

Lectio Divina (Psalm 16)

Series: Scripture

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Psalm 16

Practice, Discipleship, Scripture

One of my dear friends had a radical conversion to faith. In the middle of a crazy party with some of the crazy things you can imagine that come with weird alcohol parties they heard the voice of the Holy Spirit calling them home. In the middle of the night in drunken stupor they gave their lives to Jesus and decided to start following the Lord.

She woke up the next morning and told some of her friends that she had become a Christian. Some laughed it off and thought she was still hangover. They gave it a couple of weeks to check in again. Her heart had not changed. She had made up her mind to follow Jesus.

She has a familiar question on repeat.

I grew up in a pastor's home. It was not a radical conversion. Instead, you were born into a family who parents were believers and so you were dragged to church Sunday morning and Wednesday night you hosted a home group and Friday night there was a bible study. At some point you made your own decision to follow Jesus but some of all this was already too familiar.

With people with a background like man, the same question my friend had is also familiar.

Something you have in common with my friend is questions about the Bible. How are you to use it? What do you do with your struggle to read it? How relevant is it today? What should you do with very disturbing passages in it or instructions you do not really want to follow?

Both in the church and outside of the church, people struggle with what to make of the Bible. So George has been walking us through a conversation on the Bible for couple of weeks. And I like how in his gentle demeanour he touched on just very important truths and made them accessible to all of us.

Let me walk us through some of the key facets of the things he shared with us

He striated by inviting us to know what the Bible is. A Library of scripture both divine and human that all culminates and finds its fulfilment in Jesus.

What that means is that

- The Bible is not one book, despite being bound by 2 covers. Rather a library covering different literary genres, by different authors, written at different times to different people. Which means you do not approach all books in the same way.
- It also means it was a collaboration between human authors and the Holy Spirit. These human authors wrote in their humanity about the things of God as people carried by the Holy Spirit. And you cannot ignore either. You cannot pick and choose one or the other.
- It also says that all the books despite their variety all lead to Jesus. Not necessarily metaphors of Jesus but they are all building up to their fulfilment in Jesus. They are all connected.

The second week he invited us to focus on our posture more than our technique or skill or style of reading the Bible. It is possible to have a great view of the Bible but with the wrong posture of the heart you would still approach it as someone who wants to control it towards a certain outcome.

So what was the invitation? That the posture of our hearts should be that of trust because we are disciples of Jesus. We do not trust the Jesus because of the Bible, rather, we trust the Bible because we trust Jesus with our lives as his disciples.

Jesus had such a high view of scripture and it played a central place in his life. There is no following Jesus and ignoring scripture.

Because of this we approach the Bible not as critics neither as defenders but as disciples of Jesus.

Then last week he talked about the primary use of scripture in our lives. Scripture is primarily for our transformation not for information. Not that reading for information is wrong, but that is not the primary use of the Bible.

We do not use scripture to win arguments, to cast out demons and bad dreams, make our buildings holy or to bash others on the head with. Instead, it is primarily meant for our formation.

That way, we can draw from it's deep truths and lean on it's wisdom. So that we can live out it's truths and be filled with true life regardless of the season of our lives.

To do this we are invited to sit with scripture. Read it and reread it. To wrestle with it, to contend with it. To pray through it, to delight in it, to journey with it alongside the company of the Holy Spirit.

And one of the ways this has been done in the church through the years is through the practice of Lectio Divina. This ancient practice that George talked about last week is just a tool to help us in meditation on scripture. It is not an end to itself or the best thing out there. Just a jembe for the shamba.

And like all the practices we talk about here. The goal is not to have done it or to feel a certain way after doing it or to achieve a certain milestone. It is to be with Jesus. To gently learn to practice the presence of God.

So that is what, as has been our practice since last year, we will do together today. And for those who are here for the first time, I will walk us through it so I got you covered. If all I have said got you wound up or interested, go online and listen to the entire series and a lot will fall better into place.

So this is how we will do it as a community

1. PREPARE

Pick the scripture you will use. If you are new, start with Psalms or the Gospels.

Situate yourself comfortably in a quiet place, which means turning off your phone and staying away from distraction, remember what you are there to do. It's simply being prepared to meet with God.

2. READ (Lectio)

Read the first time. Read slowly carefully and preferably out loud, it channels your focus so take your time, as you move through the text pay close attention to what words and ideas draw your attention in a unique way. If something strikes you then pause and take note of it.

3. REFLECT (Meditatio)

Read a second time. Take the text personally think about how it intersects with you. What are your thoughts? Become aware of what you are feeling in that moment?

4. RESPOND (oratio)

Read a third time. Talk to God about your experience, if you are confused say that if it upsets you, talk to God about that tell him how you feel, if you are compelled to worship then worship.

Ask yourself what do I need to know or do or become in light of this text what does it mean for my life today.

5. REST (contemplatio)

Read one more time then rest and sit silently with God and whatever it is you are feeling in light of this exercise feel it knowing that you are in the presence of God himself.

So why don't we start (cue synth pads gently)

We will read from Psalm 16 today. I will be reading ver 1-2, 5-6 and 9-10. I will guide us through the steps gently.

Lectio for Big Group (Adopted from Lectio 365)

1. PREPARE:

2. READ (Lectio)

1. Please Read the Scripture On the Screen with Me out Loud and slowly

**Keep me safe, O mighty God.
I run to you, my safe place.
I said to Yahweh,
“You are my Maker and my Master.
Any good thing you find in me has come from you.”
Yahweh, you alone are my inheritance.
You are my prize, my pleasure, and my portion.
You hold my destiny and its timing in your hands.
Your pleasant path leads me to pleasant places.
I’m overwhelmed by the privileges
that come with following you!
My heart and soul explode with joy—full of glory!
Even my body will rest confident and secure.
For you will not abandon me to the realm of death,
nor will you allow your Faithful One to experience corruption**

Is there anything that strikes you or captures your attention from our reading today? Feel free to write that down. On the journals or sticky notes on your tables.

3. Reflect

2. Here are some questions to help you reflect on the scripture we have just read?

**I said to Yahweh,
“You are my Maker and my Master.
Any good thing you find in me has come from you.”**

1. In what ways have you seen God’s goodness in you in the past week?

**Yahweh, you alone are my inheritance.
You are my prize, my pleasure, and my portion.
You hold my destiny and its timing in your hands.
Your pleasant path leads me to pleasant places.**

2. Do you feel that where God has led you is pleasant? Or are you in difficult place not seeing how where your life is can be any pleasant? Why not talk to your father about it?

**My heart and soul explode with joy—full of glory!
Even my body will rest confident and secure.**

3. How does your body feel? Do you feel you have carried the stress and pressures of the week? Can you breathe in God's rest and confidence?

4. What words of praise come to your heart today?

***My heart and soul explode with joy—full of glory!
Even my body will rest confident and secure.***

5. Are you struggling to find joy today? How can you posture your body, your mind and your heart to praise despite your current circumstances?

4. Respond

What action is today's scripture calling you to as you look forward to next week? Is God inviting you to gratitude for the goodness you have seen around you? How could gratitude flow from you?

Are you being invited to praise? Does that look like a song? Sharing your story with someone?

Are you in a hard place and all this sounds a bit unreal? How can you live out today's scripture out of faith? Trusting God to keep His promises and bring you joy?

5. Rest

I will read one last time and I invite you to just sit quietly resting in God's peace. Whatever you feel now, rest knowing you are here and God is here with you.

***Keep me safe, O mighty God.
I run to you, my safe place.
I said to Yahweh,
"You are my Maker and my Master.
Any good thing you find in me has come from you."
Yahweh, you alone are my inheritance.
You are my prize, my pleasure, and my portion.
You hold my destiny and its timing in your hands.
Your pleasant path leads me to pleasant places.
I'm overwhelmed by the privileges
that come with following you!
My heart and soul explode with joy—full of glory!
Even my body will rest confident and secure.
For you will not abandon me to the realm of death,
nor will you allow your Faithful One to experience corruption***

I bless you O Lord, Our God

King of the Universe

Who brings out in us and around us all that is good.

Who brings praise in us even in times we find difficult and in so doing healing our hearts with gratitude.

Help us now step into the coming week with our eyes set on you.

You are all that is good and pure, now call us to yourself.

Amen.