

Begin with the preflight checklist:

Ask for God's blessing:

Pray: Father God, as I seek a deeper encounter with your Son, speak directly to my heart and mind through your Holy Spirit. Guide my prayers that they might be sincere. May the truth of your word accomplish its purpose in me. Please thwart any attempt by the evil one to interfere in any way with what follows. Amen.

Assert spiritual authority:

Say aloud: As a child of God and with the authority of Jesus, I forbid any spirit that is not of God from interfering in any way with what follows. I command this in Jesus' Name.

Ask for forgiveness:

Pray: "God, please bring to mind anything I've done that is offensive to you." (If nothing comes to mind, skip the next prayer. If something comes to mind, continue:)

"Father God, I want to confess my sin to you and ask for your forgiveness. Specifically, I confess the sin (or sins) of _____. (Be as specific as possible. Make a list if necessary.) Please forgive me and change me and cleanse me. Please grant me strength that I might truly turn from my sin. I receive your forgiveness. Thank you. Amen."

Forgive others:

Pray: God, please bring to mind anyone I need to forgive.

(If no one comes to mind, skip the next prayer. If someone comes to mind, continue:)

Pray: God, I forgive _____ (name of person) for _____. (Name the sin as specifically as possible.) Please help me to forgive them from the heart. Amen.

(If you find yourself unable to forgive someone, pray this prayer: "Jesus, you know why it's so difficult for me to forgive _____. Please help me to desire to forgive them and please heal me so completely that I am able to forgive them from my heart. Amen.")

Pray for the people you know who need physical healing.

Jesus and a Blind Man

a meditation

Bible Reading:

Mark 10: 46 - 52 They [Jesus and his disciples] came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus the son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to

shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many scolded him to get him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called the blind man and said to him, “Have courage! Get up! He is calling you.” He threw off his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man replied, “Rabbi, let me see again.” Jesus said to him, “Go, your faith has healed you.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the road. *(NET; brackets added)*

Meditation

Imagine that you are present to observe the scene. Watch as the events unfold: (Remember not to rush through any of the below.)

Picture Jesus, his disciples and a large crowd leaving Jericho.

Notice as they approach a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, who is sitting near the road.

Listen as the blind man, having noticed the commotion, asks those around him, “What’s going on?”

Hear the response: “Jesus of Nazareth is walking by.”

Notice as Bartimaeus immediately begins to shout. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Sense the annoyance of the crowd as Bartimaeus continues shouting.

Hear the crowd rebuke Bartimaeus, telling him to be quiet.

Picture Jesus stopping and asking for Bartimaeus to be brought over.

Watch as those near the blind man convey the message, “Have courage! Get up! He’s calling you.”

Notice how quickly Bartimaeus jumps to his feet and begins to make his way toward Jesus.

After he arrives, listen as Jesus asks him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Hear the reply, “Rabbi, let me see again.”

Listen as Jesus replies, “Go, your faith has healed you.”

Watch as Bartimaeus, having regained his sight, follows Jesus down the road.

Questions:

- 1) What emotions come up for you as you observe the interaction between Jesus and Bartimaeus?
- 2) Have you ever been discouraged by “the crowd” in your pursuit of Jesus?
- 3) Beyond the restoration of sight, how was the (former) blind man’s life changed by his encounter with Jesus?
- 4) If Jesus were to ask you, “What do you want me to do for you?” How would you respond?

Worship:

Revisit the emotions that came up for you as you observed the interaction between Jesus and Bartimaeus. Express these emotions to Jesus as worship. (For example: Jesus, I am so thankful for how you care for the needy. I am comforted by this story of your encounter with Bartimaeus because I know that you care for me as well.

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for making time for those who need you the most. Please make me aware of where I most need your healing presence in my life. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Monday’s Exercises.]

The goal of (this kind of) meditation:

- To have an encounter with Jesus similar to those who were present with him during his earthly ministry.
- To see what they saw, hear what they heard, and feel what they felt.
- To share their experience.

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(If you find yourself unable to forgive someone, pray this prayer: "Jesus, you know why it's so difficult for me to forgive _____. Please help me to desire to forgive them and please heal me so completely that I am able to forgive them from my heart. Amen.")

Pray for the people you know who need emotional healing.

So Jesus Went with Him

a meditation

Bible Reading:

Mark 5: 22 - 24 Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and

put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him. *(NIV)*

A man approaches Jesus and pleads with him to come and heal his daughter. “So Jesus went with him”. Time and again, we see this pattern: Jesus never turns away those who approach him for healing and he never refuses to go to someone when requested. Jesus is never too tired or too busy to come to where he is needed.

Meditation:

Imagine that you are present to observe the scene. Watch as the events unfold:

Picture the worried look on the synagogue leader’s face as he looks for Jesus in the crowd.

Watch as he, having located Jesus, approaches him and falls at his feet.

Hear his words, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.”

Watch as Jesus immediately follows Jairus, disappearing through the crowd.

(We’ll continue with this episode over the next two days.)

Questions:

- 1) What emotions come up for you as you observe the interaction between Jesus and the synagogue leader?
- 2) What emotions do you suppose Jairus was feeling when Jesus agreed to go with him?
- 3) What does it mean to you today that Jesus never refused to go where he was needed?

Worship:

How does it make you feel when you see how easily Jesus goes where he’s needed?

Express these feelings to Jesus in worship. (For example: “Jesus, how good it makes me feel to know that you are available to meet with me where I most need you, that you’ll come to me where I’m most hurting.”)

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for going where you are invited to go. I invite you into the places in my life where I most need you. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Tuesday's Exercises.]

One of the keys to (this kind of) meditation:

Pausing long enough to let each moment
of the encounter have its impact.

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Forgive others:

Pray: God, please bring to mind anyone I need to forgive.

(If no one comes to mind, skip the next prayer. If someone comes to mind, continue:)

Pray: God, I forgive _____ (name of person) for _____. (Name the sin as specifically as possible.) Please help me to forgive them from the heart. Amen.

(If you find yourself unable to forgive someone, pray this prayer: "Jesus, you know why it's so difficult for me to forgive _____. Please help me to desire to forgive them and please heal me so completely that I am able to forgive them from my heart. Amen.")

Pray for salvation and/or spiritual breakthrough for friends and family members who need it.

Just One Touch

a meditation

(The following takes places while Jesus is on the way to heal Jairus' daughter.)

Bible Reading:

Mark 5: 25 - 34 Now a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had endured a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet instead of getting better, she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she kept saying, “If only I touch his clothes, I will be healed.” At once the bleeding stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Jesus knew at once that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” His disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing against you and you say, ‘Who touched me?’” But he looked around to see who had done it. Then the woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease.” (NET)

The woman of this story, hemorrhaging for twelve years and broke from paying for ineffective treatments, has heard about the healings attributed to Jesus and decides to risk an encounter with him. But rather than approach Jesus directly, the woman hopes to come by her healing anonymously. While scripture doesn't reveal why she seeks to maintain her anonymity, many scholars speculate that the continuous flow of blood from which this woman suffered was menstrual in nature. If so, she would have been considered “unclean” by the Jewish community and someone in her condition shouldn't be out in public, let alone touching a rabbi.

The woman clearly trusts in Jesus' ability to heal, but, apparently, doubts his willingness to do so. Jesus, however, wants more than just a “drive-by” healing; he wants more than the restoration of her physical health; he wants an encounter with her.

Meditation

Imagine that you are present to observe the scene:

Picture Jesus walking along through a jostling crowd.

Notice the woman maneuvering herself into position.

Watch as she approaches Jesus from behind and touches his cloak.

See Jesus turn around and hear him ask, “Who touched my clothes?”

Overhear Jesus' interaction with his disciples.

Notice the woman, trembling with fear, come forward and fall down before Jesus.

Listen as she tells him the whole truth.

Hear Jesus' words, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Questions:

- 1) Why do you suppose the woman trembled in fear as she made her confession?
- 2) What, according to Jesus, made the woman well? (See the second to last line of the above scripture.)
- 3) What did the woman gain after Jesus insisted on a deeper encounter with her?
- 4) What do you hope to gain from a deeper encounter with Jesus?

Worship:

What emotions do you feel toward Jesus when he says, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease."?

Go before Jesus in worship and express these emotions. (For example: "Your kindness is beyond understanding. Your compassion is beauty beyond beauty. Thank you for being such a beautiful savior.")

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, don't let me get away with anything but the deepest possible encounter with you. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Wednesday's Exercises.]

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Pray for the specific needs of immediate family members and loved ones.

Life Restored

a meditation

(The following takes place immediately after Jesus' encounter with the woman with the flow of blood.)

Bible Reading:

Mark 5: 35 - 43 While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue ruler's house saying, "Your daughter has died. Why trouble the teacher any longer?" But Jesus, paying no attention to what was said, told the synagogue ruler, "Do not be afraid; just believe." He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. They came to the house of the synagogue ruler where he saw noisy confusion and people weeping and wailing loudly. When he entered he said to them, "Why are you distressed and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." And they began making fun of him. But he put them all outside and he took the child's father and mother and his own companions and went into the room where the child was. Then, gently taking the child by the hand, he said to her, "*Talitha koum*," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up." The girl got up at once and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). They were completely astonished at this. He strictly ordered that no one should know about this, and told them to give her something to eat. (NET)

We can only imagine the heartbreak of Jairus. After Jesus agreed to go with him to heal his daughter, their progress was interrupted by the incident with the woman who had the flow of blood. The anguish he must have felt as time slipped away until, while Jesus was still speaking to the woman, word came that his daughter had died.

Meditation

Imagine that you are present to observe the scene:

See the anxiety on Jairus' face as Jesus is delayed by his encounter with the woman.

Watch as the people from Jairus' house approach him.

Hear them say, "Your daughter has died. Why trouble the teacher any longer?"

Watch as Jesus turns to Jairus. Hear him say, "Do not be afraid; just believe."

Picture Jairus, Peter, James, John and Jesus arriving at Jairus' house.

Hear the wailing.

Listen as Jesus says, "Why are you distressed and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep."

Hear the crowd mock Jesus.

Picture Jesus, together with his disciples and the girl's parents, going into the room where the child lay.

Watch as Jesus gently takes the girl's hand.

Hear Jesus' words, "Little girl, I say to you, get up."

Watch as the girl immediately gets up and begins to walk around the room.

Share in the astonishment of those present.

Questions:

- 1) Which part of the story is most emotionally powerful to you?
- 2) Jairus' faith initiates his encounter with Jesus, but is it enough to see him through to the joyful conclusion?
- 3) Who's faith is necessary for the girl to be brought back to life?

Worship:

How does this text effect you emotionally?

Direct a prayer to Jesus from within these emotions. (For example: "Jesus, your kindness to people, even those of little faith or of not quite enough faith, is beautiful.")

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, I have faith in you, but my faith will falter without your encouragement. Thank you for accepting the little I bring to you and for carrying me through my despair and into joy. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Thursday's Exercises.]

When words get in the way...

When moving through the meditation and into worship, sometimes the words themselves can interrupt the flow. If you find this to be the case, it can help to read through both the meditation and worship a first time and then replay the meditation a second time by memory before moving into worship.

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Pray for government and world leaders—that God would grant them wisdom, courage, knowledge of the truth and genuine faith in him.

Blessing the Children

a meditation

Bible Reading:

Mark 10: 13 - 16 Now people were bringing little children to him [Jesus] for him to touch, but the disciples scolded those who brought

them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” After he took the children in his arms, he placed his hands on them and blessed them. (*NET*)

Meditation:

Watch from a distance as the events unfold:

Picture the people bringing their little children to Jesus for him to touch. (Remember to allow sufficient time for each step.)

See the look of impatience on the faces of the disciples. Hear them scold those bringing the children.

Notice the indignation on the face of Jesus.

Hear Jesus say, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”

Watch as Jesus takes the children in his arms and places his hands on them.

Listen to Jesus’ blessing.

Questions:

- 1) We aren’t told the content of Jesus’ blessing. What do you think he might have said?
- 2) Was there an age at which you were most in need of hearing Jesus’ blessing? If so, what was the age and circumstance?
- 3) What words of blessing would you most like to hear from Jesus?

Worship:

What emotions come up for you as you meditate on this text?

Direct a prayer to Jesus which expresses your emotions. (For example: “Jesus, thank you for taking time for the little children. Thank you for blessing them. Please take me in your arms and bless me, too.”)

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, you take time to bless even the littlest of children. Bless me with their experience of safety in your presence, and bless me as you blessed them. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Friday's Exercises.]

Don't rush through the Preflight Checklist.

If you find yourself doing so,
try putting the first two items
into your own words
and consciously lingering over
the initial prayers of the
third and fourth items.

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Pray for those in any of the daily categories who have the greatest need.

Freedom From Infirmary

a meditation

Bible Reading:

Luke 13: 10 - 13 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself up completely. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and

said, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” Then he placed his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. (*NET*)

As we continue to survey the healings of Jesus, we’ll find that many appear to be entirely physical in nature (as when Jesus cleanses a leper), while others appear to be entirely spiritual in nature (as when Jesus casts out a demon). But there are occasions, as in the case above, where we are told specifically that a physical disability is caused by a spirit.

We know nothing of this woman other than that she had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. Jesus, regardless of the nature of the infirmity, has no difficulty in freeing her. His declaration, his word, is all that is required.

Meditation

Imagine that you are present to observe the scene:

Picture the woman who is unable to straighten up in the synagogue.

Watch as Jesus enters the synagogue and notices her.

Hear Jesus call her over.

See her respond to his invitation.

Listen as Jesus says, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.”

Watch as she straightens up.

Hear her praise God.

Questions:

- 1) What emotions come up for you as you meditate on this healing?
- 2) What emotions do you suppose come up for Jesus when the woman, realizing that she’s been set free, begins to praise God?
- 3) If you were the woman in this account, what infirmity would Jesus notice in you? From what disability would he desire to set you free?

Worship:

What emotions come up for you meditate on this healing?

Express your feelings directly to Jesus in worship. (For example: “Jesus, I am grateful that you take the initiative to set me free.”)

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, you called to me before I was even aware of your presence. Please free me from any spirit that afflicts me. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Saturday's Exercises.]