**Ways of Faith 7-Meditation**

**Talking to Myself**

Unity Church August 24, 2025

Psalm 119: 9-16 Matthew 6:25-34

How many of us talk to ourselves? No, don’t raise your hand, folks will laugh. Next question, how many of us answer? My Dad used to say that when he talked to himself, he knew that someone was listening. Okay, another question, How many of us worry? And finally, how many of us meditate? No I don’t mean sitting on a rug with your arms crossed saying OHM. Today, I’d like to meditate on meditation, if you will.

In the Old Testament reading from Psalms this morning, David says, “I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.” Interestingly, throughout the 119th Psalm, there are 8 references to the word “meditate.” Of the 14 citations in the Bible, all but two of them appear in Psalms. The majority appear in Psalms that David wrote. According to the Psalms, he meditated on: God’s unfailing love, His mighty deeds (twice), His precepts (twice), His decrees (twice), His law, His statutes, His promises, His works and again, His wonderful works.

In various Psalms, David talks about actively, always, constantly meditating on these things. He says that he meditates throughout the watches of the night; that in times of trouble he meditates so that he won’t forget the wonderful works and mercy of God. We read this scripture and in the back of our minds, we’re thinking, “Really?”

Joshua, in one of the other citations on meditation, admonishes the people of Israel to, “Keep this Book of the Law (the Torah)always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Always on your lips, meditate on it day and night.

I don’t know about you, but whether you’re retired or not, most of us have plenty of things to keep us busy. I don’t know many people who have the time or the luxury of sitting around all day meditating or thinking about anything, even if they wanted to. Frankly, I can’t think of many folks who would truly want to sit around meditating all day long. 1

Which takes me back to my original question, “How many of us talk to ourselves?” The difference between the literal meaning of Hebrew in the scriptures and the words that are used in the English, never ceases to amaze me. The word that is translated as “meditate” in our Bible, comes from various Hebrew words: *siyach* and *siychah*, which mean “to ponder” and by implication “to converse,” usually with one’s self. The other family of words translated as “meditate” is the words from the root *hawgaw*, which goes toward murmuring and by implication, pondering. Both of these words infer or imply talking to oneself, hence the question.

In other words, the ancient Hebrew idea of meditation or contemplation is quite different from the modern image of meditating. Instead of sitting still doing nothing, it’s more like whistling while you work, or mumbling while you drive or in my case, a veritable conversation when working alone in the shop or the office. Yes, I’ll admit to talking to myself and I’m afraid that Sherry can confirm that sometimes I answer. Fritz used look at me a little funny, but he got used to it.

In the same manner that a chemist works out a formulae on a white board, I often work out a theory or argument of the scriptures out loud, either in the office, or the car. To my mind, this is meditation or contemplation. What logic or rationality exists in my sermons goes back to this process.

Okay, outside of having your pastor admit to being a little odd, what does this mean to us? How do we use this scripture, this idea, in our day to day lives? At the risk of bringing God down to a human level, let me answer a question with a question: Do you know that dazed look that someone who is in love, has? That far off expression, almost empty headedness, verging on stupid, that people go through when they first fall in love?

Most of us have been down this road in one way or another, whether we care to admit it or not. Part of that experience is thinking about the way that our love holds something or says something or that special way they giggle or smirk. Part of it is also imaginary conversations with this person or telling yourself how they do this or that.

2

Even though there are other things we should have been doing at the time, this thought process about the object of our affection continued to run. Over time, it moved from the front to the back of our minds and we return to normal, but the normal is different from what it was before we fell in love. This makes sense because hopefully being in love will change you.

This process is part of the method in which someone else becomes part of our lives, both emotionally and physically. It takes us to a point where we can’t imagine a time or a place where this other person wasn’t part of our life. We also can’t imagine a time when this person won’t be a part of our life. I think that what David is talking about in the idea of “meditate” and “think” is similar to that process.

Whether we are mumbling to ourselves or telling others, we are mentally processing the wonderful attributes of God, shown to us through his faithfulness, His love, His word and His deeds. Remember the old saying, “God is good, all the time” and the reverse, “All the time, God is good?” I know people who say this frequently throughout their day and week, simply to remind themselves of who they are and who they serve. It’s a theme running in the background of their lives, an assurance, an affirmation.

Each of us needs this reminder, this assurance, not only that God is faithful, but who we are as a child of the king. Many of both the small and large worries of our daily life can be put into perspective, made manageable, by remembering that we are the adopted child of a father who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, who creates things out of nothing and yet cares for each of us as unique individuals.

We sing the hymns, Count your blessings name them one by one, or, I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able, but we don’t sing these every week, let alone every day. We get busy, we get preoccupied, we forget. In that forgetting, we slip back into the old mindset that we are all alone, just little old me against the big bad world.

3

Before we know it, we have pulled into ourselves, playing defense. We don’t have the energy to reach out to others, to show Christ’s love, we’re hurt, we’re angry, we’re scared. Because we’re playing defense, our gifts, both natural and Spirit given remain hidden. We’re only focused on ourselves and the seemingly overwhelming situations in which we find ourselves. Sadly, we are human and we tend to resort to our default position.

Which goes back to David’s reminder to meditate on these things constantly, we need to be constantly reminded that God loves us, forgives our screw ups, heals us, sustains us. Maybe I should say that we need to constantly remind ourselves because that’s what we are doing if we put Psalm 119 into action.

Now I’m sure that there are folks here that will say, “I don’t know how to meditate.” I was talking about this to someone the other day and he made a very good point. He said, “When someone tells me that they don’t know how to meditate, I ask them if they know how to worry.” I started to chuckle and he continued, “What is worry but negative meditation?” The man has a point.

I realize that there is a thin line between concern and worry, but I suspect that most of us spend too much time on the wrong side of that line. It is one thing to be concerned about how we’re going to pay $2000 worth of bills with $1673 in our checking account. There are plenty of people who face this dilemma. It is another thing to spend our time and energy convincing ourselves that this situation is never going to change and each month is going to be a Ground Hog day of this scenario, till we die. The first is concern, the latter is worry.

The other side of that coin, is I’m not going to stand up here and tell you that if you get right with Jesus, everything will be coming up roses. I know plenty of people who are right with the Lord who are dealing with cancer, financial hardship, marital problems, etc.

The difference, and this is a big difference, is that they realize that it’s not them agains the world, but God and them against the world. That they are partnered with a God who answers prayer, sometimes miraculously, sometimes slowly, but He does answer prayer. In that realization, they recognize that there is hope, there is the possibility of changing circumstances and the realization that they aren’t unworthy, because God didn’t make no junk. 4

In reminding themselves, meditating, for lack of a better word, folks recognize that they can do better than their current circumstances, they gain the courage to reach higher, improve themselves. Those suffering from various diseases gain a peace that whether they are healed physically or called home, they are in the arms of a loving God. Those in rotten relationships develop a realization that they are indeed a child of the King and a child of the king will not be treated this way.

In our normal everyday lives, we gain the courage to reach out to others in the love of Christ to those around us who are suffering or unloved. This not only benefits the community, it strengthens the church and furthers the body of Christ.

We bloom where we’re planted and encourage those around us to blossom.

We pray the psalms in the idea of asking God to teach us his way, we ask Him to show us, lead us, etc. Through the Psalmist, God turns around like a good teacher and gives us homework, unending homework, meditate on these things. Turn your worry time into reminding time, How great is our God.

Amen

5

Psalm 119:15-27 NRSV

15 I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.

16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

17 Deal bountifully with your servant, so that I may live and observe your word.

18 Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

19 I live as an alien in the land; do not hide your commandments from me.

20 My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all times.

21 You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments;

22 take away from me their scorn and contempt, for I have kept your decrees.

23 Even though princes sit plotting against me, I will meditate on your statutes.

24 Your decrees are my delight, they are my counselors.

25 My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to your word.

26 When I told of my ways, you answered me; teach me your statutes.

27 Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works.

Matthew 6:25-34 (NRSV)

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?  Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?  And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.  But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’  For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.  But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” (Sufficient unto the day are the troubles thereof. KJV)