

# Making Space for God

## Lessons from Mark--#2 Still Point

### Opening Prayer

*O God, early in the morning I cry to you. Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you; I cannot do this alone. In me there is darkness, but with you there is light; I am lonely, but you do not leave me; I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help; I am restless but with you there is peace. In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience; I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me... Restore me to liberty, and enable me to live now that I may answer before you and before men. Lord, whatever this day may bring, your name be praised. Amen*  
1945)



*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Germany/1906-*

### Arrival

Take 30-60 minutes to settle yourself. Invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been in the last four weeks. Review your calendar and journal to get a sense of what you have been thinking and feeling. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? Offer these to the Lord.

### Scripture—Mark 1:29-39

Read the passage slowly three times to let it sink in

### Reflection

It was dark outside. The first glimmers of dawn were hours away. The air was cool and still. The cloudless night sky was resplendent with stars that cast a silver hue over the land. The only sound was an occasional cough or snort of a sleeper stirring on their mat. His bare footsteps on the stone floor were as silent as a cat. He passed through the doorway like a ghost; the click of the lock imperceptible.

He glided over the darkened landscape heading away from the lake and up into the hills. Alone. Eventually, after walking for about thirty minutes, he came to a grassy knoll and sat down with his back against a rock. He sat listening to the silence for a while. Slowly, he sensed entering a safe space where he was loved. Then he sighed and as he exhaled, the disparate needs, the helplessness, the doubts and fears, the repressed anger, and the superficial adulations of those he had healed at Simon's house the previous day were released from his body. He exhaled again and then when he inhaled he remembered Simon's mother-in-law—a nameless old woman who lived in the shadows serving the household. When she was touched by him, she instinctively rose and quietly returned to her duties. Of all the people he had met the previous day, she was the one who intrigued him the most. She understood her purpose and place. So he sat with that thought for a long time.

Eventually, as the black sky turned a blue grey, he asked the silence, “What should I do next?” And a thought came to him, “You have your answer.” And so he did.<sup>1</sup>

**Questions:** What are the main things Jesus calls you to concern yourself with next month? What do you need to ignore or put off until a later time in order to give your best self to your main concerns? Who might you disappoint? How will you handle their disappointment?

## Readings

In a world too vast and a lifetime too short for me to carry all responsibility...the loving presence of God does not burden us equally with all things, but considerably puts upon each of us just a few central tasks, as emphatic responsibilities. For each of us these special undertakings are our share in the joyous burdens of love. This state of having a concern has a foreground and a background. In the foreground is the special task, uniquely illuminated, toward which we feel a special yearning and care...But in the background is a second level, or layer, of universal concern for all the multitude of good things that need doing. Toward them we feel kindly, but we are dismissed from active service in most of them. And we have an easy mind in the presence of desperately real needs which are not our direct responsibility. We cannot die on every cross, nor are we expected to.

*Thomas Kelly in Sanctuary of the Soul page 61*

You must have a room, or a certain hour or so a day, where you don't know what was in the newspapers that morning, you don't know who your friends are, you don't know what you owe anybody, you don't know what anybody owes to you. This is a place where you can simply experience and bring forth what you are and what you might be. This is the place of creative incubation. At first you may find that nothing happens there. But if you have a sacred place and use it, something eventually will happen.

*Joseph Campbell*

## Psalm 23—Silicon Valley Version

The clock is my shepherd, I shall not rest. It makes me lie down only when exhausted.

It leads me in circles of frenzy for activities' sake; it hounds my soul.

Even though I run frantically from task to task, I will never get it all done, for my “ideal” is with me.

Deadlines and my need for approval, they drive me. They demand performance from me, beyond the limits of my schedule.

They anoint my head with migraines, my in-basket overflows. Surely fatigue and time pressure shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the bonds of frustration forever.

## Benediction

Father, thank you for time in this quiet place with you today. Thank you for the reminders that you love me no matter what. Thank you for the example that Jesus gave in the gospels to take time to be with you. You know my propensity to distraction. You know my longing to be liked by others. And you know how easy it is for me to get lost inside my head and forget you, forget who I am, or forget the mission you call me to. In this month ahead, give me daily reminders that I belong, body and soul in this life and in the next, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

<sup>1</sup> Reflection and Painting by Steve Stuckey