



Rooted

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL DAY

NOVEMBER 15, 2023



greater^{europe}mission
SPIRITUAL LIFE

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WELCOME



Welcome to GEM's autumn Spiritual Renewal Day!

We're glad you're taking this time and pray the Lord will enable you to receive His presence in it.

Life in ministry is never static. There are always changes— new things constantly coming down the road. We anticipate some and many catch us unaware. These changes may regard personal relationships, social trends, economic dynamics, or organizational shifts. They may involve physical moves, changes in your health, or new responsibilities. Whatever the cause, change is inevitable and often uncomfortable.

When we experience uncertainty, it's important to be connected to something solid and secure. Or rather, Someone solid and secure. Today, we want to pause and consider God's Word speaking and assuring us of our source of stability. As we nurture and tend our relationship with the Lord, He provides the very life we need. We can find confidence for the changes and challenges as we remain rooted and grounded in God's love.

We will look at Scripture passages illustrating life rooted in God. Some of these passages may seem very familiar, but spend time with these passages— meditating and asking the Holy Spirit to refresh them in your imagination. Allow the Spirit to show you how to tend to the health of your soul, so when storms blow in, when heat comes, and in times of drought – you will find all you need provided in our good and gracious God.

Our prayer today is for you to know more deeply the faithfulness of our Father, learn to rest more fully in the love of Jesus, and be transformed by the power of the Spirit – drawing all you need from our sovereign God.

Bob, Krishana, and Lynnae

WHAT TO EXPECT



Expect God to speak to you and be with you. God is the one who initiates relationship with us. He delights in you and has specific ways He is engaging with you in this season. Be aware of what God brings to your mind of His person.

Talk to God honestly about what you are feeling or thinking. Then take some time to sit quietly with Him—being with Him and listening to Him. When we are with a trusted friend, there are times of sharing and times of quiet. Give space for God to speak to you or to just be silent together.

You can also expect that there will be some moments of distraction or discomfort. Silence and listening can be difficult. They require us to relinquish control. We must acknowledge that God is His own person and can choose to speak (or not) when and how He wants.

Additionally, there is our own internal activity that is not easily stilled. The word of God is “alive and active” but so are our hearts and minds. We have a multitude of things, within and without, vying for our attention. It is important therefore, as we listen to God, to extend ourselves grace as we dance back and forth between focus and distraction.

Author Adele Calhoun encourages us, “Rather than judging ourselves as a miserable failure on the basis of inner detours, humbly return listening attention to Jesus.”

What will help you enter a time of listening to God right now?

PREPARING FOR YOUR RENEWAL DAY



God is the one initiating and pursuing us in relationship with Him but there are ways we can prepare for time with Him both externally and internally.

External preparations include things like picking the place you want to spend your time with God and making sure it has the things you will need (your Bible, a journal, ...) as well as removing things you won't need (potential distractions such as unfinished work, phone, etc.). It can also include letting family and colleagues know you will be unavailable during that time and asking a close friend to pray for you.

Internal preparation happens when we take time to pay attention to what is going on in our hearts, minds, and bodies. We ask God to help us notice which things are pulling our attention away from Him or hindering our ability to notice and respond to Him. And we see what things He may be inviting us to bring into interaction with Him. This can happen before and throughout our time with God.

For example, I may notice that my thoughts keep turning to a conversation from the previous day that I need to release to His care. I may realize that I'm experiencing feelings of fear that God will not meet me in this time or that He will say something I don't want to hear, and then be able to bring those fears to the Lord. Recognizing tension in my neck could point to frustration that I'm not getting what I expected out of the day and lead me to God's invitation to surrender my plans and ask for a more open heart.

For more, see this article on preparing for a day with God or our **Day with God Organizer**.

RENEWAL DAY OVERVIEW



The time schedule is identical for both Central European Time and Mountain Standard Time. Use this Zoom link for the whole day:

[ZOOM MEETING LINK](#)

09H00 – 10H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting
Introduction, Group Reflection

10H00 – 12H30

Personal Reflection Time #1

12H30 – 13H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting
Midday Group Reflection

13H00 – 16H00

Personal Reflection Time #2

16H00 – 16H30

Full Group Zoom Meeting
Wrap up / Debrief

REFLECTIONS



09H00 – 10H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Introduction, Group Reflection

Scripture: *“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8 NIV).*

10H00 – 12H30

Personal Reflection Time #1

Now that we’ve had some time to meditate on the vision of the tree rooted by streams of water, let’s delve a little deeper into what (or Who) is involved in creating that state of being.

The tree is a picture of one who trusts confidently in the Lord. Our invitation for the rest of this morning is to use Psalm 103 to look at the Lord’s character—what reminders are there for us about who it is that we’re called to put our trust in?

- Begin by reading Psalm 103. (See Appendix page 12 for the Scripture passage.)
- Then with paper and pencil in hand, ask God to reveal Himself to you and slowly go back through the Psalm, writing out all the attributes and actions of God it describes (Ex. The Lord, holy, forgives sins...) If there is one that stands out, or that you feel particularly drawn to, feel free to pause for a few minutes to just savor or rest in that particular word.

REFLECTIONS *(continued)*



- When you finish your list, invite God to help you see your life through His eyes. Then return to your list. Work your way through the list, pausing at each attribute and asking God how this has been true in your life recently. Write down what comes to mind. If there are any that feel particularly untrue of your life or where nothing comes to mind, mark them with a star and move on to the next. We'll come back to those in a bit.
- As you look over your completed list, what stirs in your soul? How would you like to express this to God? Speak it, write it, sing it, draw it, dance it...
- Now go back to the ones you marked with a star. What do you want to say/ask/rant/or cry to God about these things? How would you like to express that to Him? Speak it, shout it, weep it, write it, paint it...
- Leave some space when you're finished for God to respond to you. Once again, slowly read Psalm 103 and/or sit quietly before Him. What do you hear, see, or sense that may be His way of speaking back to you?

12H30 – 13H00

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Midday Group Reflection

REFLECTIONS (continued)



13H00 – 16H00

Personal Reflection Time #2

This morning we explored Psalm 103 to discover what attributes and actions of God we're currently experiencing and those which seem foreign.

This afternoon we'll step into God's creation to discover what it means and looks like to be rooted.

Before you dive into these familiar passages. Pause for a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation and highlight what's important about rootedness.

Psalm 1 (NIV)

*1 Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.
4 Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

- Read Psalm 1 out loud or listen to it if you have an audio Bible.

REFLECTIONS (continued)



- After reading it out loud once, hone in on verse three. Read this verse out loud with your name in place of “That person.” Try this a few times—slowly.
- What do you notice?; What does it mean to be rooted according to this Scripture?; How do you notice God at work in your root system?
- Pause and invite Jesus into this conversation. What’s His response? Try to imagine His expression as you have this conversation.

John 15:1-5 (NIV)

1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- Read John 15:1-5 out loud or listen to it if you have an audio Bible.
- After reading it out loud once, hone in on one verse or phrase Holy Spirit highlights for you. Read this out loud. Try this a few times—slowly.
- What do you notice?; What does it mean to be rooted according to this Scripture?; How do you notice God at work in your root system?
- Pause and invite Jesus into this conversation. What’s His response? Try to imagine His expression as you have this conversation.

REFLECTIONS (continued)



(cont.) Explore Being Rooted

After beginning the conversation with your Shepherd in Psalm 1 and John 15:1-5, take time to get outside (if you can) and be with Him in creation. It's unlikely you will see a Shepherd's tree (see sidebar below), but what do you see in creation that speaks of being rooted.

Synonyms for rooted: embedded; entrenched; implanted; placed; grounded; ingrained

If you're unable to get outside, then consider other examples of rootedness in nature through a picture, a house plant, or even a tree outside your window.

What do you notice?; What does it mean to be rooted according to these physical examples?; How do you notice God at work in your root system?

Before concluding this time, what is something you want to take with you from this experience? Maybe it's something physical you find in nature. It could be a word or phrase you noticed as you explored Scripture. Or it might even be an image you had or a snippet of the conversation between you and the Good Shepherd.

The Shepherd's Tree

One of the trees with the deepest roots is the *Boscia albitrunca*, known as the Shepherd's Tree. It grows in the drier areas of South Africa. This is a small to medium-sized tree reaching heights of seven meters but the roots of this tree have been measured to go as deep as 68 meters/223 feet. In this dry area, this tree's roots go deeper and deeper until water is found.

"Known locally as the 'tree of life', because humans and animals alike can find sustenance from it, a more [versatile] tree is hard to find on the Namibian savanna. Its uses vary from fodder for both livestock and wildlife from its evergreen leaves, to a nourishing supplement for humans. The roots, when dried, roasted and ground act as a substitute for coffee or can be pounded into a white meal to make porridge. It's also a really great supplier of shade when the sun is bearing down."

(Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0M9SvhFjOI)



REFLECTIONS *(continued)*



16H00 – 16H30

Full Group Zoom Meeting

Wrap up / Debrief

Notes:

APPENDIX



Additional Scripture: John 15:1-17; Ephesians 3:14-21; Colossians 2:6-7

Spotify Playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/OTO57WpGh0P3d4ZrcrVAt2?si=08d69cb655954011>

Family Resources:

- <https://gemspirituallife.com/spiritual-formation-for-families/>
- <https://gemspirituallife.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/07/Family-Day-Away-Organizer-2021.pdf>

Advent Suggestions:

- Podcast: Gifts of Advent: Discerning God in Advent and Christmastide
- Online Devotional: The Vision of Isaiah: Praying with the Poet Prophet of Advent (from Biola)

Book ideas:

Simple -

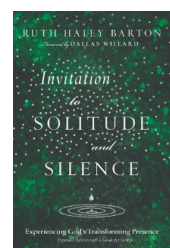
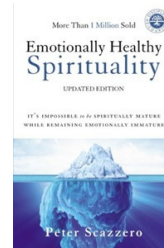
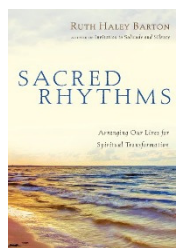
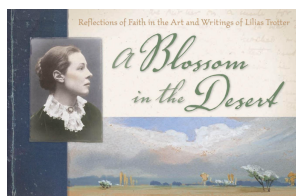
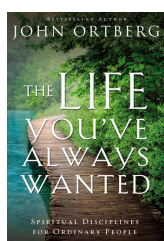
- *The Life You've Always Wanted*, by John Ortberg
- *A Blossom in the Desert: Reflections of Faith in the Art and Writings of Lilies Trotter*, by Lilies Trotter and, Miriam Huffman Rockness

Deeper –

- *Sacred Rhythms*, by Ruth Haley Barton
- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, by Peter Scazzero

Deeper Still –

- *Invitation to Silence and Solitude*, by Ruth Haley Barton
- *Renovation of the Heart*, by Dallas Willard



APPENDIX

(continued)



Scripture for Personal Reflection 1:

Psalm 103 (NIV)

*1 Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
2 Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
3 who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

*6 The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.*

*7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the
earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions
from us.*

*13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who
fear him;
14 for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.*

*15 The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
16 the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.*

*17 But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's
children—
18 with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.*

*19 The Lord has established his throne in
heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.*

*20 Praise the Lord, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.
21 Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.
22 Praise the Lord, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.*

Praise the Lord, my soul.