

October 17, 2022

PrayerCast

As you enter this time of reflection and prayer, slow your thoughts and work to stop the world around you. The Word teaches us to “Take every thought captive”. So, take those racing thoughts and set them aside. Lay them down. You will be able to pick up your thoughts again soon. But in this time, in these moments of right NOW, belong only to your Father. Turn your mind toward Him, encounter your God and center yourself in His peace.

(Pause for a moment to breathe and center yourself in His peace)

In service, Brian has been challenging us to BLESS 217. BLESS is an acronym, that gives us simple ways to bless those around us, in our community. They stand for:

- Begin with Prayer. Pray for the people in your life and the places that you’re in.
- Listen. Listen to and discover the needs of others and the places where God is at work.
- Eat. Share meals and spend time with the people in your life.
- Serve. Respond to the needs of others and help them in practical and impactful ways.
- Story. Share the story of Jesus and what He is doing in your life with others.

These next few weeks, we are focusing on Beginning with prayer. So in our next few PrayerCasts, we’re going to focus on praying for those who we want to bless and share Christ with. Brian challenged us to choose one person in our lives who we want to see come to know Jesus. Then, to dedicate these first six weeks to prayer for that person. Like a lot of great things, it’s not complicated. It’s simple. But it is very powerful.

(Pause for a moment and reflect)

Let’s take a step back for a moment and pause to consider, what does that really *mean*? What exactly are we praying and desiring for our non-believing friend to encounter? We’re praying for an opportunity, an invitation, for them to have an encounter with Jesus that would lead them to *repentance and faith*.

We’re praying that we as believers, as their friends, would BE that invitation, that catalyst of an encounter unto life with Jesus, a life of repentance and faith. But how can they know if they are not first *shown*? If it’s not first modeled for them *in our very lives*?

(Pause for a moment and reflect)

In her book, “Liturgy of the Ordinary” Tish Harrison Warren writes, “Repentance and faith are the constant, daily rhythms of the Christian life, our breathing out and breathing in.”

“Breathing out and breathing in.”

Repentance – that turning constantly round and round of a potter’s wheel, changing our hearts and minds unto *new* thoughts and *new* desires.

Faith – that committed trusting and relying upon the person and work of Jesus for our every. thing.

But what does this repentance and faith as breathing out and breathing in look like in practice?

When I lose my cool (again), and yell at my kids (again) over something stupid –

Exhale – Repentance

“Ugh. I’m sorry I messed up – again – I can’t do this on my own. I need you Jesus, to continue to change me into the person you’ve created me to be.”

Inhale – Faith

“I trust your work in my life. You’re making all things new – even me. I rely on you for the strength I need for this moment.”

For another example, (and to bring this full circle):

When I’m tempted to isolate or overlook opportunities to connect with non-believers in my life –

Exhale – Repentance

“God, I’m sorry for letting fear into the driver’s seat. I can’t do this without you. I need you to change my heart. Remove the fear and replace it with love.”

Inhale – Faith

“I know I’m safe with you. No matter what happens around me – you hold me fast. Lead me and guide me to those whom you would have me share my life with in this way. Give me the boldness and courage to take every opportunity to give a reason for my hope in you.”

Repentance and faith. Our breathing out and our breathing in.

(Pause for a moment and reflect)

As we begin with prayer in our mission to bless those around us, let us pray that God would convict our hearts as we live this life with God. My we live in humble repentance and faith in the company of those whom God has called us to bless with His presence.

Let us keep this in mind as we meditate on 1 Peter 2:9-12. I will read the passage in both the New International Version and the Message.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

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<sup>9-10</sup> But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God’s instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.

<sup>11-12</sup> Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life in your neighborhood so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives."

(Read that again slowly to yourself.) I encourage you to spend some time today praying though this passage and considering ways you can embody this life with God – this repentance and faith – in your daily life and interactions with those He places in your path.

*"Lord, as we begin with prayer for those whom you've placed in our hearts and lives, let us always consider and remember it is our lives and our witness they are looking to. May we be ever brighter reflections of you and your Spirit."*