

Lectio Divina: The Law of the Lord is Perfect



Lectio Divina – Listening to God’s Word with our hearts

“And the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us”

In Imaginative Contemplation we pray with the Scriptures, allowing Christ in the Scriptures to speak to us through our imagination. In Lectio Divina we pray with the Scriptures by dwelling on God’s word by listening with our heart. In Imaginative Contemplation, Jesus’ words, actions, teaching and relationships with people become familiar to us when we enter into the Scripture passage using our imagination. In Lectio Divina, God’s word becomes familiar to us by listening with our hearts and dwelling on His words. Listening with our hearts is something we do automatically in everyday life when we for example dwell on the beauty of nature or listening to someone we love or recall a poignant memory.

Lectio Divina or divine reading has four parts: reading, repeating, responding and resting.

Reading: Begin by reading the Scripture Passage slowly until a word or a phrase resonates with you. Then stop for the moment.

Repeating: Dwell on the words you have chosen. Repeat them again and again as though God is saying them to you. Try not to analyse them, just let them speak to you. Savour the words.

Responding: Allow God's heart to speak to your heart. He wants to be close to you so ask yourself what this invitation could mean. Speak to God with your heart. Be open to what he is trying to reveal to you. Share with God whatever is coming into your heart and mind.

Resting: Rest in the embrace and love of God. It is God's response to us. Your whole being is focussed on God so dwell in the moment. When you feel ready, move on.

As you listen to the following passage, note which parts move you but don't analyse anything. Then when you are ready, **read, repeat, respond and rest** and when you have dwelt on the words that initially resonated with you, continue on reading the passage and repeat the process.

Prayer

We acknowledge we are in the presence of God so let us say:

Direct O Lord and guide and influence all that is happening in my mind and heart during this time of prayer: all my moods and feelings, my memories and imaginings; my hopes and desires; may all be directed and influenced to your greater glory, praise and service and to my growth in your Spirit.
Amen

Let the Spirit enter our hearts and enlighten our minds so that we can ask for the grace to trust in the Lord amidst the turmoil of our life.

Introduction to Psalm 18

The writer of this Psalm is King David and in it he praises the Word God gives mankind through the scriptures. Today, we can read the Word in both the Holy Scriptures as written by the prophets and in the New Testament as written by the evangelists, but David only had part of the Old Testament to base his gratitude on. From this, David proclaims that God's revelation in Scripture is perfect, trustworthy and pure. He proclaims that it revives the soul, brings wisdom to the mind, creates joy in the heart, gives blessings to those who read it and lasts forever. According to David, God's written revelation in Scripture is more valuable than the finest gold and

sweeter to the taste than honey. David finds both warning and great reward in God's written Word.

Let us now pray with this Psalm with the hope that we too can find great joy in the written word.

Psalm 18

1. The law of the Lord is perfect
it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.
2. The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.
3. The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding forever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.
4. They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is the Psalm saying to you?
2. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
3. In verse one of the Psalm David tells us that the Law of the Lord (i.e. the Word of God) that was given to Israel is flawless because in it God reveals himself and his will, thus it can be trusted. Which scripture passage reveals God's will to you? Does it revive your soul?
4. In the second verse, the psalmist trusts the will of God in that whatever He tells him to do is right and it will give joy to those who obey him. Have you ever experienced a deep sense of clarity

about knowing that a decision you have made has been without doubt, the right one? Did you realise that it was God showing you the course to follow?

5. In the third verse, the psalmist extols his great respect for God and he trusts that God's judgements are right and true. Have you ever experience a time of disappointment when things have not worked out as you would have desired, but looking back you now realise that it was the right outcome; that God was looking after you?
6. In the fourth verse, according to David, God's written Word is more valuable than the finest gold and sweeter to the taste than honey. Is there a passage in scripture that touches your heart? That you find comforting in times of turmoil? Is there a special passage in scripture that you find appropriate especially during this pandemic?
7. What do you think God is saying to you in this Psalm? What do you want to say to God?

Prayer for 3rd Sunday in Lent

<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/Daily-prayers-02.html>

Loving Father,
So many times I turn away from you
and always you welcome me back.
Your mercy and love gives me confidence
Thank you for the invitation to share, fast and pray
so that you can form a new heart within me.
Your powerful compassion for my weaknesses
leads me to ask for mercy
and await with great hope the Easter joy you share with us.

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd