

GPS GUIDE: MARCH 12, 2023 G r o w . P r a y . S t u d y .

Series: Discipleship Pathway

Sermon: Sacred Purpose

Monday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to practice breathing as you read the texts from Sunday. What questions are stirred in your spirit? What might God be revealing through the words of these passages? Sit with your question as you breathe deeply.

Luke 4:14-24 (CEB)

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been raised. On the Sabbath he went to the synagogue as he normally did and stood up to read. The synagogue assistant gave him the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the prisoners
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to liberate the oppressed,
and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.[a]

He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. He began to explain to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it."

Everyone was raving about Jesus, so impressed were they by the gracious words flowing from his lips. They said, "This is Joseph's son, isn't it?"

Then Jesus said to them, "Undoubtedly, you will quote this saying to me: 'Doctor, heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we've heard you did in Capernaum.'" He said, "I assure you that no prophet is welcome in the prophet's hometown.

Prayer: Breathe in... and breathe out... inhale... exhale... Amen.

Tuesday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

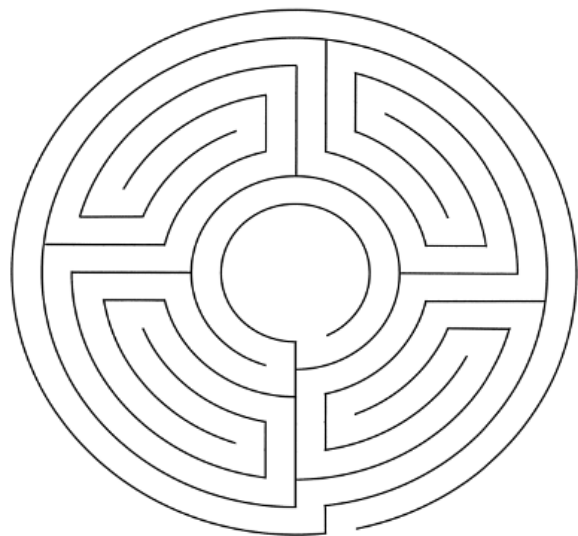
Pilgrimage or journey is practice as old as our faith.

Abraham journeyed to the land God promised. The Israelites journeyed through the wilderness with God. Jews journeyed to Jerusalem for Passover... setting out on a path with God is a practice that invites us to journey towards the heart of God.

The labyrinth has traditionally been a symbolic pilgrimage, a "path to Jerusalem" an opportunity to embark on an outward journey reflecting your inward journey with God. You'll notice the labyrinth is different from a maze. Having only one way in and one way out, it is impossible to get lost. The labyrinth's path moves you towards the center—towards the heart of God—and the return journey.

Labyrinths can be many shapes and sizes, you can walk, run, crawl, trace, or imagine the journey. Below you will find a labyrinth, meant to be traced with your finger or colored with pen, pencil, or crayon.

As you embark upon this labyrinth prayer journey today, you are invited to consider your sacred purpose. **What is NOT yours to do in the world? What is it that you need to lay down or let go of? What is keeping you from your holy work?** Carry that question as you journey into the labyrinth, resting in the center of God's presence, and then when you are ready, as you embark on the return journey ask yourself **What holy work has God called me to? What is it that is mine to do in the world?**



Wednesday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today the invitation is to engage in a creative practice of discernment as you focus on deepening your connection with God and with others. For this prayer practice you will need to download and print the heart below or draw a heart on paper that you can fill in with your own design and colors.

Praying in Color

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. - Fredrick Buechner

Today's prayer practice centers around this quote from Fredrick Buechner. It is a statement that describes sacred purpose. By and large a good rule for finding your sacred purpose is recognizing that the kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work that: you need most to do and the world most needs to have done.

With that in mind, start praying by coloring in the shapes on your heart. As you color, meditate on Buecher's statement. As you continue to color in your heart meditate on the following questions that are intended to help you discern your sacred purpose:

What are the deepest desires of your heart? What brings you deep gladness?

What do you think God wants for you? In what ways are you fulfilling your desires and God's desire for you?

What hunger / needs in the world intersect with the desires of your heart?

As you color / pray, you can write down your answers if you want.

Take a deep breath and read again the following:

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. - Fredrick Buechner

Pray for God to guide you to a deeper understanding of your sacred purpose.

When you are finished, place your heart in a place where you are reminded of this sacred time of discerning of your sacred purpose.



Thursday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment. When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation, that God wants for us. Today we offer this prayer of confession. Let us pray together...

Calling God, for the times we have denied your holiness within us, failing to live out our own deep gladness; for the ways we have neglected the deep hunger of the world, failing to meet the needs of others who need our care, we come to you asking for your forgiveness.

O Lord,
forgive us when we fail to respond to your call with faith.
Through your Spirit
we stand in the assurance of your acceptance.

Forgive us when we are shackled
by our narrow understandings of discipleship
and our clouded sense of purpose.
Through your Spirit
we are drawn into the illumination of your empowering love.

Forgive us when we are frightened of the future
or pull back from the challenge of your calling.

Forgive us when we fail to sense your presence in our past,
to acknowledge your grace in the present moment,
and to trust you for our future.
Through your Spirit we offer ourselves in discipleship.

We stand together as your disciples.
We seek renewed and renewing faith.
Touch us now with your Spirit, Lord.

God is present with us, calling us to live our holy vocation.
In Christ, we are forgiven; we are made new to live our lives with sacred purpose. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Friday: Read Romans 12: 1-8

Paul is challenging readers to live out their faith in ways appropriate to the amount and type of faith that God has gifted to people.

When reading this text, I like to think of how bakers use different amounts and types of flour based on what they are producing—whether it's cake flour for pastries, self-rising flour for bread or all-purpose flour for cookies. Similarly, different amounts and types of faith may lead people to use their gifts to fulfill different roles in ministry. One person might have the kind of faith that leads her into a career as a missionary, another may have the sort of faith that leads him to work as a corporate lawyer and use his expertise to serve others as God provides opportunities, yet another might have the faith to use

their gifts of organization to guide the church in leadership and planning.

Paul's main point about spiritual gifts, mentioned in verse 6, is that God has given us these as members of the body of Christ. So, we are to use the particular gift God has given us to help the body function, not to promote ourselves or show how we as one body part are better than others who are another body part. Do you want to present your body as a living sacrifice and be renewed in your mind as Paul challenges us? Then seek to live out your measure of faith and exercise your gift in a way that best contributes to the body of Christ!

What is your passion? What has brought you great joy in your work? How could you best serve others by fully using your God-given gifts, talents, and skills? How does your faith lead you to use your gifts?

Prayer: Gift giving God, thank you for creating me with spiritual gifts to be shared for the building up of the body of Christ. Help me discern my sacred purpose as I use my gifts to serve the church. Amen.

Saturday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to pray this prayer of transformation.

I breathe in God's grace.
May it transform my insecurities
So that I breathe out God's love
I breathe in God's love
May it transform my fears
So that I breathe out God's hope
I breathe in God's hope
May it transform my doubts
So that I breathe out God's faithfulness
I breathe in God's faithfulness
May it transform my heart
So that I breathe out the Good News of Christ Jesus
I breathe in the Good News of Christ Jesus
May it transform me

