

This morning, the worries of the day seemed to wake up before I did. They had made a cup of coffee and asked me to join them and bring my phone, get to work (or get distracted). I had a choice. I sat down with the scripture and my journal instead. I wish I could tell you that this act of intention brought immediate peace and clarity, but the truth is my mind was already spinning up schedules and emails, my nerves seemed frayed, anxiety seemed near.

And then the Word entered in.

From Hebrews 4: let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

From Psalm 111: The works of his hands are faithful and just...the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

From Hebrews 9: he entered in heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence... and he will appear a second time...to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

- By these words, a prayer began to form in me. Let me hold firmly to the faith. Bring to mind the work of your hands. As I fear you, your unfathomable heights, depth, and breadth, may all other fears cease. Teach me to trust in the amazing promise that you are *for us*. Grow my faith and joy as I wait for you.

Today I arrived poor in spirit, tenderly aware of that which is mournful, in me and in the world around me, feeling rather meek.

And what *was*, what *is*, most amazing to me is the proximity of that place, broken and in need of help, to the place of His blessing: his inheritance, his comfort, his Kingdom.

It seems worth noting that nothing of the day's circumstances changed. Every appointment, expectation, unanswered question, and lingering frustration remained. But His presence, and my awareness of His presence changed all of these things. Rather than clutch them in my hands, I placed them in His. In our weakness, we find his strength.

In the power of the spirit, we can move from worry to worship.

This is the simple yet profound movement we will focus our attention and intention to this week, from Jesus' words in Matthew 5:3-5 to the spiritual discipline of worship.

Let's take a closer look at that word *worship*.

- From Adele Calhoun's *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*: "The simple truth is that everybody looks to something or someone to give their lives meaning. Worship reveals the somethings or the someone's we value most. What we love and adore and focus on forms us into the people we become."

And: “True worship of God happens when we put God first in our lives. When what God says matters more than what others say, and when loving God matters more than being loved.

With these thoughts in mind, let’s move into the scripture and the accompanying spiritual disciplines with our small group.

Small Group Direction

Begin by reviewing last week's spiritual discipline.

- In what ways did you experience solitude?
- What insights or surprises did you find in that place?
- How might the Lord want to speak to you in solitude?

Matthew 5:3-5

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Take time to move through these three verses.

- What compels your attention?
- What does *poor in spirit* mean?
- In what ways do we experience (or avoid) *mourning*?
- How do you understand the word *meek*?
- What challenges you?
- What comforts you?

Listen to some to the same themes, poured out as worship in Psalm 37:1-11

*1 Do not fret over those who do evil;
do not envy those who do wrong.*

*2 For they wither quickly like grass
and wilt like tender plants.*

*3 Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.*

*4 Delight yourself in the LORD,
and He will give you the desires of your heart.*

*5 Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in Him, and He will do it.*

*6 He will bring forth your righteousness like the dawn,
your justice like the noonday sun.*

*7 Be still before the LORD
and wait patiently for Him;*

*do not fret when men prosper in their ways,
when they carry out wicked schemes.
8Refrain from anger and abandon wrath;
do not fret—it can only bring harm.
9For the evildoers will be cut off,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.
10Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look for them, they will not be found.
11But the meek will inherit the land
and delight in abundant prosperity.*

- What stands out to you in these verses?
- How have you experienced weakness and worry being transformed into worship?
- What does the *spiritual discipline* of worship look like in your life?

In light of these things and in hope of what God is doing and will do, close your time praying for one another.