

# Ash Wednesday Meditation

Living Hope Free Methodist Church, West Unity, Ohio • March 5, 2025

## Poverty of Spirit - morning or midday

Christ calls all have his followers to himself. Jesus is our King and in obedience to our King the disciple of Jesus aspires to poverty.

While some live in material poverty all of us are called to “poverty of spirit.” This is a state of utter dependence before God, not in a demeaning or servile sense, but in the sense that God is God and we are creatures created to praise, love, and serve God. Before all else, we depend on God for our happiness and fulfillment. While we are grateful for our talents, abilities, wealth, and achievements, we are free enough to offer them to the service of God and others and to let go of them when they get in the way of that self-giving.

In short, poverty of spirit is emptying ourselves that God may fill us with life and love. Our prayer helps us grow in spiritual poverty and freedom. Christ is the model of spiritual poverty above all else.

While some lack material goods all of us lack the spiritual content to serve and worship God with all we are without God’s help. Not all are called to live in material poverty and where there is suffering because of poverty we should, as followers of Christ, work to eliminate that. We are all called to live simply and in freedom with respect to the riches we have whether those riches are material possessions, talents, reputation, or influence. We are all called to labor with Christ to help the poor, the powerless, the oppressed, the marginalized in some way. All are called to give countercultural witness to the rampant competition and materialism around us.

### Prayer Exercise on Poverty of Spirit

Begin with prayer. You may use the following if it is helpful:

*“Holy Spirit, I close my eyes and imagine you flooding my life with light and insight. Revealed to me now*

*wonders of your word as I sit with you and this time. I yield to you O, Word of God. Amen”*

As you read the following passage, slowly focus on each word and ask,

- What does this word say by itself and what would this passage not say without this word?
- Is there a word/words that are most important for you today?
- What is Christ teaching you through this passage?
- What is Christ calling you to do through this passage?
- What can you share with your church?

***“As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.” (Mark 1:16–18, NIV)***

Repeat the above exercise 2x you will read the passage slowly and go over these observations three times before you are completed.

### Discuss Your Findings

It is most helpful to process what you have discovered by talking about it. We often gain clarity by simply putting into words what we have experienced. If things you felt urges are hard to describe, do the best you can. Simply stating that certain things are hard to describe is a wonderful place to start.

### Closing Prayer

*Father, help me live this day to the full, being true to you, in every way. Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet. Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. Amen.*

## Evening Meditation

*In the quietness of this moment, please still my soul that I might spend this time with you, my God.*

Ask yourself each question throughout this exercise. When you do it now the questions are not completely answerable and that is okay. The purpose is to give you a sense of what you are asking God for. God wants to show you things about her day and about you.

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

Pray:

*Come Holy Spirit to my mind, I receive your comfort.  
Come Holy Spirit to my heart, I receive your piece.  
Come Holy Spirit to my soul, I received the father's love for me.*

Read the following verse over slowly. Do it as many times as you need to focus on its content and its message to you.

***“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”***  
(Psalm 55:22, NIV)

## Reflection on Your Day

Reflect on your day and time that has passed. Ask the Lord to show you where God was at work in your life. In what ways did you experience God's goodness when you heard him speak?

Now ask these questions again:

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

Read the following verse over slowly. Do it as many times as you need to focus on its content and its message to you.

***“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”***  
(Psalm 55:22, NIV)

## A Call to Repentance

*Our Father, remind me now of the ways in which I have fallen short and send today through negligence, weakness, or deliberate fault. I take a moment to confess my sins before you now.*

### Pause and pray

*God of grace, thank you that you found me when I was lost and for gave me when I was ashamed. You nailed my accusations against me to the cross. I receive your forgiveness now. In the name of Jesus Christ, I am forgiven.*

### Pause and pray

***“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”***  
(Psalm 55:22, NIV)

ask these questions a final time

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

## Closing prayer

*God of all seasons, the sun has gone down, and the night is gathering. Let my soul sink slowly in your rest, trusting now in the resurrection of Jesus and the one to come, Amen.*