

Father, Your Will Be Done

Jesus taught us to pray, God's will be done. The Bible contains story after story of women and men who struggle to know God's will. In today's story, we meet Joseph. We shall not hear him ask about God's will. I suppose he doesn't have the emotional-mental space for such endeavors. Joseph finds himself immersed in a quandary.

Matthew tells us that Joseph is a righteous man. Life-Experience taught him lessons of evil. His mother, father, community, and rabbi taught him The Law of Moses. Righteousness that comes from the Law of Moses left him in a precarious place.

He wants to be good. He wants to keep the Law of Moses. He knows the Ten Commandments. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not kill. He also knows the Law requires a woman caught in adultery be stoned to death.

Do you see Joseph's quandary? Do you possess experience of this precarious place? If he exposes Mary to public dis-grace how shall he live with himself? How may a righteous person, who keeps the whole Law of Moses, kill a person and not break the whole Law?

Before we say, "Righteousness comes through obedience to the Law of Moses," let us return to the scene. Exodus 19: 5 says, "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine." Notice God asked us to do two things. First, to listen to God's voice. Second, to keep the Covenant.

Now, back to Joseph. He has been taught to keep the Covenant, the Law of Moses. He has not been taught to listen to God's voice. The reason he was not taught to listen to God's voice comes at the end of the giving of the 10 Commandments.

After hearing God speak, the people came to Moses and said, "Moses, you speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us or we will die." Fearing God's voice, they turned to Moses each time a person in their community violated the 10 Commandments. The people forced Moses to become Judge. I wonder if the Israelites wandered 40 years in the Wilderness of Sin because Moses was forced to be their Judge instead of their Leader?

Matthew tells us that Joseph had a dream. When he woke from his dream, he knew God's will. God told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Stop, and listen! God spoke to Joseph. Experience teaches me that Joseph's 'fear' rose up out of his desire to keep the Law of Moses. An experience like Joseph's teaches that the Law of Moses leads us into quandaries that leaves us in the precarious place the Bible calls fear, sin, or dis-grace. Joseph heard God and experienced Grace!

Medical science explains how Joseph was led to usher God's Will from Heaven to Earth. Read what Medical Science knows about the power of Dreams.

REM sleep is the only time when our brain is completely devoid of the anxiety-triggering molecule noradrenaline. At the same time, key emotional and memory-related structures of the brain are reactivated during REM sleep as we dream. This means that emotional memory reactivation is occurring in a brain free of a key stress chemical, which allows us to re-process upsetting memories in a safer, calmer environment." REM-sleep dreaming appears to take the painful sting out of difficult, even traumatic, emotional episodes experienced during the day, offering emotional resolution when you awake the next morning.

(https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_your_brain_needs_to_dream)

Research tells us that prayer and meditation usher us into a place of Peace akin to REM Dreams. Prayer shifts our Being from fear-focus, trial-focus, and body-pain-focus, to focus on hearing God's still small voice.

Try praying without words. Yes, I suggest we shut up, be still, and listen. (Reread the article above.) It appears we know how to pray. God hardwired prayer into our brains. But for many people they only experience prayer in their dreams! (Hear my sarcasm?) When they wake they search for someone like Moses to interpret their dreams and tell them what to do. Searching for the right words keeps the brain busy. Searching keeps us distracted from hearing God. Searching keeps us distracted from seeing life as God creates life.

A still mind turns loose of emotions. A mind free of emotions becomes a place of peace. Therefore, our Advent Wreath teaches us the way of prayer. The light of Peace flows through the Light of Hope. God is our Hope. Jesus is our Peace. When Joseph woke from his dream his quandary had become Joy. He took Mary as his wife. He let God's Will come to earth as a Great Light... but it took nine months! So, joy gives birth to the Light of Love, and love is as patient as a person in a REM-Dream, state of prayer, or mediation.

One in Christ,
Robert