

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE | 5/16/21

“Standing at the threshold of our hearts....”

Hi! Good morning everyone, I'm Ivy a Pastor here. And in just a moment Pastor Lydia will share a sermon entitled, "Suffering to Hope." She'll be offering scripture found in Romans 5 where it says, "but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that **suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.** And hope does not put us to shame, because **God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.**"

And I want to invite us into a spiritual practice that utilizes this Scripture, and allows us to reflect and move forward with an awareness of how suffering and hope resides in us. It's a practice you might want to use as you cross through the threshold of your physical doorways - and out into society - in the days, and weeks to come.

In some ways we, as a society, are about to pass through a big threshold - as we look to the Summer. With more people vaccinated there's more hopeful movement, more gathering safely and more connection, more people.. And it's in REAL view, withinreach! ((As, of course we continue to track with the CDC & State guidelines.))

And with that - there's this possibility, this promise, new light, freshnesshope... ahead.

1. I'd love for you to take a moment now to consider how you feel as you look at the opportunities ahead to in some ways regain connection and movement in your life:

How do you feel? How do you greet this?

- Full on Willingness...
- Excitement...
- Hesitancy....
- Worry...anxiety..
- Urgency...

Take a second to think about this....how are you greeting the opportunities for more connection and movement ahead of us?

As you consider how you feel - I want you to also pause & take a look at the **terrain of your heart**. Because while we can feel excited-ly nervous and eagerly-optimistic - it's important to give our hearts a moment to catch up - to fully express to us - what they've been holding for a year, a year plus, and for some of us - generations.

Because we, and our hearts have hoped and suffered a lot.

2. Landscape of Your Heart

So take a minute to think about the terrain of your heart...

I'll offer a couple of suggestions to get your mind going;

Brittle ...and dry - cracked, crumbling.

Protective - buttoned down - your only shelter/refuge.

Saturated ...with a sense of lushness/nourishments - or saturated with weight/ burden/pain..

I'll give you a minute now to think about the terrain of your heart

Chat: Any takers - want to offer how the landscape/terrain of your heart is today?

To help us narrow in a little more on the landscape of our hearts - I'm going to read a couple of the words from the Romans scripture.. And pay attention to how and where these words land as I say them - do they bounce off of your heart? Are they immediately absorbed? How do they land?

First word is,

Suffering

Next word is,

Perseverance

Another word is,

Character

And lastly,

Hope

These words may give you more information - about what the state of your heart is. Maybe the word "SUFFERING" can't be absorbed into your heart - because it's ALL your heart is composed of right now... maybe the word PERSEVERANCE lies on top of your heart, because you've already given all you can ... Maybe the word HOPE rolls back and forth looking for a crack to sink into...

Knowing where you are at - how your heart is doing - is helpful as we venture more fully into our days. It allows us to be **gentle** with ourselves, it **frees** us to engage as we can - but not to force ourselves into more than we can - and it **enlivens** us to rejoice and give thanks - and dance in the streets if we want - from a true source of hope.....in our hearts, laced with love.

Because as this Scripture in Romans reminds us - our hearts are also encased in the source of hope.....love,

God loves me, just as I am - exactly where I'm at.

"God's love pours into my heart through the Holy Spirit"

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So, as you stand in the threshold of your own doorways - before you leave each time in the upcoming weeks.. Let this be your summer prayer:

"God pour your love into my heart, pour your love into my heart, as I go forth."

Amen