

Theological Equipping Class – How to Meditate on the Bible **“Delight. Display. Declare: The Mission of The Parkway Church”**

The Parkway Church exists to Glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who: Delight in Him, Display His Love to one another, and Declare Him to the World

What is Christian Meditation?

- Psalm 1 – *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”*
- Psalm 119:48 – *“I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.”*
- Psalm 119:97-99- *“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day....I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.”*
- *“Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let His truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart.” – J.I. Packer*
- *Meditation is 'a dwelling, a musing, an abiding upon the things we know of God'. It means focusing on the truth, staying with it until it registers as it should. – Allen Chapple*

Why Practice Christian Meditation?

Getting the Truth from the Head to the Heart

- *You hear the Word of God. This is good. But it is not enough that your ears hear it. Do you let it penetrate inwardly into your heart and allow the heavenly food to be digested there, so that you get the benefit of its vitality and power? – Philip Spener*
- *“Meditation is thinking a truth *out* and then thinking a truth *in* until its ideas become “big” and “sweet,” moving and affecting, and until the reality of God is sensed upon the heart.” - Tim Keller*
- *“Meditation is the discipline that lights the fuse between the understanding of the mind and the tasting of the heart – the knowledge of God and the joy of His presence.” – John Starke*

Setting the Heart on Fire

- *Psalm 103:1-14 - Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! ² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, ³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, ⁵ who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. ⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹² as far as the*

east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. ¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. ¹⁴ For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.... Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! ²¹ Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! ²² Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

- "The reason we come away from the word so cold is we do not warm ourselves by the fires of meditation." - Thomas Watson
- "Meditation is a great heart warmer; it renews and increases spiritual heats, drives away dullness and dead-heartedness, brings a new life, strength, and vigor into the spirit." – Nathaniel Ranew
- "Every divine truth has a sweetness and a savor in it, and our souls are to relish it. If there be not relish in the palate, the relish in meat is to no purpose... If we have not a relish of divine truths, undoubtedly we know them not as we should." – Richard Sibbs
- Thinking of meditation this way emphasizes that God's word nourishes us, growing us in godliness. The truth needs to sink into me so that it does what it is meant to do. – Allen Chappel

Growing through Meditation

- Psalm 1 – "*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*"
- "In this Christian life there are many problems and difficulties, but more and more it seems to me that most of our problems, indeed if not all of them, arise from the simple fact that we fail to realize, understand, and appreciate what is the real truth about us as Christian people. We read these things in the scripture without meditating on them so we don't realize that these are not abstract truths but these are truths about us. If we did that, our entire lives would be revolutionized." – Martin Lloyd Jones
- "Let us dwell upon the meditation and consideration of this till we feel our hearts warmed. If one pass through the sunshine, it doth not much heat; but if the sun beat upon a thing, there will be a reflection of heat. So let us stay upon this consideration of the infinite love and mercy of Christ to us wretches, and this warming the heart, it will transform us to the likeness of Christ" - Richard Sibbes

Meditation is essential to Christian life

- Joshua 1:8 "*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*"
- "Meditation is the life and soul of Christianity; it is that which makes you improve all the truths of the Christian religion. You are but the skeletons of Christians without meditation. It is as necessary as your daily bread." - Thomas Brooks
- "It is not more impossible to live without a heart than to be devout without meditation." – Joseph Hall

What do we Meditate on?

God's Word: Scriptures

- Psalm 1 – *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”*
- Psalm 119:15-16 *“I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.”*

God's Work: Gospel

- Psalm 77:12 – *“I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.”*
- Colossians 3:1-4 – *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*
- Romans 8:5-6 – *“Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”*
- Philippians 4:8-9 – *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”*
- *“O Christian soul...arouse your mind, remember your resurrection, contemplate your redemption and liberation. Consider anew where and what the strength of your salvation is, spend time in meditating upon this strength, delight in reflecting upon it. Shake off your disinclination, constrain yourself, strive with your mind towards this end. Taste the goodness of your Redeemer, be aflame with love for your Savior, chew his words as a honeycomb, suck out their flavor, which is sweeter than honey, swallow their health-giving sweetness. Chew by thinking, suck by understanding, swallow by loving and rejoicing. Rejoice in chewing, be glad in sucking, delight in swallowing.” – Anselm of Canterbury*

God's Work: History

- Psalm 143:5 – *“I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.”*

God's Work: Creation

- Psalm 8:1-4 – *“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens...³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”*

God's Worth

- Psalm 145:5 - *On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*

God's Character

- “Solemnly set yourselves at chosen times to think on God. Meditation is of itself a distinct duty, and must have a considerable time allowed it among the other exercises of the Christian life...Is it reasonable that he who is our life and our all, should never be thought on, but now and then, as it were by chance, and on the by?” – John Howe

Meditate on your feelings and circumstances in light of God's Truth:

- Psalm 77 – *“I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. ²In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. ³When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah ⁴You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. ⁵I consider the days of old, the years long ago. ⁶I said, “Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart.” Then my spirit made a diligent search: ⁷“Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? ⁸Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? ⁹Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?” Selah ¹⁰Then I said, “I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High.” ¹¹I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. ¹²I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. ¹³Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? ¹⁴You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. ¹⁵You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah ¹⁶When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled. ¹⁷The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side. ¹⁸The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. ¹⁹Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. ²⁰You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”*

How do we Meditate?

General Structure:

- 1. Identify a Truth to Meditate on
- 2. “Think it out”
- 3. “Think it in”

Meditating on the Word:

- Take a Passage - read, study, see what stirs your heart
 - Either linger there or come back to it
- When ready to meditate: Pray
- Approach #1: Ring out the Truth
 - Psalm 103:3 – *“who forgives all you iniquity”*
 - Because of Jesus, all my rebellion is forgiven
 - Because of Jesus, ALL my rebellion is forgiven
 - Because of Jesus, all my REBELLION is forgiven
 - Because of Jesus, all MY Rebellion is forgiven
 - Because of Jesus, all my rebellion is FORGIVEN
 - Because of JESUS, all my rebellion is forgiven

- Approach #2: Ask Questions
 - Question: What does this say about God?
 - How does it make Him beautiful, wonderful, etc.?
 - What does this show me about His character?
 - How can I adore Him?
 - Then, sit there with Jesus
 - Think about: what your life, your church, and your family would be like if He was adored for this more fully.
 - Then you could:
 - Pray – Adore Him
 - Repent – because you’re convicted.
 - Stand in Awe of Him
 - Pray – Ask for Him to keep your eyes set on His beauty
 - Question: What does this say about humanity/you?
 - Have you been walking as you shouldn’t?
 - Have you been living as if your “pretty good?”
 - Is there something this passage exposes wrong ways you view yourself/the world?
 - Sit there with Jesus
 - Think about what your life would be like (your hopes, your behavior) if this truth was true in your life.
 - Then you could:
 - Confess and Repent
 - Think about God’s word and the assurance you have in repenting
 - Question: What does this teach about what Jesus has accomplished in the Gospel?
 - How is Jesus’ life and work the solution to my failings?
 - How does this show the “immeasurable grace” of the Gospel?
 - Sit there with Jesus
 - Think about His succeeding where you fail and giving you His Success/Righteousness
 - See Him laying down His heavenly glory to be born in a feeding trough for you
 - Then you could:
 - Pray: Praise
 - Thank Him for His healing
 - Thank him for who he is and what he has done.
 - Question: How should I live in response to this?
 - Are there ways I can walk in obedience to this?
 - Are there ways to love or serve my neighbor?
 - Sit there with Jesus
 - Think about: What would my life, Church, family be like if I walked like this by God’s grace?
 - Then you could:
 - Ask for the mercy to live more truthfully in the way of this healing.
 - Ask for help against temptation.

- Ask for light to see clearly when you leave this time of prayer and begin the rest of your day.

Meditating on the Gospel:

- Start big and slowly “zoom in”
- 1. Think on the Gospel from Creation to Consummation
- 2. Plug yourself into that Gospel story
- 3. Think about all the personal implications

Meditation on my Feelings:

- 1. Take your Circumstances...Identify your struggles
- 2. Take them TO God
- 3. Meditate on them in His presence
 - “If you wish to look well inwardly, look well out...Throw widely open the portals of faith and in this, every light will be admitted into the chambers of experience. The true way to facilitate self-examination is to look believingly outwardly.” - Thomas Chalmers
- 4. Meditate on how the Truth of God speaks into your circumstances
 - Another way of saying “Preaching gospel to self”

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.” - Psalm 23:1-3