

A9 | Awaken to God's Presence: Finding Calm in the Storm | Lectio Divina
Project Zion Podcast

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A gift of peace in the midst of troubling times. Project Zion Podcast offers this series of guided practices to help you connect with the divine. No matter where you are, and what's going on around you. Take a deep breath and allow your spirit to find calm in the storm of life.

Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin

Hi, this is Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin with Community of Christ Spiritual Formation Ministries. And today I invite you to join me in the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina, which is Latin for divine or sacred reading.

Lectio Divina is a way of praying with Scripture. And has four primary movements that invite us to read and savor a scripture text slowly turning it over in our minds and hearts before God and noticing the invitations from the Living Word that stir in us this day. As we move through this practice, I'll invite us to listen to the scripture text. Pause for the silence and ask questions and share statements that help us continue to reflect on the scripture in a spirit of prayer.

The four primary movements include first just simply listening with an open mind and heart and noticing where our attention is drawn. Then the second time noticing how the scripture text engages our senses or stirs memories or emotions in response to what we have heard. The third time we are listening for a summons or invitation, noticing or the scripture text is intersecting with the realities of our real lives and contexts. And the fourth time we hear the text, we are invited to let go of all of our images and feelings and simply rest in the presence of God. Letting the scripture draw us and settle us into a time of deeper contemplation.

As we move through this time, I invite you to recognize the ways that you typically approach scripture. Many of us have varied relationships with sacred text. For many, that relationship is analytical, which can make it challenging to simply rest in the invitations of the Spirit.

We recognize that a healthy and holistic treatment of Scripture includes both scholarly research and contextualization and study. But it also includes an invitation to rest into God's invitations in the text as they are coming to us here and now. Balancing these approaches to Scripture helps us continue to grow in in the spiritual life.

And so now I invite you to settle into a posture of prayer that is comfortable for you. drawing your attention to your breath. Simply noticing each inhale and exhale as you begin to quiet within an open a space to be present to God this day.

Anytime during this prayer that you find yourself wandering or distracted, you are invited to use your breath as an anchor to return you to this intention to be present to God in prayer through these sacred words. Text we'll be sharing in today comes from Jeremiah chapter 17 verses seven through nine.

I invite you to first listen as I read this powerful image, noticing if there is a word or phrase or image that captures your attention this day. Don't worry about analyzing or trying to make meaning of the text. Just simply pay attention to what shimmers for you in this first reading, and maybe even repeat it over and over in the silence, turning it over and seeing it more deeply within you. Let's hear these words from sacred text.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water. Sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Just rest into those words for a moment. And I'll read it again. As we notice what shimmers for us, noticing where your attention is drawn that you are invited to just hold in prayer before God.

Blessed it are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes and its leaves shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious and it does not cease to bear fruit.

As you hear this text a second time, bring your imagination into prayer. Let your senses experience the text. What do you see, hear, smell, touch? What images feelings or memories are stirred or evoked for you in the listening, but the end come to life in you, as you hear it in a spirit of prayer.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when he comes, and its leaves shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Third movement of this prayer invites us to listen in to our own life for an invitation or a summons. Where does this text where does this image intersect with the realities of your life as you come to this time of prayer today? What special meaning or invitation might these sacred words have for you? Notice what is evoked as you listen again to these words.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when he comes, and its leaves shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The fourth and final movement of Lectio Divina invites us to release all words and images to rest in the presence of God. Sinking deeper into an experience of stillness, that this text leads us into a time of relationship and connection. So let's hear these words one more time. And as you

listen, notice again your breath, resting in the presence of God for a few moments in the silence.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Return your awareness again to your breathing. Giving thanks for whatever has come in this time of prayer. Notice the quality of your presence and see if anything has shifted in you from the time we started until now. Notice how this image this time of prayer wants to be lived in you this day. As you go about the ordinary activities encounters of your everyday life how might this time of prayer be waking you up to the God who was present in you and in all things. May you as you go forth, be blessed with a sense of assurance of a tree spreading its roots into the stream. Knowing that you too are connected to the source of life that never runs dry. Amen