



HEARING GOD

HOW TO CONNECT IN A WORLD OF CHAOS

WEEK TWO: LISTENING THROUGH SCRIPTURE



All Listening Prayer should be done in partnership with God's word in the Bible so this will be a theme in all of our Listening Prayer Practices.

This week we consider the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina* which simply means, Spiritual Reading. The following is an excerpt from Richard Foster's excellent book, *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*.

There is a place for reading large portions of the Bible in one sitting, such as an entire book, but this is not it. In *Lectio Divina* we are concerned with depth rather than breadth. ...*Lectio* is a way of allowing the mind to "descend" into the heart, so that both mind and heart might be drawn into the love and goodness of God. Our goal is immersion.

In its classic form *Lectio* comprises four elements:

Lectio (reading with a listening spirit), ***meditation*** (reflecting on what we are hearing), ***oratio*** (praying in response to this hearing), and ***contemplation*** (contemplating what we will carry forward in our lives).

For our purposes here, we will refer to these basic elements of *Lectio* as listening, reflecting, praying and obeying.

When these elements are combined - regardless of sequence, for they overlap and intermingle in a circular rather than linear way - they lead the human spirit into a dynamic interaction with the Holy Spirit.

LECTIO DIVINA

PREPARE: Find a quiet place and ask God to help you quiet your heart so that you do not feel rushed. We will use Matthew 14:13-21.



LISTENING

Read the passage all the way through without pausing – sometimes it is helpful to read out loud. Then read the passage again – this time pause, underline words, highlight a phrase. Take time to note what seems to be jumping off the page into your heart and mind. What do you hear God saying to you?

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

REFLECTING

God uses our imagination. Imagine yourself in this scene: Where are you? Who do you most identify with? Listen for a phrase or word and spend time reflecting upon it. Ponder it in your mind and heart. Foster says, “Inwardly we are asking, how are you revealing yourself to me, Lord? What am I to see and understand in this border territory where my life merges with yours?” What do you hear God saying to you?

PRAYING

Listening and reflecting naturally turns to conversation with God. Again, we turn to Foster who notes, “We engage with what we are hearing by praying this text of Scripture, letting the reality of this holy moment with God give rise to our heart cry of gratitude, confession, lament, relief, or praise.” Record your prayer here.

OBEYING

Foster says, “The change that God is working deep into our souls will naturally flow outward into our lives, as surely as a river must follow its course to the open sea. Here we contemplate the meaning of this word from God for the choices we will make for this day, for the attitudes we will carry into our tasks, for the thoughts we will allow to dwell uppermost in our minds.” What do you hear God saying to you?