

RESET Journey Prayer Experience – Script (revised 2-15)

Welcome

Welcome to the RESET prayer experience. Over the past several weeks we've been taking a look at Jesus and examining whether or not we have been living with unhealthy assumptions about him. Today we're going to spend some time talking with God about all of this.

Just to begin, it's important that we understand that prayer is just a fancy word for talking with God. There's nothing special we have to do and there are no pre-requisites for this conversation. In prayer we simply bring all of our thoughts, ideas, struggles, etc., to God in a simple conversation. That's it.

Throughout this experience you'll be prompted to perform certain activities to help you better engage. Take as much time with these as you'd like. The experience is designed to last about an hour, but some people will take more or less time.

Take a few minutes right now to focus your thoughts. Tell God that you want to hear from him today. Tell him all of your expectations, good bad and ugly. Tell him that you want to know him for who he is, not for who you wish he was. Spend a few minutes doing this, then whenever you're ready move on to the next part of the experience.

Assumptions/ICONS

In front of you are rows of stain glass. In the history of the church, stain glass played an important role in helping communicate the story of Jesus and what he was doing in the world. Early church leaders would create pictures to help a largely illiterate population understand and grasp who Jesus was. Over time, however, these images - these representations - became twisted and taken out of context. Because people were dealing only with the representation - the icon - and not the source material, they could simply make up any story they wanted. Over time these stories spread and became the common understanding of who Jesus was.

In the same way, many of us also create icons of Jesus in our heads. We live with impressions, other people's stories, and false images that have been taken for granted because we've never looked clearly at Jesus himself. For others of us, maybe we've been following Jesus for years but we are still living with an understanding we had of him years ago and are no longer engaging him in a thriving, vibrant relationship. We've grown stagnant. Jesus has become more of an intellectual construct than a person.

We're going to spend some time in this room asking God to show us areas in our life where we have reduced Jesus to an icon and harbored a false understanding of him. As you walk throughout the room, you'll notice various statements on the walls. Take some time to consider these statements and your reaction to them. Ask God to show you places in your life where you might be living with wrong assumptions. Spend as much time here as you'd like, then whenever you're ready move on to the next part of the experience.

Assumptions/IDOLS

In the book of Luke we read an account of Jesus' last meal with his close followers. We read of an incredibly touching moment when Jesus shares with his followers that he is about to be arrested and condemned to die on a cross. One of those present with Jesus was a man named

Judas. Judas was one of Jesus' closest followers and, as many of us may know after reading Luke, was the one who betrayed Jesus to the ruling authorities and facilitated his execution.

In one account of this last supper, the final interaction Jesus had with Judas was to offer him the bread from the last supper, symbolizing his life and love for his followers. Judas took the bread, then left the room.

Even at the moment when he was being sold out by one of his best friends for a handful of coins, Jesus was still offering himself and his life.

Judas sold Jesus out because Jesus didn't fit his exact understanding of what a savior should be. He was making assumptions about Jesus that were simply untrue.

In the same way, when we hold assumptions about Jesus we can be tempted to sell him out for whatever seems right at the time. But just like Judas, the bible tells us that Jesus is offering us life if we are willing to receive it. To receive him. To receive the bread of life.

In front of you are several altars. Each of these represents a way in which we might be tempted to sell out God in our lives. They are all based upon false assumptions about Jesus and who he is and what he is offering us. Take some time to roam throughout the room and think about ways in which you are allowing your assumptions to convince you to sell Jesus out. It might be that you think God is holding out on you, so you're going to get what you can while you can. It might be that you think God is indifferent to you and so you spend your life screaming for love and attention from others to close the gap. Whatever it is, know that God is not threatened by your assumptions. Jesus is still offering you the bread.

As you walk around the room, carry with you the bread and coins. When you feel like you're ready and it's a choice you want to make, toss your coins in the center area to symbolize that you don't want assumptions to get in the way anymore. Then eat the bread.

GARDEN

It was in the garden that Jesus obeyed. While wrestling with what was to come - agony and death - he said, "not my will but yours be done." Jesus went to the cross to take on all of our sins, all of our assumptions, everything, and to reconcile us to God. Spend a few moments here - in the garden - telling God that you want to hear from him and to be reconciled.

CROSS

The cross was God's way of saying that no matter what we throw at him - sin, death, assumptions - he will walk right through it in order to have a relationship with us. It's not because God is needy and insecure and needs friends, it's because he knows that relationship with him is the most valuable thing in the universe and he wants us to experience him. He will go to any length to insure that we have the ability to choose him. That is love.

In front of you is a cross. On this cross Jesus bore the sins of the whole world - the ways we missed the mark and denied God and turned our back on him. Jesus was crucified by the very people for whom he was dying. And for you and me. The cross is big enough to bear all of our shortcomings. We're going to spend some time in this room writing down all of the assumptions that we have been wrestling through. Then, whenever you are ready, go to the front and nail

those assumptions to the cross knowing that Jesus bore all of them for you, and he is not threatened by them. We are only hurting ourselves by continuing to live with them. Nail them to the cross and tell God that you want to know him for who he is.

TOMB

For three days Jesus remained in the tomb. Many people like to end the story there, but that is NOT the end of the story. It is just the beginning. On the third day Jesus rose from death and walked in life. He did so to take away the only power that this world holds - death - and to show that he will even walk through that to prove his love for us.

And for those who follow Jesus we have that same promise. The bible tells us that there is no longer death. In fact, not only is there no longer death but there is eternal life and it begins now. We can be in a thriving, eternal relationship with our creator starting right now if we choose to receive him.

On the walls of this tomb are various statements about what is true of those who follow Jesus and are alive in him. Take some time to think on these, and if you want, write a prayer of gratitude to God for what he has done for you in Jesus.

WORSHIP

In Jesus we have life. Jesus says that he came that we might have life and have it to the full. That doesn't necessarily mean lots and lots of money and stuff, it means that we will find our ultimate desires, hopes, passions, longings and needs met in him and as we pursue him we will grow more and more convinced of his goodness, life and goodwill toward us. As we worship him, we come to trust him.

We are going to spend some time in this room in worship. That can look like anything you want. You can spend time praying to God and thanking him for what he has done in your life. Feel free to sing along with the music. Feel free to crouch in a corner and have some alone time with God. Whatever you want to do - this is your time to respond to God. If you are not sure what to do, just tell that to God. Have an honest and frank conversation and ask him to meet you.

RECEIVE

One discipline that we need to learn if we want to thrive in our relationship with God is the discipline of receiving. We - especially in America - tend to be very good at working and extending ourselves. We are in a capitalist economy where there is no free lunch. But this economy doesn't really work with God because there is nothing we really have to give him other than ourselves, and so we must simply get comfortable with receiving.

There are many ways that we receive from God. Jesus gave us lots of examples in the bible. We examine four of them in this week's prompts in the Reset guide. In front of you are four spaces based upon four models Jesus gave us for receiving from God: like a son, like soil, like a branch attached to a vine and like a child. Choose one of these environments and spend some time receiving from God. No expectations, only expectancy. Feel free to try a few different environments before you move on.

FINAL WORDS

What you experienced here today is not something that needs to be reserved for a large event with multiple rooms and environments. In fact, sometimes that stuff just gets in the way. You can pray to God anywhere and anytime by simply starting up a conversation.

To help you do so, grab a take home CD of today's experience on your way out. It is a shortened version of the prayer experience and is designed to help you have times with God on your way to work, while on a walk, while working out, whatever. Take it and use it.

Also, if you had a powerful time today in the experience, please share your story with someone. you can use the card you got on the way in to write it out or you can simply call someone on the phone and let them know what you experienced. But one of the ways that we encourage one another and continue our growth is by sharing our story.

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