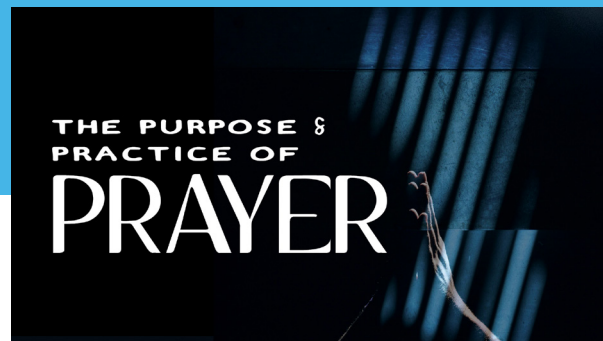


Discussion Questions

November 12, 2023

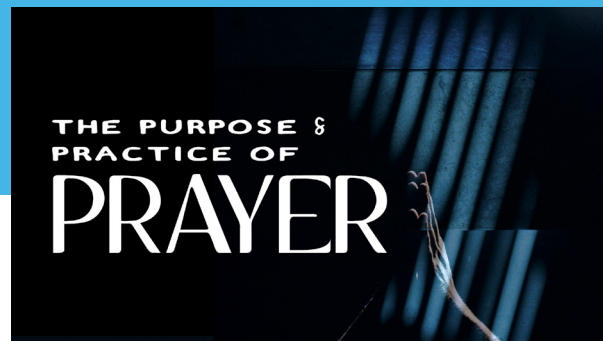
Practicing Prayer: Entering Into the Text



1. Over the last series we have looked at a number of different prayer practices: Centering/Breath Prayer, Practicing the Presence of God, The Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23 Prayer, Lectio Divina, Prayer of Examen. Which one has resonated with you the most and why?
2. How comfortable are you with the practice of using your imagination to help see, hear, or feel what is happening in the text when you engage with Scripture? Share your thoughts of why it is valuable and/or any reservations.
3. James spoke about the shift that occurred during the Enlightenment, where reason became predominant in the reading of scripture, where an individualistic, analytical way of reading overtook a more corporate, relational or experiential way of engaging the Bible. What impact, positive or negative, do you feel this had upon us as Christians today?
4. Were there any moments during the guided prayer exercise of Luke's telling of the woman washing Jesus' feet that stood out to you? What emotions or insights did you experience as you engaged with the story?
5. Practice the method with Luke 10:38-42 - Mary and Martha's story - going through the 4 steps below.
 - Take a few minutes of silence in step 3, then share afterwards what you "saw" and what resonated with you.
 - After a couple minutes of silence in step 4, share again with the group what stood out to you.
 1. Remember that God is present with you.
 2. Read the Gospel passage a couple times.
 3. Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.
 - Put yourself in the scene as an observer, or one of the main people.
 - Pay attention to what you see, hear and feel.
 - Look at what Jesus is doing.
 - Listen to what He says.
 - Look at the people around and what they are doing and feeling.
 - How are people responding to Jesus?
 4. Finish by taking a moment to speak with Jesus.
 - Reflect on what you have seen.
 - Process how this passage applies to you.
 - Listen to what He might say back to you.

Prayer Practice

November 12, 2023



Entering Into the Text

This week, practice this form of "Entering into the text" a few times. Pick any story from the gospels and follow the steps below.

We have provided a guided example for the first passage. We have also provided a few Gospel stories that are very conducive to this style of prayer. Pick any story from the gospels (or other scripture) that you would like to pray through.

Guided example for John 8:2-11

1. Remember that God is present with you

2. Read the Gospel passage a couple times

- Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.
- Put yourself in the scene
- Pay attention to what you see, hear and feel.
- Look at what Jesus is doing.
- Listen to what He says
- Look at the people around and what they are doing and feeling?
- How are people responding to Jesus?

3. Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.

- Feel the power dynamic and her shame
- See Jesus defending her, giving her dignity
- Hear Jesus Forgive her and watch her face
- See the judgment on the faces of the people around.

4. Finish by taking a moment to speak with Jesus.

- Reflect on what you have seen.
- Process what how this passage applies to you
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If you would like a bit of prompting, here is a guided walk through of the passage.

Imagine the chaos of this scene at the temple play out. Feel the crowds of people surrounding Jesus as He sits down and teaches. Some important people drag a scared woman in front of everyone and make a circle around her. Hear the gossips in the crowd talking about her. Hear the anger in the voices of the leader as they accuse her of adultery, then demand Jesus pronounce judgment to stone her. See her face as she shirks in fear and shame, still wearing the clothes from when she was pulled away in the act. Watch Jesus' reaction as He looks at her. Then, as the indignation of the men rises, watch as Jesus is in no rush and draws on the ground. They keep yelling questions at him, some are picking up stones, demanding action. Sit with the tension of this. Feel what she would be feeling at the time alone & scared. Then look at Jesus' face as He tells them that the one without sin should cast the first stone. Watch Him go back and draw again, never giving in to their anger and spite. Then watch as one by one, the men drop their stones and walk away. Watch the angry leader walk away defeated. Then look at the face of the woman as Jesus

stands up, looks around, and tells her there is no one to condemn her. She looks into His eyes as He says, "Neither do I condemn you. God home and sin no more." Watch her body language, imagine what she would be saying. Feel her elation and joy of experiencing unconditional love for the first time she can remember.

For the last step, watch Jesus turn to you. Lay out whatever sin or brokenness you have wrestled with. Hear him say to you. "I do not condemn you." Receive His love. And endeavor, by His strength to seek to move on a path towards Him and away from the disordered desires.

Other good passages to use (though any gospel story can be used)

Luke 17:11-19 - Jesus heals the ten lepers

John 13:2-11 - Jesus washes the disciples feet

Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus Calms the Storm

Matthew 14:22-133 - Jesus Walks on Water

Matthew 14:13-21 - Jesus Feeds the 5,000

Luke 5:1-11 - Jesus Calls Disciples to be Fishers of men

Matthew 9:9-13 - Jesus Calls Matthew & Eats with Sinners

Mark 12:41-44 - The Widow's Mite

Luke 23:44-56 - the Death & Burial of Jesus

Luke 23:33-43 - The Crucifixion of Jesus

Luke 24:13-35 - The Road to Emmaus

Luke 7:36–39 (NLT)

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

Prayer Practices We Have Looked At So Far:

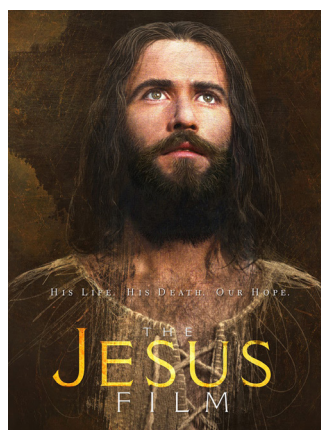
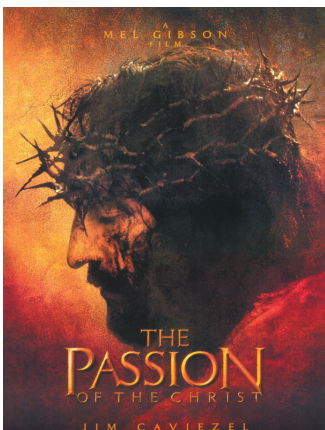
Breath Prayer
 Practicing the Presence of God
 The Lord's Prayer
 Psalm 23 Prayer
 Lectio Divina
 Prayer of Examen

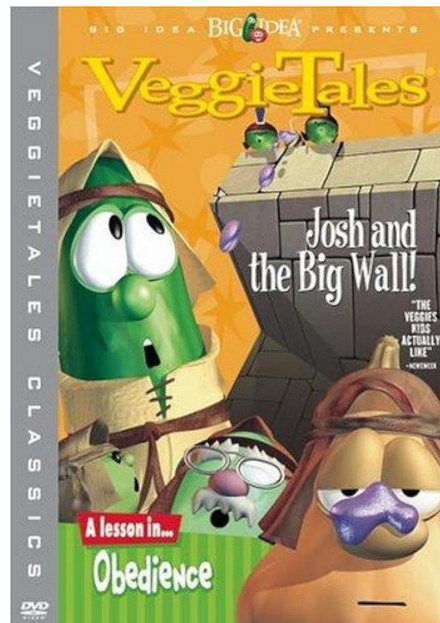
Mark 2:15–17 (CSB)

While he was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him. When the scribes who were Pharisees, saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard this, he told them, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."

- **Read the Gospel passage a couple times**
- **Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.**
 - Put yourself in the scene
 - Pay attention to what you see, hear and feel.
 - Look at what Jesus is doing.
 - Listen to what He says
 - Look at the people around and what they are doing and feeling?
 - How are people responding to Jesus?
- **Finish by taking a moment to speak with Jesus.**
 - Reflect on what you have seen.
 - Process what how this passage applies to you
 - Listen to what he might say back to you.

A scene from The Chosen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YvnpLsnKks>





Dr. Garret Green - Imagining God

For modern people the imagination is often equated with “the imaginary.” It is the stuff of which children’s stories and dreamy wishes are made—nothing more. If God ever did try to communicate to us with an inner voice, an inner image, an inner vision, or dream (I for one believe he is always trying to do just this!), our scientific worldview would incline us to immediately censor it from our consciousness or write it off as “just imagination.”

Daniel 7:1 (CSB)

Daniel had a dream with visions in his mind as he was lying in his bed. He wrote down the dream, and here is the summary of his account.

- 1. Remember that God is present with you**
- 2. Read the Gospel passage a couple times**
- 3. Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.**
- 4. Finish by taking a moment to speak with Jesus.**
- 1. Remember that God is present with you**
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you as you pray.

Luke 7:36–50 (NLT)

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!” Then Jesus answered his thoughts. “Simon, “he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.” “Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied.

Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people - 500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt."

"That's right," Jesus said. Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume."

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?" And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

1. Remember that God is present with you

2. Read the Gospel passage a couple times

- Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.
- Put yourself in the scene
- Pay attention to what you see, hear and feel.
- Look at what Jesus is doing.
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- Look at the people around and what they are doing and feeling?
- How are people responding to Jesus?

3. Imagine the scene and walk through it with your imagination.

- Imagine Simon's Home at the meal
- Imagine yourself as a guest or as the woman
- Picture Jesus' dirty feet unattended
- Picture the rejected prostitute entering
- Picture her tears flowing
- See her open her expensive perfume box and rub it, while others are aghast
- Feel the Power Dynamic and her shame
- See Jesus defending her, giving her dignity
- Hear Jesus Forgive her and watch her face
- See the judgment on the faces of the people around.

4. Finish by taking a moment to speak with Jesus.

- Reflect on what you have seen.
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