

SHALOM

We have all experienced difficulty in finding peace at times. During, and while recovering from, a recent bout of Covid, I felt spiritually and physically washed out.

I thought of the reading in Genesis: Isaac, as ‘He went out into the field one evening to meditate’ and was reminded of those regular daily times, set aside to seek the Lord with a still heart, in a quiet place. Genesis. 24:63

The best part of a week had gone by and I was struggling to concentrate on concentrating!

I found myself carrying stress and tension and needing to return to the practice of meditation. The meditation that allows us to maintain that ongoing sense of inner calm.

I knew that I needed to begin with stillness and prayer. I wanted to re-join that spiritual walk. To seek peace. Shalom, the Hebrew word, described by Strong’s Concordance as meaning completeness, wholeness, health, safety, prosperity, fullness, rest and harmony as well as tranquillity and peace.

As Joshua and all the people are led, by God into The Promised Land, He reminds them that He will be with them and He will ‘ never leave or forsake you’. In order to progress and lead his people, God also tells Joshua, ‘to be strong and courageous’ and ‘ to be careful to observe the law of the Lord’, ‘meditate on it day and night’. Joshua. 5:5-9

In reclaiming this vital practice, I began with a prayer for peace. Not something to be approached in haste, suggests David Cole, but gently and quietly, slowly observing the peace and beauty that surrounds us.

The deep peace of the quiet earth to you;
The deep peace of the still air;
The deep peace of the running wave to you;
The deep peace of the warming sun;
The deep peace of the gentle night to you;
The deep peace of the shining stars to you;
The deep peace of the forgiving heart to you;
The deep peace of the Prince of Peace.
- a Celtic blessing

“ There is a contemplative in us all, almost strangled, but still alive who craves enjoyment of the Now and longs to touch the seamless garment of silence which makes us whole” Alan Torey

‘contemplation is the highest expression of man’s intellectual and spiritual life. It is that life itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life.’ Thomas Merton

Jesus taught his disciples to pray and to persevere in prayer.

‘Ask and it will be given: search and you will find’, ‘ the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him’.

Mark 7:7

The glory and power of praying and meditating together and rejoicing together in shared worship and understanding is yet more of the experience of now.

Consider past meditation and all that we have experienced through the power and goodness of God, as well as His promises for the future.

Psalm 119, calls us to meditate and consider God’s ways, His words and His teachings. The psalmist calls out, ‘Help me to understand and continue to meditate on your wonders’ and ‘I will meditate on your laws and obey your commands’. Help me to persist and not to be wrong footed by others. The more I understand of your teachings, the more I long to live out your ways. I will meditate on your promises.

May the prayers, meditation and continuing actions of our lives be pleasing to the Lord.

AMEN