



Daily Meditations

October 5 - October 10, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT, PROPER 22

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and meditation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Log in Our Own Eye

Monday, October 5, 2020

Luke 6:39-49

"Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit?" - Luke 6:39

On a late November evening, I was watching a glorious sunset, over the snow-covered Sierra, from the top of Yosemite Falls. My friend Ted and I hurried up the trail without much forethought. Now we realized we had to get back down to camp, and we had no flashlight. Luckily for most of the hike back, we had the benefit of moonlight reflected off the canyon walls. But the last half mile the trail descended into the woods where the moonlight did not penetrate. It felt like we were blind. We would walk by feel. Every once in a while, I would step off the switch-back and let out a yell. Then Ted came up from behind, reached out a hand, helped me back onto the trail, and took the lead until he walked off a switch-back, and we repeated the process.

So, my answer is: yes, the blind can lead the blind, when we acknowledge our blindness, when we are humble enough to recognize the log in our own eye.

I'm becoming a big advocate of humility, of always remembering that we might be wrong, that we have more to learn, that we are incapable of acting totally without self-interest. I believe practicing humility is the process of removing the "log from our own eye."

The Centurion

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

Luke 7:1-17

The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." - Luke 7:3-5

A centurion, the commander of 100 soldiers of an occupying and hated Roman army:

- has the support and respect of local Jews after helping them build their synagogue.
- recognizes Jesus as a man of spiritual authority analogous to the centurion's martial authority,
- is ashamed to meet Jesus face-to-face, or let Jesus into his house. So, he sends his message to Jesus through Jewish elders and friends.

I pray that all soldiers everywhere, of all nationalities, be modeled after this man, who regardless of what side he is on, seems to seek to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with his God. Able to see God in others and find help wherever he needs it.

Your Own Experience Says it Best

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Luke 7:18-35

"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor." - Luke 7:22

John the Baptizer is in prison, so he sends his disciples to get confirmation from Jesus that He is the Messiah.

A good rule of communication states: speak only for yourself, never for anyone else. To go back to John and say "Jesus says yes" or "Jesus says no" would put them in the place of speaking for Jesus. So, Jesus tells them "watch this, and then tell John what you see."

When we evangelize—that is, share the good news—we don't need to quote Scripture, we don't need to parrot doctrine. We don't need to tell what Jesus would do. We do it best when we share our own experience, our own encounters with the divine, with Jesus.

Freely Forgiven

Thursday, October 8, 2020

Luke 7:36-50

"I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown." - Luke 7:47

I've told this story before, but it needs telling today.

It was 30 years ago, and I was practicing a form of "imaginative prayer" in which I imagined meeting Jesus and experiencing the encounter. I had not been scrupulous in my prayer life and had not been praying regularly. At that moment, I was in an emotional crisis, and I needed Jesus. I met him on a beach north of Santa Cruz, California. I felt shame for having been so unfaithful and apologized for being so self-centered and selfish. Instead of being judgmental, Jesus started giving me a gentle healing massage, there

in the sand on the beach. I tried to reject the undeserved love but realized I needed to accept it. In the end, I found myself lying on the sand, my arms wrapped around His ankles and wetting his feet with my grateful tears.

Like this woman's experience, God's love and forgiveness is not given because we love God; we love God because we are freely forgiven. That is an awe-full and tear-full thing to realize.

Individual Paths

Friday, October 9, 2020

Luke 8:1-15

Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. - Luke 8:1-3

I tended to respond to the eager evangelist's question: "When were you saved?" with a slightly smart-aleck but also honest answer and believed: "When Jesus died on the cross around 2,000 years ago." I rebel against the idea that there is only one way to God. I was raised in an active church-going family and maybe I am predisposed to believe what I am taught. It prepared me to be open to my encounters through church, worship, prayer, study, and reflection. I suspect the Twelve were likewise prepared by religious training and had the dispositions to follow when called. The centurion we read about on Tuesday seemed to be predisposed to be open to the divine and truth regardless of what religious tradition it came from. The women mentioned here reportedly responded in gratitude for the gifts of healing they received.

While all paths lead to the kingdom through Jesus, thank God for all the different paths.

Light of the World

Saturday, October 10, 2020

Luke 8:16-25

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light." - Luke 8:16

Several times in my life, when friends have said things like, "sometimes I wish it would all just end" or even in a joking tone, "maybe I should just kill myself," I have responded, expressing concern and asking them how serious they are. I always felt some fear that my concerns offended them but every time, they have expressed appreciation for my concern.

Sometimes it is scary to shine a light into the darkness. Sometimes, like a lighthouse, a light is a beacon warning of danger, and a light of encouragement.

We are called to be the light of the world and are promised that the darkness shall not overcome it.

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