

We've been in the season of Listening to the Spirit: With Freedom and Power, since Easter, with Listening Sessions happening in various groups and sermon series on ways we listen to the spirit. Today pastor Steve is back from his sabbatical finishing up our series of Listening to the Spirit with a sermon from the Book of Ruth in the Bible. Ruth becomes a character that signifies ways in which we might listen to the spirit that might be different from the old ways, the law, or tradition.

For me, there have been times where a certain individual helped me to see and feel in a real embodied way the love of God in my life. Listening to the Spirit can be through our thoughts or from stories of how God acts in other's lives, but there are also times when a person, just by being themselves, who just exudes the presence of God, can be through whom God speaks. So today, for our Spiritual Practice, I want to invite you to think of that person. Someone who has been a representative, a reminder, someone who could've even been the face of God for you at some point in your life.

So let me invite you to just quietly sit and reflect, to think upon and bring to your mind this person and all that this person is or was. I'll take us through some series of questions to invite us to think about this person. And if just imagining and thinking is hard, feel free to also jot some thoughts or words down on a journal as well.

Okay, let's get into a comfortable position, and feel free to close your eyes to bring focus in your mind.

Think of someone, that person who maybe at a time when you needed God's loving presence, showed up in your life. And if you have any trouble thinking of someone, also feel free to think of Jesus instead and imagine him as that person.

Picture that person in your mind now. And feel how they make you feel in your body for a moment. Maybe love, maybe safe, maybe comfort. Maybe free.

How were you feeling before they showed up?

How did you meet them?

What did they look like?

What did they say to you that brought encouragement, comfort, or tenderness?

What was their personality like? Quiet? Wise? Funny? Helpful?

What did they do?

How did you two spend time together? How did you experience them?

What was it about them that left such an impression in your life in positive ways?

What imprint did they leave on you?

How did they impact you? How have you changed because of them?

What's different about you now because of them?

Now think of ways you can channel their energy to those around you. How would you do that? What would you say that honors their spirit? How can you also be the presence of love, wisdom, and comfort to someone else, like this person was to you?

I'll close us in prayer.

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of people in our lives. Thank you for the ways in which you use us, one another, sometimes broken, sometimes selfish, full of mistakes and lacking so many ways, that you use us mere humans to speak your love, to show your comfort to our neighbor, to help someone else who's hurting, to be advocates, to be protectors, to be mothers and fathers and guardians and god fathers and god mothers. How good is your mercy, and grace, and love that you reach us through such broken vessels. Thank you. And make us vessels of your love, co creators in your kin-dom, that we may share the knowledge of you through our very lives we pray. Amen.

Pass it to Steve