

March 3rd – Wednesday

Centering Breath Prayer: Teach me your ways, O Lord...and how to think like you.

Lord, I do not often understand your thoughts or your ways. I have come to you today to learn of you so that my understanding may become more complete and my thoughts and ways become more like yours. In the name of Jesus, who came that we might know you more, I pray. Amen.

Scriptures: Isaiah 55:6-9

Key Verses: Isaiah 55:8-9:

(8) “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. (9) ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (NIV).

Buying food and drink without money without any strings attached, now that’s not the way humans think or act! This is just one of many examples of how very different God is than we are. In our scripture passage for today we are urged to seek God and call on God. Why? We are urged so that the wicked might forsake their ways and those who are evil release their thoughts. We are urged to seek God so that God will have mercy and offer free pardon. Humm...buying food and drink without money and receiving free pardon, what a radical idea! At least radical by human ways and human thoughts! Jesus was like this. For three years he traveled around the countryside turning our thinking and our ways of doing things upside down – the prodigal son welcomed with open arms – a blind man healed on the Sabbath – the widow’s mite declared the greatest offering, just to name a few.

When Jesus met with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, he declared to her that he would give her living water which would mean that she would never thirst. Living water she could purchase without money, but by trust. It was a lengthy conversation between two vastly different kinds of people, people who would not ordinarily spend time in conversation. After all she was a woman, and not just any woman, but a Samaritan woman, and he was a Jewish man. It is hard to describe the distinction in our time, but think of a fundamentalist Christian man having a meaningful conversation with a militant Muslim (male or female). But, God’s ways are not our ways and Jesus often did the unexpected. The conversation Jesus had with the Samaritan woman led the woman to witness to the town about Jesus and how he was different from any man she had ever met and who knew more about her than anyone could. Yet, even in the midst of her sinful life, Jesus invited her to drink from the living water, just as God called to his people through Isaiah to come and drink their fill without cost. How often do we drink of this precious gift to us? Are we thirsty or have we continued to drink our fill, leaving our thirst behind us?

One of the reasons for Christ’s life here on earth was to model God’s ways and thought processes to us, to be an example of God’s very nature. Because God’s thoughts and ways are not natural to us, we must constantly look to Jesus for comparison so that we might become more like him and thus think and act more like God would do. Love’s triumphant journey is filled with such examples. As we travel with the Lord, our hunger and thirst for righteousness, for that right relationship with

God, is constantly being sustained and satisfied by Christ's way of dealing with situations. His thought process and his actions stimulate ours. If there is one thing I have learned over the years of traveling with Christ, and I'm certain that my knowledge is still very incomplete, it is that everything Christ did and said was motivated by love. Even his anger was prompted by his compassion for the people and the perversions which kept God's love from reaching the people. If we are to satisfy our hunger and thirst for spiritual nourishment, we need to be filled with love, for ourselves, for those around us, for the world upon which we live and most especially for the God who gives us life. This Lenten journey is about love, God's love for us, and, as the title of this series reminds us, that love is triumphant. We have not yet experienced its final triumph, we are still on the journey. Even though our understanding is still incomplete, we are filled with the desire to learn more and to grow into greater love. We hunger and thirst for the living bread and water that only Christ can give us, bread and water which contain what we need most to sustain us - love. Let us continue to travel love's triumphant journey and become more like Jesus. Our love will grow and we will be satisfied.

Additional Scriptures: Luke 15:11-32; John 9:1-15; Luke 21:1-4; John 4: 4-42

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. Do I hunger and thirst for an understanding of God's thoughts and ways?
2. How can I learn more about God's ways and thoughts by following Jesus?
3. Have I let my life be turned upside down (or is it right side up) by the love of God?

Suggestions for action:

1. As you go through your day, ask yourself, how would Jesus handle this situation? Then do your best to do likewise.
2. Continue to pray for someone new each day and do something special to encourage someone new each day. These are acts of love such as Jesus did.
3. Look for something to do which shows your love for the creation in which we live; pick up some trash, recycle cans and other items, plant a tree, etc.

Loving God, your ways and your thoughts are not natural to me, but my earnest desire is that your ways and your thoughts would become a natural part of my life. As I continue to walk with Jesus on love's triumphant journey, fill me with your love so that it is overflowing and so that those around me may experience it along with me. Satisfy my hunger and thirst for you as we travel this day. In your loving name, I pray. Amen.