

Let us pray,

Lord, give us the courage and the temperament to go with the flow of your breath, your spirit.

Amen.

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Can we all take some giant breaths in?

Breath in

Breath out

Breath in

Breath out

Breath in

Breath out

Feel better?

I feel a little light headed, but that's not a bad thing.

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When we focus on the basics of life, in this case breath, everything else kind of fades into the distance for a moment.

Our focus is centered and directed to the very thing that makes life possible.

Breath, for example.

All the worlds problems, our own personal problems, family problems, friends problems, they all disappear for just a moment.

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As Christians, we are not called to stay here, in this moment of peace, but we are called to enter into this state, daily.

Our breath can be and is a form of prayer and a way to inner peace.

Breath prayer, it is a prayer of being, a prayer of openness, a prayer of thanksgiving for life.

I truly believe that we as a society would be a more compassionate, caring and loving place if we all slowed down, breathed, and entered into this listening and gratitude focused prayer.

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For many of us, politics, work, our communities, our desires, ambitions, they can all put us in this heightened fight or flight mode of being.

We always feel like we have to be on the attack or on the defense.

There is a time for that for sure.

But we were not built to be in that state forever.

It is a survival tactic, not a living tactic.

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When we stay in these states of heightened fight or flight, it is hard for us to listen.

Its hard for us to see God in each other and in creation.

When we always feel like there is danger lurking around every corner, we can never let our guard down and let God in.

The Pharisees were always in this state of fight or flight.

They were always worried about what Rome would do.

They were worried about protecting their people, about following God, about keeping the peace.

But in their desire to control the outcomes, they accidentally killed God on the cross.

In their attempt to save their people from Rome, they killed the very person of God that was sent to save them.

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Nicodemus however, saw Jesus for who he was.

He didn't allow the anxieties of the world to blind him of the realities of God that were right in front of him.

So for us today.

Our question is:

What is getting in the way of us seeing God right in front of us?

What are we allowing in our lives to make us blind to God's work in the world?

Sometimes we allow the sins of the world to take hold of us and blind us of the love and glory and goodness of God.

We are called to reject sin, but sometimes we make this rejection of sin into an idol.

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When we dwell too much on sin, when we dwell on the pain, the suffering, the grief, the just horrible aspects of this world, its so easy for us to be blinded, so that we don't see the salvation that is right in front of us.

The pharisees created a division between themselves and God, because they were afraid of the Romans.

They put too much of the fate of their own existence in their own hands, and put God on the back burner.

They didn't trust that the way of God is the only way forward to true peace and true life.

They allowed their fear to overpower their faith.

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So another question for us is;

What are we doing today where our fear is crippling our ability to trust God and do God's work?

I don't have data on this, but I am a firm believer that the vast majority of evil deeds are done in the name of fear.

We have a complete distrust of other human beings, so we all create these barriers, these fortresses for ourselves so that we can feel protected.

But a God breathed world requires us to give our fears up to God.

To be vulnerable even if it leads to getting hurt or in extreme cases the ending of our lives.

Because if we as faith-filled people are not willing to be vulnerable with each other and trust each other and collectively trust God, than what chance do we have in this world to bring God's kingdom on earth?

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Lets risk being vulnerable with each other.

Lets risk getting taken advantage of, for the possibility of being loved so deeply that we start to understand what it means to be alive.

Lets risk taking a leap of faith together and follow the spirit wherever she may lead us, without fear.

If we can hold each other in our darkest moments, in our disagreements, in our sins, and still find a way to love one another deeply, we will be that much closer to bringing heaven on earth.

There is just so much judgement out there, so much fear, so much hate, so much dwelling on sin.

Lets together, be different.

Lets together, follow the flow of the spirit.

Lets together, follow Jesus, without fear.

Lets together;

Breath in

Breath out

Breath in

Breath out

Breath in

Breath out

The Spirit is within us, lets follow it with out fear.

Amen.