

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

October 18th

Daily Devotional #18

We Are in the Season of Cleansing

(For today's devotional, I want to share some powerfully challenging excerpts chosen from Darryl Tippens book, "Pilgrim Heart", Chapter 3, Emptying: A Fresh Breeze as We Let Go. Read and take time to meditate on these concepts. They are incredible! df)

Christianity is a religion of stunning paradoxes. The first shall be last. The least shall be the greatest. The poor will be rich. But one of the greatest of spiritual paradoxes is the strength to be found in weakness and the power found in submission. **Kenosis** (emptying oneself, pouring oneself out) is achieved, not through some superhuman effort on our part, but rather in the opposite direction, in giving up and giving in to GOD.

GOD has much to offer us, but if we are already full – of ourselves or the things of this world – then we have no room to receive. This... helps explain the essential paradox in the great beatitude: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)

The spiritual act of pouring out oneself, of “emptying” the self of its prerogatives, is sometimes called **kenosis**, from the Greek New Testament word **keno** found in Philippians 2:7 where Paul writes that Christ “emptied Himself,” “poured himself out” or “made Himself nothing.” While **kenosis** has many nuances, at its core is the idea of relinquishment of authority, power, or prerogative. Jesus stands as the supreme example of this generous act of humility. Paul sees Jesus’ act of becoming a human being and living a simple life of service to others as a supreme and eternal pattern for every pilgrim heart.

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus Christ,” Paul instructs the disciples, embellishing the idea by quoting an evidently familiar early Christian hymn:

- 6 who, though He was in the form of God,
 did not regard equality with God
 as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied Himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
 being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8 He humbled himself
 and became obedient to the point of death—
 even death on a cross.
9 Therefore God also highly exalted Him

and gave Him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Here we see, in summary, the path of the pilgrim heart towards GOD – a life of yielding up what one has for the sake of others, radical obedience, a downward descent in humility and service, even to the point of shame, self-sacrifice, and (even) death. George F. R. Ellis defines *kenosis* as:

A joyous, kind, and loving attitude that is willing to give up selfish desires and to make sacrifices on behalf of others for the common good and the glory of GOD, doing this in a generous and creative way, avoiding the pitfall of pride, and guided and inspired by the love of GOD and the gift of grace.

If *kenosis* is the goal of the heart's pilgrimage, then we must fervently meditate on how to reach this primary objective.... How does one reach such a state of heart and mind? (We should deeply consider/trust): Being formed in the image of Jesus is not our doing. It is GOD's mysterious, miraculous work in our lives. It's really much more about getting out of the way so that GOD is free to work within us.

(Philippians put it this way...)

*10 For we are what he has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.
Ephesians 2:10 (NRSV)*

(and here is where) we rest, knowing it is GOD's creative energy that leads the pilgrim heart towards GOD.