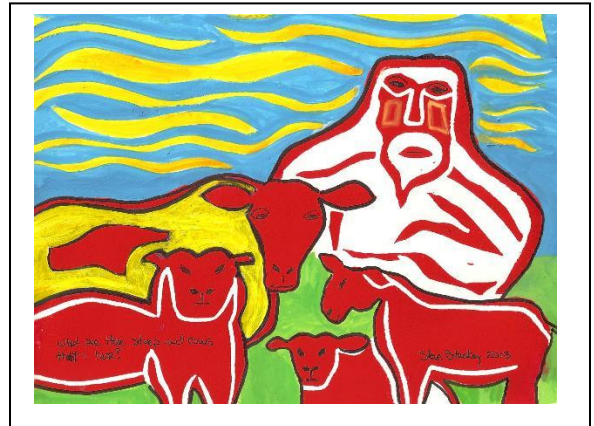


Making Space for God

Opening Prayer

O Lord, I would trust Thee completely. I would be altogether Thine; I would exalt Thee above all. I desire that I may feel no sense of possessing anything outside of thee. I want constantly to be aware of Thy overshadowing Presence and to hear Thy speaking Voice. I long to live in restful sincerity of heart. I want to live so fully in the Spirit that all my thought may be as sweet incense ascending to Thee and every act of my life may be an act of worship. Therefore I pray in the words of Thy great servant of old, "I beseech Thee so far to cleanse the intent of my heart with the unspeakable gift of Thy grace that I may perfectly love Thee and worthily praise Thee." and all this I confidently believe Thou wilt grant me through the merits of Jesus Christ Thy Son. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



*What are These Sheep and Cows that I Hear?
Linoleum Block Print and Watercolor by Steven Stuckey 2013*

From the Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer

Reflection- Looking Back

Take some times to settle yourself. Review your calendar and think back over where you have been this past month. Focus on answering this one question: **How has the Lord been present to you?** In the events of your life; in your joys and fears; in what has occupied your mind and heart; in what you dream about or long for; in what you are thankful for. Journal these thoughts and offer them to the Lord.

Scripture Study—1 Samuel 15:1-25- To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice

The Amalekites were a tribe of nomadic marauders who for centuries pillaged and plundered their way through history. Moses, Saul, David, and Hezekiah all did battle with them. Contemporary manifestations might be Al-Qaeda or the Congolese Rebels. They were bent on death and destruction and Yahweh finally send Saul and his army to reek destruction upon them. The command of genocide sounds disturbing to modern years and rightly so. Evidence from the story, however, suggests that the attack upon the Amalekites was a localized act of judgment. The tribe lived on to fight another day. The story also reveals that the attack was a turning point in Saul's reign as king and in his relationship with the Lord. Notice how he uses his success as a warrior to bolster his internal insecurities. This passage highlights the profound temptation that every successful leader faces.

Reading for Reflection

The truth of Wesley's words is established before our eyes: "Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best, a very slender part of religion. Though right tempers cannot subsist without right opinions, yet right opinions may subsist without right tempers. There may be a right opinion of God without either love or one right temper toward Him. Satan is a proof of this."

Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain.

From the Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozar

“There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says ‘Morning, boys. How’s the water?’ ” the writer David Foster Wallace told a class of graduating college students in 2005. “And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’ ” The water is habits, the unthinking choices and invisible decisions that surround us every day.

The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business by Charles Duhigg

Sacred psychology sees personality as a false-self system. The “true self” is spiritual in nature. It was overshadowed in early life when attention turned to meet the needs of survival. Over time we identified so strongly with the characteristics of our type, and came to rely so heavily on conditioned perceptions, that we forgot our true nature and “became” our personality, or false self. The Enneagram is a psychology from sacred tradition that is based on nine personality types, which, from the perspective of the true, or spiritual, self, are nine illusions about life; and that illusion is the natural starting place for both psychological and spiritual growth.

The Enneagram in Love and Work: Understanding Your Intimate and Business Relationships by Helen Palmer

The thing about hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, the thing that was so profound to me that summer—and yet also, like most things, so very simple—was how few choices I had and how often I had to do the thing I least wanted to do. How there was no escape or denial. No numbing it down with a martini or covering it up with a roll in the hay.

Wild (From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail) by Cheryl Strayed

My original attraction to the Gilded Age, the period in the shadow of the Civil War, grew out of fascination with the religious crisis of the era. So many people were wrestling, as were William James, Henry Adams, and their generation, with the question of how to be an intelligent, skeptical person and yet at the same time somehow sustain what was nourishing about traditional belief. They had to walk that tightrope between faith and doubt.

An Interview with T. J. Jackson Lears

“That finger of Jesus, pointing at Matthew. That’s me. I feel like him. Like Matthew.” Here the pope becomes determined, as if he had finally found the image he was looking for: “It is the gesture of Matthew that strikes me: he holds on to his money as if to say, ‘No, not me! No, this money is mine.’ Here, this is me, a sinner on whom the Lord has turned his gaze. And this is what I said when they asked me if I would accept my election as pontiff.” Then the pope whispers in Latin: “I am a sinner, but I trust in the infinite mercy and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I accept in a spirit of penance.”

From A Big Heart Open to God, an Interview with Pope Francis

The Benediction

You have been reminded that Jesus Christ is your Lord and that you are God’s servant. You are loved; you are forgiven; you are empowered and now you are sent to live as God’s faithful one. Amen

From A Guide to Prayer, page 266

Reflection Questions for 1 Samuel 15:1-25

1. How does Samuel preface his instructions to Saul so that he will take them seriously?
2. The Amalekites were a warring tribal group of people who aggressively raided, attacked, and plundered their neighbors for hundreds of years. What was the purpose of God's edict against the Amalekites?
3. Why does the army fail to carry out the order completely? How was this battle to be different from other battles?
4. "I regret that I have made Saul king because he has turned away from me and not carried out my instructions." What does this statement reveal about God?
5. Reflect upon Samuel's response to the news.
6. What is the evidence that Saul has turned away from God?
7. What is Saul's sin? What are the steps that got him there?
8. What might true complete repentance look like in this situation?
9. What application do you see of this passage to your own life?