



## Day 4 - Saturday - Breath Prayer

### **Listen:**

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

- Matthew 4:8-11 NRSV

### **Think:**

Money. Power. Greed. Every day, we see the way that these things fracture communities, hurt people, and devastate our lives. But, somehow, we continue to strive to be the best - to have the most power - to be the person everyone else wishes they could be.

It is often tempting to follow the path that will lead to the most immediate reward. By excluding a friend, we can become more popular. By spreading a lie, we can win the school election. Every day, we are faced with the decision to follow a path that will put us on top or to follow God in caring for the people and communities over whom God already reigns.

Who do you worship? What do you worship? When you make decisions, what or who guides your process? Each day when you wake up, what is your primary motivation for living and acting? What or who gets the most priority in your life?

Jesus' answer to the questions above was always, "God." We struggle so hard to make God our answer as well. But, as we see in this story, God and all the heavenly beings celebrate when we choose to make God our priority.

### **Do:**

What is one decision you can make today that will point you closer to making God your first priority? When you have done that thing, celebrate! And then do it again and again until it becomes a habit for you.

**Pray:**

We will begin Lent with an ancient practice called “Breath Prayer.” Over time, Breath Prayers have been done in many different ways, often using the phrase, “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner.” During the Breath Prayer, the person will speak the words of the prayer in rhythm with their breath. The goal is to slow our breathing and rest in the presence of God, focusing on the short phrase, and repeating for one minute or more.

Over the course of the next four days, I invite you to pray the words we speak on Ash Wednesday in this pattern (either silently or out loud):

(Inhale) Remember that,  
(Exhale) I am dust,  
(Inhale) And to dust,  
(Exhale) I shall return.

Have one family member repeat these words out loud as each person breathes for at least 60 seconds. Consider pausing for three seconds between each breath to really ruminate on each word. As you pray, sit in a comfortable position that will not require you to move or fidget. Focusing on your breathing in such a way that you can block out distractions. If you are able, close your eyes while you pray, slowly opening them when you are finished.

Before and after your breath prayer, take time to clear your mind, breathing in and out without saying the words. Allow yourself to ruminate over how the words make you feel - how is God calling you to respond?

Throughout the day, take time to repeat these words in your mind as a way to refocus. Lent is not an easy season. Within minutes, we can become distracted by the busy-ness of our days. Breath Prayers are intended to give us a way to re-center our minds throughout the day and point our hearts back to God.

**Reflect:**

Find the reflection prompt in your journal.