King of Babylon (Chaldeans in some old translations) would never attack Jerusalem, as opposed to Jeremiah’s warning that the Babylonians would attack the city, the inevitable happens. When the Babylonians attack, chaos pervades Jerusalem, and Jeremiah is thrown in a dungeon. Finally, when Zedekiah secretly sends for Jeremiah, hoping that if he listens to Yahweh’s prophet now, he may get a reprieve from Yahweh. As Jeremiah delivers God’s judgement on Zedekiah, he also asks Zedekiah his fault as to why he has been jailed. More importantly, he challenges King Zedekiah as to where are those people who said that Babylon would not attack Jerusalem?

Reflecting on the happenings of the last part of this chapter, do we also, like Zedekiah, choose not to listen to the voice of God when things are all right, but at the same time, desperately beg for good advice when we are in problems and expect that God’s people should speak words of peace and good guidance to us? Have we like Zedekiah, jailed God’s guidance and counsel and have surrounded ourselves with our own prophets, telling us all is fine? Interestingly, the name Zedekiah is translated as ‘Yahweh is righteous’!

Prayer: Almighty God, grant us the strength to always listen to you, even when you give us a bitter pill to swallow. Amen.

KINGLY DUPLICITY INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

August 12th, Thursday

Clare of Assisi (Nun), 125

MW Ps. 105.1-22 Jer.38.14-end Philemon
EW Ps. 105.23-end Jer. 39 Matt.27.62-28end

Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me.” (Jer 38:15)

This passage is a very sad picture of a man who thought he could fool his opposition and Yahweh at the same time. Here we see Zedekiah struggling to be in control of his kingdom. His status as the King of Judah is merely nominal now. His opposition consists of the Jews who have gone over to the enemy – Babylon, and now they plot against him. Some of his officials have put Jeremiah in a cistern to die, and the King does not know about it (but when he does come to know about it, he has him rescued.) in verse 16, Zedekiah ‘secretly’ swears an oath to Jeremiah that he would not be killed. As Zedekiah’s popularity and power is waning, he wants to play it safe with both – those in the opposition and with Yahweh. Even this meeting with Jeremiah is a secret - (vs. 19, 24). Even at this stage, he does not want anybody to know the real reason of his discussion with Jeremiah. Zedekiah, as the King of Judah, had not only failed his people, but he had also failed Yahweh. Perhaps it is this verse (vs.15) which brings out Zedekiah’s attitude to Yahweh. As Jeremiah plainly says, Zedekiah has made up his mind. His wanting to see Jeremiah is a mere formality. He now wants to see if Yahweh has a better future for him.

Once again, are we sailing in the same boat as Zedekiah? Too often, we try to keep God in our palms, instead of being in his palm. But by the time we realise we have been duped, it may get too late.....

Prayer: Dear Lord, give us the wisdom to look up to you and trust you, at all times. Amen.

PROPHET'S REWARD?

August 13th, Friday

MW	Ps. 106.1-23	Jer. 40	Luke 1.1-23
EW	Ps. 106.24-end	Jer. 41	Hebrews 1

Today I am taking the chains off your wrists and setting you free! If you want to, you can come with me to Babylonia, and I will see that you are taken care of. Or if you decide to stay here, you can go wherever you wish. (Jer 40:4)

In today's reading, the Babylonians have taken over the kingdom of Judah, and God's chosen people proceed for their exile. Jeremiah's reputation has even gone on to Nebuchadnezzar's ears. Perhaps the dignity and respect that his own countrymen could not (or would not) give to Jeremiah, now is coming from a very unexpected quarter. From his days in the dungeon to the cistern, ironically, now his country is in exile, Jeremiah's luck seems to have turned. Nebuchadnezzar had told Nebuzaradan, (his seniormost official in Judah), to find Jeremiah, take good care of him and listen to whatever he says (ch 39.11-12). If he wants to come to Babylon (where honour and respect would be bestowed), on the other hand, if Jeremiah wanted to stay in Judah, he was also free to do so. But Jeremiah, being the man of God that he was, chooses to stay with the remnants of God's people in Mizpah, where only the poorest people who owned no land were left behind, and Nebuzaradan gave them fields and vineyards (Jer 39:10).

Jeremiah, being Yahweh's chosen prophet, continues to identify with Yahweh's people and identity. He could have justified his move to Babylon, saying God's people need me in an alien land (but in a kingdom which would offer him an easy life, honour and respect). In keeping up with Yahweh's preferential option for the poor and the weak, Jeremiah chooses to remain in Judah where life would be tough and hard, but the place where he would be accomplishing Yahweh's will and work.

Between the Babylon and Judah of our lives, what do we choose as God's servants?

Prayer: Dear Lord, as we serve you, help us to serve you in your way, not our's. Amen.

GOD'S WISDOM AND OURS

August 14th, Saturday

MW	Ps. 107.1-22	Jer. 42	Luke 1.24-38
EW	Ps. 107.23-end	Jer.43	Hebrews 2.1-9

'If you are willing to go on living in this land, then I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not pull you up. The destruction I brought on you has caused me great sorrow. (Jer 42:10)

Gadaliah had been placed by Nebuchadnezzar as his representative over the remnant in Mizpah. When Gadaliah was assassinated by a faction of the remnants, the others are now afraid of the repercussions by the Babylonians. It is at this moment when they come to Jeremiah for help. Their plan is to escape to Egypt where they think they will be safe. They are under the impression that the Egyptian army would be able to protect them. Whatever they were trying to escape from – war, famine and disease would follow them to Egypt. Therefore, they are to stay in Judah. On his part, the Lord God would make King Nebuchadnezzar have mercy on them. Therefore, if they continue to stay in Judah, the Lord God would make them prosper and flourish, but if they choose Egypt, they would be disobeying the Lord once again and troubles would follow.

So many times, just like the remnant in Mizpah, when we try to use our limited wisdom thinking we have solved any problem with our own ability, it leads to more complicated problems. Our practical self-centered approach to life can never really solve our problems. Only when we look up to God for help, guidance and protection can we afford to save ourselves.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to always make you the source of all wisdom and guidance in my life. Amen.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: THE FOUNDERS OF THE NATION

August 15th, Sunday

12 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: Thanksgiving for freedom which can only be preserved by discipline and self-sacrifice.

M/EW	Psalm 33	L.S.	OT	Deut.6.20-25
	OT			Psalm 33.12-19
	NT			Galatians 5.1, 13-18
	and/or			Epistle Gal. 5.1, 13-18
				Gosp. Luke 22.24-27

The LORD rescued us from Egypt, so he could bring us into this land, as he had promised our ancestors. That's why the LORD our God demands that we obey his laws and worship him with fear and trembling. And if we do, he will protect us and help us be successful. (Deut 6:23-24)

On this day, when we remember those patriots who died for our freedom, let us remember, that when they died, they died for a country that existed as an idea, as a vision. In the epic novel Exodus by Leon Uris, there is a part where, after the nation of Israel has been created, the protagonist Ari Ben Canaan and his father Barak go to pay their respects to Barak's brother Akiva's grave who died fighting the British for the freedom of Israel. On his grave is inscribed, 'It is good to die for one's country.' Seeing this Barak whispers, "*it is good to have a country to die for.*" While our forefathers suffered and died for a dream called India, today we are India. We have a country to protect and die for.

As Moses led the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt to an idea called Canaan promised by Yahweh, he could only be faithful to Yahweh and encourage his fellow Hebrew slaves to move on closer to that dream. Many fell by the way and even Moses only got a glimpse of that dream. Because of the initiative which was given to Moses by Yahweh, the next generation of Hebrews could claim the land of Canaan as their own home. But they had a duty to the Lord and that was to obey and worship him. As Indian Christians, what is our role in building up our country? Can we see and recognise the Lord's wisdom in giving us a free country to born in and take responsible and active steps to make our country better? *Jai Hind!*

Prayer: Dear Lord, as you prepare us to be citizens of your coming kingdom, grant us the wisdom to be true citizens of the country you have chosen for us. Amen.

UNFAITHFUL!!

August 16th, Monday

MW	Ps. 112	Jer.44.1-14	Luke 1.39-56
EW	Ps. 113,114	Jer.44.15-end	Heb.2.10-3.6

Why do you provoke me to anger ... making offerings to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have come to live,... Have you forgotten the evil of your fathers, the evil of the kings of Judah, the evil of their wives, your own evil...They have not humbled themselves even to this day, ... "Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will set my face against you for harm, to cut off all Judah. (Jer 44:8-11)

Yahweh's anger against his people is quite justified here. The Hebrews, when fleeing from Egypt under Moses had promised to Yahweh that they would be under his guidance. Yahweh had 'cut a covenant' (entered into a contract) with the Israelites that they would follow, obey and be faithful to him. As they began to settle in Canaan and began to immerse themselves in the easiness of a well settled life, they began to drift away from the one who gave them freedom from slavery. They began to compromise on their relationship with Yahweh. In spite of many warnings through many people, the Israelites would not remain faithful to Yahweh. Here, Yahweh's complaint is the same – vs. 8- 'why do you make offerings to other gods'? Yahweh's original plan for Israel was that it was to be a 'model' of faithfulness to the other kingdoms and countries. In spite of the fact that Israel was already facing punishment by being exiled made no difference to them. Now in Egypt (still under punishment), Israel has not learnt its lesson. Once again, they have been unfaithful to Yahweh.

Yahweh's complaint against his chosen people Israel is very heart rending. Taking advantage of his constant love and forgiveness, Israel has now become calloused. As Israel chooses to ignore Yahweh, they feel that they have become a law to themselves and become increasingly arrogant. In our lives, do we tend to take our relationship for granted to such an extent that become puffed up with false pride and arrogance?

Prayer: Lord, as I walk in your footsteps, keep me humble in your eyes. Amen.

AWESOME

August 17th, Tuesday

MW	Ps. 116,117	Jer.46.13-end	Luke 1.57-end
EW	Ps. 115	Jer.50.1-7,17-20	Heb.3.7—4.11

Israel, don't be afraid. Someday I will bring you home from foreign lands. You and your descendants will live in peace and safety, with nothing to fear. (28) So don't be afraid, even though now you deserve to be punished and have been scattered among other nations. But when I destroy them, I will protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken. (Jer 46:27)

This chapter takes us back to 605 BC, when the Egyptian army was absolutely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in Carchemish. It was here that Pharaoh Neco killed King Josiah of Judah in 609 BC (2Chr 35: 20 onwards). Somehow it was poetic justice that the same Neco would be destroyed here by the Babylonian army. This entire chapter makes us remember that Yahweh is indeed the Lord Of Hosts, Lord of all the earth, over every nation and tribe. The prophecies here are not only about Israel, but also pertaining to other kingdoms and countries, Egypt and Babylon. This sets in perspective the role of Yahweh. He is not to be mistaken for a 'small time god', limited by geographical boundaries and lineages of kings, but indeed he is the Lord of all Earth and all nations are subject to Him. Even as he controls the other kings and nations, his heart is set on his own people – Israel. Even if he punishes Israel through the activities of the other Nations, Yahweh still has a soft corner for it. In these last two verses, Yahweh assures Israel that one day he will safely guide his people home, and even if they are being punished for their past sins, the day will come when they will be able to live in peace in their own country.

As we serve a God as mighty as Yahweh, do we for a moment realise his power and ability to be the controller of nations and kingdoms, yet having a soft spot for his people? His concern for the weak and infirm characterises his greatness and power, and this is our Lord!

Prayer: Dear Lord, in the presence of your awesome greatness, make us worthy to be your children in your sight. Amen.

HI- FI (DELITY)

August 18th, Wednesday

MW	Ps. 118	Jer.51.6-10,15-19,58-end	Luke 2.1-21
EW	Ps. 119.1-24	Baruch 1 or Ruth 1	Heb.4.11-5.10

When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.' Thus far are the words of Jeremiah. (Jer. 51: 63 - 64)

Jeremiah's prophecy of Babylon, which comes to him from God, is a message of doom and destruction. Babylon was a city known for its very strong ramparts. Yet that city would face utter destruction - never to rise again (vs.63). Jeremiah does not mince words about what God has told him to tell the people. There is a possibility that it might get him in serious trouble with the authorities, but he chooses to be faithful to what God wants him to say. There were many prophets during Jeremiah's time who gave the 'feel good message' rather than say what God wanted them to do. The best part in this prophecy is that this message of doom is to be read publicly in Babylon, not in the safety of the kingdom of Judah! Even though these words are read out by Seriah, this prophecy is attributed to Jeremiah.

Professional sound engineers believe that the best amplifiers, speakers and electronic equipment are those which can reproduce the original sound / music without adulterating it. Therefore a piece of badly recorded music will sound bad and well recorded music will sound good. That is why the earlier music systems were also known as Hi-Fi, ie. High Fidelity! In bringing God's message to all, do we tend to adulterate or edit it with what others want to hear? As servants of the Lord, it is our duty to speak out what He wants to be told and heard, rather than what we would like to speak for popularity's sake.

Prayer: Lord, we pray for courage to face unpopularity for the sake of truth. Amen.

WORSHIP

August 21st, Saturday

MW	Ps. 119.121-144	Ezra 3	Luke 3.1-2
EW	Ps. 119.145-160	Ezra 4.1-5	Heb.7.26—8-end

On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid. NIV (Ezra 3: 6)

This morning's reading of Ezra 3 is very boring and mundane at one level with details of their rituals and burnt offerings, morning and evening sacrifices going on to the Feast of the Tabernacles, New moon sacrifices and so on. But may be a better understanding of vs.6 can make matters more interesting, if not challenging.

vs.6 : "... *all these actions were going on when there was no Temple nor even had the Temple foundations been rebuilt.*"

Here we see the Israelites getting into the act of rigorous worship even before the new foundations of the Temple are laid. They were here to see and help in the reconstruction of the Temple and what better way to begin the construction by regularly taking part in the worship as if the Temple already existed. May be their actions enhanced their faith. The Israelites knew that the Temple would be built, but they had to get *into and begin the* regular worship the Temple demanded.

Normally, we wait for a church building to be built before we begin worshipping there, or we have the 'token' or the inaugural service before the construction of the building. Only when the church building is completed, and furnished completely, does the business of normal worship begin.

What does our worship depend on? Furniture, comfort, technology. What is the 'Ground Zero' of our faith?

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to worship you in the beauty of your holiness. Amen.

PRODUCTIVITY OF EFFICIENCY

August 22nd, Sunday

13 Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: The watchfulness that is required in the Church's pastors.

M/EW	Psalm 125	L.S.	OT	Ezekiel 3.16-21
	OT	Ezekiel 3.16-21	Psalm 125	
	NT	Acts 20.17-38	2nd R.	Acts 20.28-32
	and/or	Luke 12.41-48	Gosp.	Luke 12.41-48

Notice of Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyrs on 24 August

If God has been generous with you, he will expect you to serve him well. But if he has been more than generous, he will expect you to serve him even better. (CEV) (Luke 12: 48)

Preceding this reading is the cryptic reply of Jesus to his disciples, " So always be ready! You don't know when the Son of Man will come." As Jesus talks to his disciples, he focuses on the responsibility of the spiritual leaders for those who are in their charge with the focus on their accountability to their flock. The leader's work is proportionate in response to the generosity of God. While that becomes the driving factor, it is further clarified in vs. 44- 46, contrasting the role of the able and efficient servant with that of the servant who misuses his authority and position as a servant. Not only is the servant's work taken into consideration, but also his behaviour with others (vs. 45). Taking his master's absence for granted, he himself assumes the role of the master and mistreats his fellow servants.

As we search out God's generosity in our own lives, are we serving him better or as and when it suits us. If God has not compromised on his kindness to us in our lives, are we justified in our lack of productivity and accountability in the work he has chosen to give us? It is exactly because of the fact that we don't know when the Son of Man will come, that we need to have our 'account books ' always ready.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, as we strive to be sincere in our work to you, grant us that strength to be productive in our work. Amen.

HYPOCRISY REDOUBLED

August 23rd, Monday

MW	Ps. 123,124,125	Ezra 4.6-end	Luke3.21-22&4.1-13
EW	Ps. 126,127,128	Ezra 5	Heb.9.1-10

Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and troubled them in building. (Ezra 4: 4)

The letter written by the enemies of Judah and Benjamin brings out the actual feelings lurking within their hearts. In V.2 they came with an apparent request to help in the building of the Temple. But when they were turned down, their apparent 'friendliness' and helpfulness dissolves into throwing a spanner (vs. 4-5) in the works.

Hypocrisy is the name of the game here. They wanted to show how helpful they were, but their main intent was to try and stop the building of the Temple. They went to no ends to stop the work, even to the extent of misrepresenting facts. Such intentions are blatantly seen not only in churches but also in institutions.

Now the building of the Temple is at a full stop. The Jewish leaders who came to build the Temple have finally been beaten. They did not listen to them who could have been their friend's allies but chose to rely on their own God and look what happened.

God is not asleep. He is silently watching and keeping a track of all that we say, do or even think, and finally he will (and normally does) intercede. Vindication is His.

Prayer: Almighty God, help us to be patient for you to work in our lives. Amen.

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

August 24th, Tuesday

Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr

Theme: Thanksgiving for Bartholomew and all the apostles through whom Christ has built up his Church.

M/EW	Psalm 2S	LS. OT	Genesis 28.10-17
	or	Gen. 28.10-17	Psalm 25.8-14
	NT	Revelation 21.9-14	2nd R Rev. 21.9-14
	and/or	John 1.43-51	Gosp. John 1.43-51

Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip answered, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said, "Here is a true descendant of our ancestor Israel. And he isn't deceitful." (John 1:46 - 47)

In this passage, Nathanael's outburst is very jarring at the first instance. As we read it, we can almost visualise his sneer. Just how self righteous can Nathanael be, we wonder. That is not how somebody is greeted for the first time. Further, his reaction was absolutely unwarranted and even went against the meaning of his name – 'gift of God'. What good did Jesus see in him that he made him a disciple of his? Yet, he takes up Phillip's invitation to come and see. Jesus on seeing him, acknowledges him as a true descendant of Israel who has no guile in him. Whether we see Israel as a nation or as a person, they are inconceivably linked to Jacob. While Jacob meant 'deceiver', yet after his tussle he was renamed Israel – God prevails. So when Jesus said he isn't deceitful, he probably had the concept of the metamorphosis of Jacob into Israel. As Nathanael is taken back and blurts out –how do you know. Jesus says he had seen him talking to Philip under the fig tree. Once again As Nathanael is taken aback, he acknowledges Jesus to be the Son of God.

As Nathanael's life is transformed by meeting Jesus, this passage becomes a parable for us. While many might have sneered at the very idea of meeting Jesus, but after the encounter with Jesus, they undergo the same metamorphosis that changed Jacob to Israel, and Bartholomew out of Nathanael! In our encounters with Jesus, has he changed us?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, as we encounter you, change us. Amen.

HE MAKES ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL IN HIS TIME

August 25th, Wednesday

MW Ps. 132 Ezra 6.1-12 Luke 4.14-30
EW Ps. 135 Ezra 6.13-end Heb.9.11-end

“Let the temple be rebuilt...” (Ezra 6: 3)

If yesterdays reading left us with a feeling of gloom and uncertainty, about the uncertainty of the building of the Temple, today's reading establishes the fact of the knowledge of God with us.

Till yesterdays reading it was not known whether the Temple would be rebuilt at all. The Jewish leaders might have been thinking it waste of time, effort and money to come all the way to build the Temple. Their impatience might have given way and taking the law in their own hands in starting a civic unrest or something similar. But they knew their God would not fail them. They continued in their trust in God. After a gap of fourteen long years, Darius himself sanctions the building of the Temple and the total cost of the project would be borne by the revenues from that area (vs.8). Even sacrifices would be provided by the establishment on a daily basis (vs.9).

God does have a strange way of working with everybody, even with his people. When he closes a door, he opens not just a window, but also a series of bay windows. We, therefore, need not only to have faith in God and in His ways but patience.

Prayer: “Teach us, dear Lord to be patient in you, as you are patient with us.” Amen.

BROKEN COMMITMENTS

August 26th, Thursday

MW Ps. 136(om.v.17-22) Haggai 1 Luke 4.31-end
EW Ps. 137(om.v.7-9),138 Haggai 2 Heb.10.1-18

“You have planted much, but have harvested little.” (Haggai 1: 6)

Haggai's message is to the fifty thousand Jews who had committed themselves to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. They left Babylon in 538 CE. By 536CE, the foundation of the temple was completed. Faced with local opposition, there was a lull in their activity, which lasted for over 16 years. Even though these people had sworn themselves to the rebuilding of the temple, their priorities and focus shifted. Now, comfortable in their own *'panelled' homes* (verse 4), they need to be re-challenged, re-encouraged and re-commissioned by the Lord Almighty through Haggai to move back to their original focus of building the temple.

So many of our church projects lies like decaying monuments because of our shift in focus. Countless foundation stones, unfinished buildings are stark testimonies because we have lost sight of our focus, selling ourselves to Our comforts and conveniences. There is a need to evaluate our shift in focus. So many of our projects have been *'euthanised' because* of this.

How committed are we to church related work? Do we tend to take it for granted? Do we make it conform to our convenience?

Prayer: Renew in us a sense of commitment to the body of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

BOUND TO OBEY

August 27th, Friday

MW Ps. 139(om.v.17-22) Zech. 1.1-17 Luke 5.1-16
EW Ps. 140(om.v.9-10),141 Zech.1.18-2-end Heb.10.19end

**Your fathers, where are they and the prophets, do they live forever?
(Zech. 1: 5)**

The Lord tells his people - "Return to me, and I will return to you." He reminds the people of their forefathers who chose not to listen to the prophets who were there for the people's instruction and guidance. The Lord goes on to say that finally those people who conveniently forgot him and chose to disobey him had passed on in life (ie. had died and now were forgotten), but the prophets who vowed allegiance to the Lord lived on ever after dying because God's words live on in them to be fulfilled. Finally, in vs.6 we see that the words of the Lord, which came to us through the prophets, overtakes the disobedient forefathers.

Looking into the history of this, we realise the forefathers of Zechariah were under a contract to obey the Lord. If they continued to obey the Lord, they would be blessed, but if they chose to reject the Lord, then they would face curses or troubles (Deut.28). The very fact that they were in exile now was because they chose the latter. If the people of Zechariah's time would now choose to return to the Lord their God, he will accept them with blessings.

Today, do we see ourselves in this reading? While the Lord our God is bound to us and we are also bound to him, do we still reject him and his ways? While we may not fully reject him, it may be that we are drifting away from him. Let us return whole-heartedly to the Lord our God.

Prayer: Dear Lord, enable us to devote ourselves to your most wonderful love and help us to be committed to your love. Amen.

GOD'S SPIRIT IS IN MY HEART?

August 28th, Saturday Augustine of Hippo (Conv. Bp.Th.), 430

MW Ps. 142,143(om.v.12) Zech.3.1-4.10 Luke 5.17-32
EW Ps. 144 Zech.4.11-5-end Heb.11.1-16

"Not by might, nor by power". (Zech 4: 6)

In this reading, as Joshua and Zerubbabel are commissioned to do God's work it is but fitting that the Lord reminds them that his work is to begin and to be completed by the Spirit of God, and not by might or power. While Zerubbabel signifies the office of the king for David's line and Joshua (Ch3) signifies the priestly office - both of their work is to be governed by the Spirit of God. While the work of Joshua (meaning God saves) is to minister to the people of God, Zerubbabel's work is to govern the rebuilding of the Temple of God.

Both Joshua and Zerubbabel are to depend on the Spirit of God carrying out their task. It is not to be based only on principles of power or might. But what qualities would the Spirit of God signify? I strongly feel qualities such as righteousness; justice, mercy and equality reflect the characteristics of the Spirit of God.

At an interpretative level, Joshua's work can signify the church while Zerubbabel signifies the State or Institution. As of today, how many of our states or institutions are running on the qualities of the Spirit of God mentioned above? In our places of work, can we put the qualities of the Spirit of God in practice?

Prayer: Dear Lord, make us weak so that we may be strong in you. Amen.

NEEDED : RELIGIOUS SPIRITUALITY

August 29th, Sunday

14th Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: God has called us to be free.

M/EW	Psalm 106.1-12,19-27	L.S.	OT	Numbers 14.1-10a
	OT Numbers 14.1-10a		Psalm	106.24-27,41-44
	NT Galatians 4.1-11		2nd R.	Galatians 4.8-11
	and/or Luke 13.10-17		Gosp.	Luke 13.10-17

The Lord replied, “Are you trying to fool someone? Won’t any one of you untie your ox or donkey and lead it out to drink on a Sabbath? (CEV) (Luke 13:15)

In today’s passage we see the struggle between religiosity and spirituality. In this struggle, where do we fit in the act of ‘praising God’? The ruler of the synagogue was perhaps caught up within the rules of the synagogue and strove to follow them religiously, and in doing so, he forgot about the spiritual connection with God. His point was that since her life was not at stake, the miracle could have been postponed for the ‘next working day’ (when miracles could happen)! He lived within the lines of the ‘shalls and shall nots’ and mistook them to be the focus of worship. In spite of the miracle which took place in front of his eyes, he looked at it as a broken rule. Miracles are okay and acceptable as long as they take place within the stipulated time. Anything else is a crime and needs to be referred to the Committee for rap on the knuckles. Jesus saw through this hypocrisy and challenged the ruler by asking if cattle could be loosed to drink water on the Sabbath, how more a human being (daughter of Abraham and also one who was created in the image of God) could be freed from her sickness!

Looking back, to the time I was ordained as a young minister, I find that I resembled the ruler of the synagogue in a fit of misplaced zeal and devotion. It was only over the years that I could correct myself and retread the path of spirituality. This does not mean spirituality is exempt from rules, but the focus of spirituality is not maintaining the ‘letter of the law’, but sticking to the spirit of the law.

Prayer: Open our eyes, dear Jesus , to the miracles we consciously shut our eyes to. Amen.

DILIGENTLY LOVING GOD

August 30th, Monday

MW	Ps. 147	Zechariah 6	Luke 5.33-6.11
EW	Ps. 148	Zech.7.1-8.8	Heb.11.17-end

“This will happen if you diligently obey the Lord your God.” (Zech 6: 15)

“It was a constant dream for the Jews in exile to return to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls, city and to restore the Temple back to its glory. The Temple was the high point in the life of any Jew. “After Israel had grown into a nationhood, a central shrine became a necessity as a gathering point for all people, a symbol of their unity in the worship of their God”, (New Bible Dictionary, Temple). It was not only a place of worship; it had grown to be a national symbol for them. And this Temple would be rebuilt with the Lord their God’s help by getting people from far away places (vs. 15) to help.

But there is a small clause in the last line of this chapter- *“this will happen if you diligently obey the lord your God”* (vs. 15). They are not only to love the Lord their God but are to love him *diligently*. The word *diligently* means *“careful and conscientious in our work or duties”* (Oxford English Dictionary). It also means *“love or to take delight in”*. The Jews are being told not only to obey the Lord but also to take delight and to love the very act or process of obeying him. Further, the phrase ‘diligently obey the Lord’ is translated in the original as *‘shema,’* that is, to *hear* intelligently, attentively, carefully.

How do we obey God? We have a choice. We can either love God as a duty, or *diligently* love him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, make us not only to love you, but also to obey you. Amen.

OF PRAYER AND ACTIONS

August 31st, Tuesday John Bunyan (Devotional Writer), 1688

MW	Ps. 149	Zech. 8.9-end	Luke 5.33-6.11
EW	Ps. 150	Ezra 7.1,6-10	Heb. 12.1-13

“... Speak the truth and render true and good judgement, do not plot evil ...and do not love to swear falsely.” (Zech 8: 16, 17)

The Lord asks four things of those who are to be in an active, ongoing relationship with Him. To speak the truth, be just, not to plot evil and not to swear falsely. The Lord knew that it was easy for people to separate the actions of their daily life with what he wanted them to be. They could be regular temple goer's sacrifice and worshippers, and yet at the same time, continue to plot evil, swear falsely, speak untruths and not be committed to justice. It was possible because it was exactly this lifestyle, which had got them in trouble with God and then was exiled.

In our lives today, is our prayer or worship life totally separate from the rest of our actions and decisions made or taken throughout the day? Sad to say, but sometimes we tend to put them in watertight compartments. It is very easy for us to separate our spiritual life from our everyday working life. But this is not what God wants. He wants us to relate our worship, prayer and spiritual life with our everyday work. The prayers we say, the hymns we pray and sing in the church are to have a direct impact on us throughout the week and it needs a constant ongoing effort from our side to keep the two one.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to put our prayers, hymns and sermons in action through our lives. Amen.

GOOD PRODUCE

September 1st, Wednesday

MW	Ps. 1,2(om.v.9)	Ezra 7.11-end	Luke 6.27-45
EW	Ps. 3(om.v.7),4	Ezra 8.15-34	Heb.12.14-end

“The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good... for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45)

The Bible gives us an encouraging example of King David. We read in I Samuel 23 & 24 that King Saul, who was after David's life, was making things miserable for David. Because of which David is on run and hiding in the wilderness. "...David was hurrying to get away from Saul, while Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them." I Samuel 23:26. But soon there is a change in the situation. Now David has a chance to kill Saul.

However, he chooses not to do so. We read in I Samuel 24:10 that David says to Saul, "This very day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you into my hand in the cave; and some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not raise my hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed.'" Why did David do so?

King David always lived in the presence and fear of the Lord, always sought to do what is good in His sight and his good conduct changed King Saul completely. Saul say to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil..." (I Samuel 24:17)

The presence of God has the power to transform a life. And a changed life will always produce good fruits. You may be knowing, Reny George from Kerala, who was convicted for criminal offence. He was touched by God in one of the prison prayer fellowship. Now he is an evangelist, who has not only transformed 100 more fellow prisoners but after his release, still continues to be an evangelist in the prison. He also runs an orphanage for the prisoner's children. What a great produce!!

Many times we find difficult to be good especially in adverse situations and to those who intend to hurt and harm us. But God's awesome presence can bring a change within us.

Let our life and conduct be a life changing experience to others.

Prayer: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Amen.