

LENT SERMONS: "Practicing the Presence of God"

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II Lent 2022, the Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12,17-18, Philippians 3:17-4:1, Luke 13:31-35, Psalm 27

Depth Psychology Temperament preferences...Intuition, Sensation. Thinking, Feeling

What to do if you are an Intuitive type in preference? After age 50, we should be integrating all of them, even if we want to ignore our least favorite. But for a personal spiritual Practice of the Presence of God, there is a method that each type will PREFER to use.

Intuition using the scriptures. The Intuitive preference relies on a private revelation, a dream, a sign, a vision, an 'a-ha' moment, a gut feeling. What may happen is not understandable to everyone, but the intuitive person gets it and is guided by it.

We have two examples of this in Abram/later Abraham's story in Genesis 15. The prophet has two visions from God which direct and totally change his life and the life of his people forever.

"Count the stars, so shall your descendants be"! So, he is promise beyond any logic that he will be the father of millions. And in the fiery covenant of the sacrificed animals and birds, he is given not only the gift of the Promised land of Israel, but a covenant relationship, one-on-one, with God.

And look at all the images we get in Psalm 27, the Latin name says it all "*Dominus illuminatio*"= *God lights me up!* Pictures of light, a feeling of protection even though an enemy army is camped out at your doorstep. a secret safe cave in the height of a mountain. And the best ones for me; "*You speak in my heart and say, 'Seek my face'. Your face, O Lord, will I seek*" and "*What if I had not believed that I should see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living?*"

And the writer of the Letter to the folks at Philippi—"their god is their belly". we can't forget that one! And "*He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory.*" These are all pictures we can see in our imagination and feel in our insides.

That is part of Intuition.

And for half the human population, probably the most poignant, the most gut-wrenching is that one of Jesus as a lady hen, calling to gather her chicks under her winged protection. And we all know the sharp-shinned hawk is flying just under the lowest tree branch to spy supper..."*and you were not willing!*" Jesus asked you to the Prom and you turned Him down. But you will see Him when you say, "*Blessed in the One who comes in the Name of the Lord*". Then you will see in your heart what '*things you have left undone*'! We hope.

A particular Spiritual Practice for Intuitives in the JESUS PRAYER, the words taken from St. Luke 18:13="Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!" That's the whole prayer as Jesus tells it. And it is connected to I Thessalonians, chapter 1, when St. Paul tells the people in the church there to "*Pray without ceasing*". There is a long tradition, beginning at least in the 10th century undivided Church, that those two quotes are connected, and are very strong in the Orthodox tradition. People tried with the help of a spiritual advisor, to practice the Jesus Prayer as an intuitive preference. Maybe at first, it seems impossible to keep it running through your

head and heart continually. And some people have done very well with it and have been comforted immensely by it when making a regular commute, or peeling potatoes! For me, it works best at night, when unwelcome or unhappy thoughts decide they need to come crowding in and the lizard brain takes over the functions of the logical mind. My breath is short these days and my joints ache, so what works for me is a shorter version—I already know for sure, the sinner part.

Inhale—"Lord", Exhale, "Have mercy". Try it, when you awake, when you walk, when you work.... You're going to have to breathe anyway, why not pray! "Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy"...Keep it up, and you will find that practicing the presence of God in this way is calming, instructive without thought, cleaning, healing, joyful, safe in the worst of times. and lovely no matter what. Amen? Amen.