



# Simply to Flourish

Clearing the Air:

Jesus on Difficult Relationships

Matthew 7:1-12

October 15, 2023

## Prelude – Keep My Heart Tender by Upperroom

### Welcome/Announcements

- October 29<sup>th</sup> Silent Retreat & Picnic
- Sabbath Candle: Steady our breathing, slow our pulse, calm our mind, let go of our grip, release the tension and anxiety in us... An expression of rest, that the pressure is off. We could turn the lights off right now, and the candle would continue to give light. The flame may flicker, but it continues to give light. Likewise, God's light is always around us. We need only pay attention.

## CALL TO WORSHIP | Psalm 134

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,

who stand by night in the house of the Lord!

Lift up your hands to the holy place

and bless the Lord!

May the Lord bless you from Zion,

he who made heaven and earth!

- Psalm 134

## Song #1 – Kingdom of God by Jon Guerra

## Song #2 – To the One by Upperroom

Dismiss Kids

## PRE-SERMON READING | Matthew 7:1-12

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

## SERMON | Clearing the Air: Jesus on Difficult Relationships

I want to begin by priming you with an idea that will come back at the end. So, I'm just going to say it, without explaining it, and move on. But we'll come back to it before we're through.

Steve Cuss, writes:

"Differentiation is the ability to be fully yourself while being fully connected to people. It is gaining clarity on where "I" end and the "other" begins. A differentiated person allows space between herself and another, even when that other person is highly anxious or asking for rescue. [The differentiated person] is clear on her own values and convictions and is not easily swayed from them." (Cuss, 119)<sup>1</sup>

The famous Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky is most well known for his huge novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. And there are reasons for this: it is a great novel. If you haven't read that you may have been made to read *Crime and Punishment* in high school or college or something. *Crime and Punishment*, is also a good novel. However, I want to draw our attention to a less read work of his, *Notes from the Underground*. In this short novella, we are introduced to a nameless man—we shall call him, The Underground Man—by way of his own autobiographical writings. The novella is essentially a mixture of journal writings, and narrative retellings of this man's life—through his own eyes, based on his memory (which turns out to be kind of important). The novel begins with these words:

"I am a sick man.... I am a spiteful man. I am an unpleasant man. I think my liver is diseased. However, I don't know beans about my **disease**, and *I am not even sure what is bothering me*. I don't treat it and never have... No, I refuse to treat it out of **spite**." (Dostoevsky, 3)<sup>2</sup>

The novel, I think, is a perfect case study and illustration of a lot of what we have been talking about over these past several weeks as we have looked at Jesus's famous Sermon on the Mount. Why do I say that? Because the Underground Man, is riddled with anxiety. He says he has a *disease*... but what you learn is that he is a hypochondriac and plagued by dis-ease and turmoil, narcissism, and pride. He is a walking contradiction. He condemns others for faults which he himself possesses ten times over, He is over-confident, yet a coward; he is certain, yet clueless; he is paradigmatically passive-aggressive. He is thoughtless, yet over-thinks everything— thus, he is suspicious, paranoid, constantly insecure and self-absorbed, he lacks perspective and imagination, he is scrupulous to a fault, he is stubborn, and judgmental, he is vengeful, and full of spite, he overreacts to the most petty offenses. He is determined to assert himself in the world, yet he spends most of his life stuck in his head, trapped in his own schizophrenic dialogue with himself, ruminating on how others have injured him and how they are the cause of all his problems, he never sees himself as the villain, he is always the victim. thus, the underground man is shot through with anxiety... and this is why he is the underground man: he has no awareness, whatsoever, of what is actually going on with him, of what is going on just below the surface of his thoughts and deeds, he does not understand and cannot makes sense of what drives him, what motivates him, what causes him to act and react the way he does, he cannot see himself clearly, because he lacks self-awareness. He is an absurdity, he takes *too much* responsibility for that which he should not and takes *no responsibility* for the very things he should. Remember the quote that Jeremy began the series with, back in September, it comes from James Thurber:

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Cuss, *Managing Leadership Anxiety: Yours and Theirs*

<sup>2</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*

“All people should strive to learn before they die, what they are running from, and to, and why.”

It’s probably safe to say, the underground man, never figured this out.

Dostoevsky’s novel, if for nothing else, is brilliant in this way: it puts the reader in an awkward and uncomfortable position. Here we have this disgusting character, who you immediately dislike and find rather unbearable, that is, you go about judging him. But then, you notice that, there are certain moments, where you see a bit of yourself in him, and you realize that the two of you aren’t all that different after all, he is just a bit exaggerated, a caricature. But, here’s the rub, if you don’t see anything at all of yourself in this character, then *for precisely that reason*, you actually *are like him*, because the Underground Man is the kind of person who would also lack the awareness to see himself clearly too. If you have been reading the Stephen Cuss book we recommended as a resource for this series, then you’ll recognize this as a “double bind.” Either way, you lose, because in either situation, you’re like the Underground Man, like it or not.

I say all this, mostly as a kind of reminder of how we have been looking at the Sermon on the Mount these past several weeks: namely as it relates to a kind of anxiety, that which lies just below the surface of our conscious awareness, underground, but which drives us, motivates, and causes us to react or respond in certain ways—to life and those whom we share it with. We have also discussed how anxiety tends to be contagious: we bring it with us into relationships, into the granular collisions which make up our daily interactions, and unless we deal with our own anxiety, we tend to share it with others. Unless someone is willing to clear the air, anxiety tends to pollute all of our dealings causing us to overreact or avoid, blame or deny, insult or ignore... and as we read a few moments ago, one of the most common and obvious ways this tends to show up is *hypocritical judgement*.

What we want, though, is to clear the air; to *reduce* the anxiety, not to add to it. We want to become like a catalytic converter. Here’s what I mean. In chemistry, a catalyst is:

“a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any permanent chemical change.”

Catalysts lower the amount of force or heat required for a specific chemical change to occur. They help certain compounds along. But they do all of this, *without changing* themselves. They maintain their integrity. In a catalytic converter, several catalysts clean the air of harmful gases like carbon monoxide.

**Catalytic Converter:**

Polluted air in → catalysts (platinum, palladium, rhodium) → clean(er) air out

If you would prefer a more organic or biological example, similar catalytic processes happen in our bodies all the time. In your liver and kidneys for example. We call these catalysts enzymes, and they help purge our body of certain harmful pollutants.

Now, the metaphor breaks down at a certain point of course. Because, unlike catalysts, in our dealings with other people, and with God, we do change in certain ways. However, our hope should be that the core of our identity, our life in Christ, *remains intact*—we should hope that we can deal with our anxiety, their anxiety, and the tension between us, in a way that still conforms to the truth of who Christ is, and who I am in Him. When we find ourselves in a difficult relationship, trying to navigate the anxiety within us, within another

person, and in the space between us, how do we maintain our most fundamental identity as someone redeemed by the blood of Christ? Reborn into the Kingdom of God?

That is, how can we “clear the air?” How can you and I become the kind of person who no longer shares and spreads our own anxiety, our own dis-ease and unaddressed motives and unacknowledged desires? Moreover, how can we become the kind of person who can actually contribute to the reduction of anxiety in other people? How can we become a non-anxious presence which changes the atmosphere and lessens anxiety? How can we become the kind of person which God works in and through to make life whole and holy for others? How do we become catalysts for the Good? Shalom? Peace? God’s kingdom come, here and now... in our very midst? Well, I think today’s scripture passage, which \_\_\_\_\_ just read for us a moment ago, has a ton to say in this regard. In fact, I think it gives us a few principles, that are pretty much non-negotiable and indispensable for anyone who hopes to become something of a non-anxious catalyst or change agent for The Good.

If you still aren’t convinced that Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount, has anything whatsoever to say about “anxiety,” or that it isn’t somehow pointed directly at something in us that lies just below the surface, or underground, here is what Dallas Willard says in his book *The Divine Conspiracy*—which is basically his commentary on The Sermon on the Mount:

“Jesus looks outward to the cosmos and to the sweep of human history before and after. He tells us [in this sermon] *we have no need to be anxious*, for there is a divine life, the true home of the soul, that we can enter simply by placing our confidence in him; becoming his friend and *conspiring with him to subvert evil with good.*” (Willard, Dallas)<sup>3</sup>

So, if you haven’t already, turn with me to Matthew Chapter 7. Now, in your bible there are probably section breaks in a few places, maybe with various headings, but these are a bit misleading; because I want to suggest to you that these verses, 1-12, are all related. The stuff about pearls and pigs in the middle, as well as the famous Ask Seek Knock verse, all have to do with the same thing. I mean, consider the two verses that book end this section: verse 1 and verse 12: “Judge not, lest you be judged, with the measure you use, you will be measured;” and “do to others what you would have them do to you.” Think about it: these are very similar ideas, all about how we ought to relate to one another. In fact, they almost say the same thing, just differently. This, of course, was common in Jewish teaching: to say something, expand on it, and then say it again, only in a different way. So, what I am suggesting is that we need to try and think about how all these verses relate to one another, *what is Jesus getting at here?*

I also want us to be rather concrete about what we are talking about here—more specifically, who are talking about. We often think of “judging” as having to do with those who we don’t know well. We think about how we may judge people we only recently met, or people in the public eye, or even as a kind of abstraction: we judge “that kind” of person, or this *type* of person. This tendency—to think about judgement in the context of unfamiliar relationships—is itself probably a symptom of our anxiety. Besides, can we really even call such loose associations “a relationship” anyways? Could it be that we would rather not turn our attention towards those most intimate relationships ***because we are a bit uneasy about what we might find there.***

But, for today, I would like for us to consider this portion of scripture and apply it *specifically* and *explicitly* to our most intimate, closest, and familiar relationships. Because relationships involve proximity, time, history,

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<sup>3</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

story, attention, familiarity, shared life, common experience, and a mutual concern for one another—and this is the context of Jesus words here in Matthew 7. So, perhaps, we should be considering how we interact and relate to our spouse, or a parent, or sibling, or a very close friend. Think about it: aren't these the relationships where we judge others most? Aren't these the places where it is hardest for us to admit our own fault? To see the log in our eye? And this isn't all bad, necessarily. It often comes from a place of love and care that becomes misguided over time. In other words, sometimes, our efforts to "take the spec" out of another person's eye, stems from the fact that we really, really, care about this person, we want what is best for them, we want to help. We see something in them, that we don't think they see, and we want to help. We want to get rid of some the anxiety that tends to boil over and bubble up in their actions and choices, and so, we go about "helping" them with their spec. And, as Jesus tells us, this is exactly where things start to get a bit messy. Because, it is often, in the very act of our "trying to help" that what we really contribute is just *more of the same*: more anxiety, more unease, more reactivity, and the cycle perpetuates.

So, let's reverse engineer this whole thing. Instead of beginning with "Do not judge..." Let's begin with verse 12: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them," This is our goal, our end. All of our efforts to help others, to remove their specs, has to take this shape, conform to this principle. Have you ever actually thought about it before though? What do "you wish that others would do to you?" How you answer that question will be quite revealing, I think. For example: what if your answer is, "I wish other people would leave me alone. I wish my husband or my wife, or my parent, or my sister, or roommate, would just please stop trying to help me with the spec in my eye already, because I don't want their help or need it." What if that is how you answer? I think we would all agree that that kind of answer feels a bit unsatisfying and is probably indicative of a heart that has become a bit proud. Let's face it, we all need help sometimes. And if you don't think you do, well... You're beginning to look a lot like the Underground Man, rather confused. Having a heart so impenetrable that it cannot be told it is wrong, or off, or missing something, that cannot tolerate even the most loving and kind correction, is a dangerous place to be. **How well do you react when someone tries to point out your flaws?**

Besides, I guess now would be a good time to remind you that, when Jesus starts talking about having logs and specs in our eyes. What he is talking about are those aspects of ourselves which literally and figuratively *obscure our sight*—they are **blind spots**. And by definition, *you cannot see a blind spot*. Thus, you actually *require someone else* to point them out to you, there is no other way. Again, who in your life is most likely and most prone to see and point out your particular blind spots? Usually, it is someone who knows you really well, well enough that you will let your guard down, lower your defenses in front of them—someone like a spouse, sibling, parent, or long-time friend. And again, this is the kind of relationship under consideration. So then, *in those relationships*, "how do you wish that others would treat you?" Let's return to the text, beginning in Verse 1. I think we can find **three principles** that will help us along.

**First Principle: Perspective (gaining clarity).** When Jesus says, do not judge, he does not mean that we are to no longer identify and decide between the right and wrong actions of others. The actual sense of the word meant here is something closer to "contempt" or "condemnation." He means, do not reduce your view of this person to someone who either deserves your complete indifference, or your absolute indignation—because in either case, *you are lacking perspective*. In other words, do not lose your ability to see the entire other person, because, news flash: **human beings are a complicated mess**—with history, pathologies, stories, wounds, hurts and past trauma... So do not lose your capacity *to see them in their entirety*. Remember what Jeremy said last week about anxiety as a symptom of seeing only the part, and not the whole. This is kind of what Jesus means

here: do not see *only* the spec in this person's eye, but rather, keep your attention on them as a whole, as a person. In other words, **don't lose your perspective**. Is this someone you love? Then shouldn't that be the measure of your affection for them? Why do you refuse to see anything other than their spec? Besides, it has probably always been there, you just failed to see it before because, previously, *you chose to see something else in them*, which allowed you to see them as a whole person, rather than the inconvenience and agitation you seem to be so fixated on now.

Which brings us to a striking and potentially surprising second point: in our attempts to take the spec from someone we care about, we are often *not even looking in the right direction*. One of the central themes we have explored this fall while in the Sermon on the Mount is this: the anxiety within in us, and the difficulties we face when encountering the anxieties of others, the problems and struggles we have in our closest relationships, *do not arise or begin with the other person*. No, the reason our head spins, or our gut tightens, or our heart begins to race, is because **something is going on within me**. In the final analysis, *the issue is with me*. As one theologian and psychologist put it,

"How could you go about creating a happy, loving, peaceful world? By learning a simple, beautiful, but painful art called **looking**. Every time you find yourself irritated or angry with someone, the one to look at is not that person but yourself...The cause of my irritation is not in this person *but in me*... look into the very real possibility that the reason why this person's defects annoy you is that you have them yourself." (Anthony de Mello)<sup>4</sup>

Friends, this is very close to a definition of hypocrisy, the very thing Jesus is warning us about. We'll have more to say about this in a bit, but if we ever hope to be a non-anxious change agent, a catalyst for the good of others, we must at least gain some perspective—about ourselves and about them.

**Second Principle: Patience (allowing space).** What about this whole dogs and pigs business? What does this mean? Well, the first thing we should probably point out is that it is less about dogs and pigs than it is about pearl pushers and holy harriers. Here's what I mean: Jesus's main issue is with those who give what is holy to dogs and throw pearls to pigs—not with those who behave like dogs or pigs, though sometimes people certainly do behave like animals. What Jesus is saying is this: don't force things on people that they simply can't handle or don't want. Don't force ways of life on people that they are not ready to accept. Don't berate people or nag them with your wisdom and good advice when they are clearly in no position to change, because all this does is harden their heart even further, to the point where they will turn on you, and pounce and attack. The point is not that the pearl is somehow wasted on this other person, **but that the person is not helped by it**. If we truly care about this person, we would want to give them something that would actually help, right? Pearls don't nourish pigs and dogs can't live off communion bread and wine, can they? Yet, we think that just because our Biblical wisdom and our godly advice is just what this other person needs to hear—again and again and again—until they get it. Meanwhile, what is actually happening, is we are turning this person against us, because we have become *tone deaf* to what is actually going on—both with them and with us. Instead, we need to **be patient**. See how this naturally connects to the previous verses about judgement and perspective? If we ever hope to gain perspective about ourselves and this other person, and what God is doing in this situation, we must be patient. We can't rush the work that God might be doing just because we are uncomfortable and anxious about His pace and timing. Dallas Willard says it better:

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<sup>4</sup> From *Following the Call: Living the Sermon on the Mount Together*



“What a picture this is of our efforts to correct and control others by pouring our good things, often truly precious things, upon them—things they nevertheless simply cannot ingest and use to nourish themselves. Often, we do not even listen to them. We “know” without listening. Our good intentions make little difference... [Now, notice how what Willard says next, connects this immediately back to verse 1 through 5 about judgement and hypocrisy.] Frankly, our ‘pearls’ are often offered with a certain superiority of bearing that keeps us from paying attention to those we are trying to help. We have solutions. That should be enough, shouldn’t it? And very quickly some contempt, impatience, anger, and even condemnation slips into our offer. Would we be offering them such pearls if our heart were not, right? Unfortunately, we just might. It has been done.”

Most likely, we are simply tired of having to deal with their shortcomings, so we just want to be rid of it already. Out pearl pushing and holy harassment, *is really for us. For me.* It is a reaction to something going on *with me.* Rather than actually seeing this person and attending to what they actually need and will benefit from, I grow impatient, and rush ahead, insisting that they magically transform before my very eyes... “Grow up already, get it together, cut it out...” Sometimes, we ask a person to reprogram an entire life’s worth of habit, routine, value, and belief—*in an instant.* And not because we are genuinely concerned about them, but because they are causing something to well up within me, that makes me uncomfortable, and makes me anxious. Willard again, for good measure,

“What we are actually doing with our proper condemnations and our wonderful solutions, more often than not, is taking others out of their own responsibility and out of God’s hands and trying to bring them under our control... and usually we ourselves do not consciously intend it. We are perhaps filled with anxiety about the ones we care for. But... we are always to respect other people as spiritual beings who are responsible before God alone for the course they choose to take of their own free will... It is the only way [God] can get the kind of personal beings he desired for his eternal purposes.” (Willard)<sup>5</sup>

**Third Principle: Presence and Presents (more clarity).** Here, we come to the most fundamental aspect of becoming a person who neither catches nor shares anxiety. The famous “Ask, seek, knock” verse. We are accustomed to hearing this verse as having to do almost exclusively with prayer. And while this isn’t wrong, per se, it fails to point out the very real connection that these verses have with those that surround it. Remember, right after this section, Jesus says “Do unto others what you wish they would do to you.” So, we are still talking about our immediate relationships with other people. Willard points out, that,

“the ask-seek-knock teaching first applies to our approach to other, not to prayer to God.” (Willard)<sup>6</sup>

Now, admittedly, Willard is being a bit provocative here, to make a point. Because the reality is that our prayerful posture towards God and our patient, attentive, presence towards other people, form a unified whole, they cannot be separated from one another when they are working together, integrated into a healthy relational life. Because these two relationships—with God and with one another—are always intimately bound up with each other, they always inform and influence each other, in surprising ways.

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<sup>5</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



For example: when it comes to strictly human relationships, *even Jesus himself*, seemed to practice this principle in his relationships with other people.

He was constantly asking people questions: “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mk. 10:51) He literally said he came “to seek and save the lost.” Lk. 19:10) And he tells the church at Laodacia, “I stand at the door and knock.” (Rev 3:20)

Think about how the ask-see-knock principle might transform your interactions within a difficult relationship. We cannot judge or condemn people when we find ourselves asking them questions, trying to gain perspective. We will find it hard to become impatient with others when we realize that we too, are searching for a solution to our shared dispute, with them, not against them, or in spite of them, nor for them. If we are seeking together a remedy for our relational tension, we will indeed find it. And when we approach even the most difficult relationship in our lives in this way, with gentleness, knocking as it were, we will be pleasantly surprised as the door opens to us. In other words, when we no longer barge in like Kramer from Seinfeld, we will find that this other person actually welcomes our help, and our care for them, that they actually do want to repair the relationship, and rebuild what has been damaged between us. What we ultimately discover, if we take seriously Jesus words here, is that, ***we can miraculously, become PRESENT to the other person, to ourselves, and, most importantly, TO WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT.*** This ‘sequence’ is rather important actually, because it is only after we can be present to the other person, that we become free to *actually pray* for them, rather than simply complain about them to God.

Furthermore, the gift of presence completely revolutionizes the way we interact with one another, especially because we learn to notice and ***pay attention to JESUS with us, and for us, here and now.*** The **gift of presence** that we receive is the Lord Himself. You realize that He is actually working in this other person, between the two of you in your relationship all around you, and yes, even in you personally. Because, in asking, seeking, and knocking, we learn that our Lord Himself meets us in our need, even if we don’t see it in the other person just yet. We find that He actually is working on the anxiety *in me*, and graciously healing and restoring all that is broken in me that has caused me to be so blindly judgmental, impatient and controlling, forceful and manipulative in the first place—because, at root, *those are my issues*, and they have nothing to do with this other person. ***It is with this awareness, that we find our perspective, our patience, and our presence radically reoriented towards the Kingdom of God.***

I look at God, I look at you, I keep looking at God. – Julian of Norwich

Asking, seeking, knocking, the gentle, non-forceful approach towards even the most difficult relationships, as well as our prayerful disposition towards God in prayer... all of this together, brings us back to where we began, with the quote from Steve Cuss about differentiation. Hopefully, you all have been able to piece it together by now. Lets remind ourselves what was said:

“Differentiation is the ability to be fully yourself while being fully connected to people [that is, fully present]. It is gaining clarity [and perspective] on where “I” end and the “other” begins. A differentiated person allows space [patience] between herself and another, even when that other person is highly anxious or asking for rescue. [The differentiated person] is clear [and has perspective] on her own values and convictions and is not easily swayed from them.” (Cuss, 119)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cuss, *Managing Leadership Anxiety...*

This is why I mentioned differentiation at the beginning of our time, because only the differentiated person can be a catalyst for the good—a catalytic converter or a liver! Only the differentiated person can be a **non-forceful, low friction, non-anxious presence for the good** of those around them, especially those they love. They are neither codependent or aloof, entangled or absent: *they are present, patient, and can see clearly all that God is at work doing.*

Dallas Willard for the win:

“As long as I am condemning my friends and relatives [judging them], or pushing my pearls [of wisdom] on them, I am their problem. They have to respond to me, and that usually leads to their judging me right back... But if I can back away, maintaining a sensitive and nonmanipulative presence [differentiation]... [If I can] listen, they do not have to protect themselves from me, and they begin to open up [to Kingdom Life]... because I am no longer [condemning, judging, demonizing] them, genuine communication and real sharing of hearts becomes an attractive possibility.” (Willard)<sup>8</sup>

There is an interesting moment at the very end of Jesus’s life. We overlook it sometimes, I think. Jesus, looks at those who were crucifying him, and says, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” Even in his most desperate and agonizing moment, in the midst of unbearable pain and suffering, at the hands of the very people he wanted to help, to rescue, to save... *Jesus was able to see clearly. He remained patient. He was present enough, to himself and to God, present enough **to PRAY FOR THOSE WHO WERE KILLING HIM.** He continued to see them in their need, and he sought to meet it. He continued to ask the Father on their behalf.* It is a staggering scene. It was there, on that crucifix that His body was broken, and his blood was poured out, for our sake. So that now, we are caught up in all that He is doing, here on earth, as it is in heaven. May we each grow in our ability to remain fully present to that reality.

Let’s pray.

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<sup>8</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

# REFLECTION & COMMUNION INVITE

Questions for Reflection:

- Do I tend to overreact or avoid difficult relationships? Fight or flight?
- What perspective am I lacking?
- Do I use force to 'help' those I care for?
- Am I fully present to myself, to the other person, and to God when dealing with difficult a relationship?

## COMMUNION with CORPORATE CONFESSION

Our Father in heaven, hallowed is your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We receive from you all we need for life today, knowing there is plenty more for tomorrow.

We're forgiven, and so we forgive.

Led not into the conflicts within and quarrels between, but delivered from all that thieve life.

Yours is the only and forever Kingdom and power and glory;

all of which you graciously share with us through Your Son.

In His life, we live. Amen.

Song #3 – Surely by Olivia Buckles

Song #4 – I Shall Not Want by Audrey Assad

## BENEDICTION | James 5:7-11

As we conclude the day made for us, we enter into *the work and relationships* for which we are made remembering, the words of James:

Be patient, therefore, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient.

Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. – James 5:7-11