

# Making Space for God

**Invocation:** Father in Heaven, we belong to you, body and soul, in this life and in the next. Help me to make myself available to you these next six hours. Give me ears to listen to your voice. Calm my restless heart. Let me experience your love for me and refresh and renew my love for you. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

**Looking to the Past-** Take some times to settle yourself. Invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been this last month. Review your journal. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? When have you experienced the Lord's presence? Journal your thoughts and offer these to the Lord.

## Scripture Reading- Jacob Blesses His Grandsons- Genesis 48

All of us acquire core memories early on in life that become a lens through which we see and respond to the world. Jacob's core memories included a blind father who failed to love and properly bless his son and a mother who encouraged him to wear goat hair on his hands in order to grab a blessing destined for someone else. It is the grace of God when we get a "do over"—a chance to transform a painful core memory into the source of joy. Such was the case for Jacob at the end of his 147 year life. Hands that once deceived blessed his grandsons. And the prophetic word that the younger son would be greater than the older that was ignored by Isaac was gracefully reinstated in a way that empowered all the members of his family.



*Jacob Blesses the Children of Joseph, Rembrandt 1659*

## Questions for Reflection

1. Jacob was approaching death and his son Joseph who was the most spiritually attentive of the family members went to visit. What do Jacob and Joseph share in common in their experience with the Lord?
2. In verses 3-4 Jacob remembered the high point of his life. In verse 7 he remembered the low point. What are the high point and low points in your life so far?
3. The promise given to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob is the thread that holds the book of Genesis together. How does it apply to you?
4. Recall and compare Isaac's botched blessing of Jacob and Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. How is Jacob different at the end of his life than when he was in his early years?
5. Pray Jacob's prayer of blessing in verses 15-16 for the people you serve.
6. In verses 17-20 God's prophetic word for Ephraim and Manasseh challenged cultural expectations. What cultural expectations are you being asked to challenge as you follow Jesus?

## Reading for Reflection

“Blessed is the servant who loves his brother as much when he is sick and useless as when he is well and able to be of service to him. And blessed is he who loves his brother as well when he is a far off as when he is by his side, and who would say nothing behind his back he might not, in love, say before his face.”

Saint Francis

We learn by the bitter experience of temptation that the spiritual life is not a matter of devout feeling or mere desire to be good. It is through temptation that most of us comprehend how serious a matter it is—a very matter of life and death, involving struggles for survival which are fierce and primitive.

*Reginald Somerset Ward 1881-1962*

The spiritual director Somerset Ward used to equate that use of the word *suffering* with effort. Christianity's about effort—about expending blood, sweat, and tears to be what you've been designed by God to be and do what you've been designed by God to do. That's certainly not incompatible with personal fulfillment and lasting happiness—quite the reverse. What's incompatible is not bothering to find out who one is, settling for something less or something other than what one should be, trampling on others in order to realize a self designed by the ego instead of valuing and caring for others in order to realize the true self designed by God.

*Susan Howatch in Absolute Truths*

Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven.

*NT Wright The Resurrection of the Son of God*

For the wise men of old, the cardinal problem of human life was how to conform the soul to objective reality, and the solution was wisdom, self-discipline, and virtue. For the modern mind, the cardinal problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of man, and the solution is a technique.

*C.S. Lewis in The Abolition of Man*

I have never been able to conjure up (as some great Evangelical missionaries have) the appalling vision of the millions who are not only perishing but will inevitably perish. On the other hand...I am not and cannot be a universalist. Between these two extremes I cherish and hope that the majority of the human race will be saved. And I have solid biblical basis for this belief.

*John R. W. Stott in Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue, page 327*

I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside.

*C. S. Lewis in The Great Divorce page 69*

We need to find God and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friends of silence... We need to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us and through us.

*Malcolm Muggeridge*

## ***Benediction***

*Our Father, we have listened to thy word and loved it; we have found comfort and inspiration in song and psalter; we have enjoyed the companionship of those who, with kindred minds and hearts, have praised and worshiped thee. Now help us understand that, as we leave this sacred space, we shall become thy Church in the street.*

*-Anonymous (from a Guide for Prayer)*