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**PENTECOST 5 MEDITATION**

**JULY 5, 2020**

Dear Friends,

In today's Gospel from Matthew we are reminded that some forms of wisdom cannot be obtained by working ourselves into a state of weariness. Knowledge of God, it seems, cannot always be achieved through excellence of effort or dent of perseverance.

This perspective turns my normal ways of being and doing in the world upside down. Jesus has a way of doing that, of course, but it still catches me off guard. What might it mean if through hard work we sometimes miss the point Jesus is making and, perhaps, even the main purpose of our lives as Christians? Can I really reconcile this part of me with the need to become more childlike in my faith?

One of my mentors suggested that a primary task of our lives is to grieve appropriately, remain resilient, and embrace the new normal. We can stay stuck in our mistrust of change, or we can see the Spirit in Her power as Comforter, creator, and, as the Psalm says, "renewer"; as a source, that is, of strength and wisdom.

You can certainly say that in these times of pandemic and national issues, we face a "new normal" with white-knuckle-like anxiety. The changes, for example, that the church is required to make to reopen are many. As such, these changes can either be ignored and resisted or measured by recommended health and safety adaptations and accepted in order to resume in-person worship.

And with God's help as our source of strength and wisdom, and your cooperation, soon, we will worship together to the Lord who is known to us in the breaking of the bread during Communion and together give thanks for God's grace and mercy.

*To the childlike, O God, you reveal yourself, and on those who are meet and humble of heart you bestow the inheritance of your kingdom. Set our hearts free from every burden of pretension and refresh our weary souls with the teaching of Christ, that with him we may shoulder the gentle yoke of the cross, and proclaim to everyone the joy that comes God. We pray through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*  
*From Prayers for Sunday and Seasons, Year A, Peter J. Scagnelli, LTP, 1992.*

Faithfully, Beverly+

## **PENTECOST 5 PATHWAYS**

**JULY 5, 2020**

**The Lessons:** Psalm 145:8-15, Zechariah 9:9-12, Romans 7:15-25a, Matthew 11:16-19,25-30

### **The Collect**

*O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

### **DANCING**

"**Lord of the Dance**" is a hymn written by English songwriter Sydney Carter in 1963. The melody is from the American Shaker song "Simple Gifts". The hymn is widely performed and popular as contemporary hymnody. Here's the refrain:

*Dance, dance, wherever you may be  
I am the lord of the dance, said he  
And I lead you all, wherever you may be  
And I lead you all in the dance, said he*

Jesus is trying to tell us about that "something else" in our gospel passage today. Remember the admonition, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We wailed, and you did not mourn."

Jesus knows that everyone is not hearing him. He has just challenged the religious authorities on their interpretation of the prohibitions against activity on the Sabbath. They are already doing what plotting authorities do. Rather than meeting his argument, they are attacking his character. They are calling him "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners."

Now I get how difficult it is to throw off the yoke of the desire to be perfect. And, I get how hard it is to throw off the yoke of the desire to control how everybody else feels about you. But Jesus is saying more than that. He is calling us to more than a life without rules or emotional burdens. He is calling us to a life of love.

The flute is an image pulled from a wedding celebration. The bond and covenant of marriage is often used as a symbol for the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church. The music of the flute is a call to dance in celebration of the fact that we are loved and, with God's help, can learn how to love others.

The “something else” that Jesus is trying to tell us about is love.

The 14th century mystic Julian of Norwich said it best, I think, when she said,

*Do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing?*

*Know it well. Love was his meaning.*

*Who reveals it to you? Love.*

*What did he reveal to you? Love.*

*Why does he reveal it to you? Love.*

It's not just about getting rid of our inhibitions or following our feelings or even being in the moment. It's about learning how to love, which I think we do when we know that we *are* loved.

**We are to learn and study that with Jesus provides for us but we are to be meek as we become more fully aware of His ways of Love, and we are to be transfigured and transformed by our experience of the revelation.**

Not unlike the Matthean Gospel in miniature we are to live out the revelation of Jesus Christ and become the discipleship community creation was intended to bring forth. We are to be servants of all if we are friends of Jesus. We are the meek. Our lives and relationships are to be different than those around us for the purpose of God's revelation.

*“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (from Matthew 11:28-30.)*

The words we receive we are to proclaim and enact for others, receiving the weary, carrying their heavy burdens, giving others rest. We are to take Jesus' yoke and to learn and while being humble and gentle, we are to help others find rest for their souls.

**Love is the “something else” Jesus is talking about and this is what it looks like.**

**We can start by learning that you don't have to dance well to get God's love. God loves you so that you can learn how to dance well. The key is to dance like Jesus is watching and delighting in your every movement!**