

# **St Martins C3 – May 21, 2023**

## **Lord, Search Me – Overflow**

### **Sermon Notes:**

In this series, we want to see what it takes to have the life of God overflow in us.

#### **Read John 10:10**

What Jesus means is not just a life about myself, consumed by my desires, but a life that overflows and gives life to others.

The problem is that it is not the life many Christians experience. It seems that something is missing from our discipleship because Christians struggle to reflect Jesus.

This process only happens through digging deep into yourself and giving your hidden parts to God.

#### **Read Psalm 139:1**

God knows us. He knows us intimately, every part of our life is known to Him. He invites us to welcome Him into every area of our life.

#### **Read Psalm 139:1-18**

The Psalmist says God knit them together but they didn't use that as an excuse for their behaviour. Nor did they get weighed down by their brokenness.

## **Why don't we open our lives to God?**

The key reason is shame. Shame says that who I am is no good and that at the base of my life there is something broken.

Shame is what caused Adam and Eve to hide when they sinned and we have the tendency to hide too.

The Psalmist doesn't let shame stop them. They push past their brokenness and ask God to uncover their deep parts.

### ***Read Psalm 139:23-24***

This week, we encourage you to pray the prayer: Lord, search me, reveal the hidden thoughts, and sin and show me where anxiety is coming from.

Invite the Holy Spirit to open your heart to what is true about you. It's not the same thing as a neurotic shame-inducing inventory. Instead, it is a way of opening yourself to live within the safety of His love, so you can authentically seek transformation.

Once we see these areas we can surrender to God's grace. He searches us. He knows us. He still loves us.

If you want a life that overflows, then the source of that life needs to be pure. If you want a life that overflows with God's love, then you need to do some hard work. Will you?

## Questions for Connect Groups:

*If you could have certain character traits overflow in your life, what would they be?*

*This week, we compared life to an iceberg. How much time do you spend focusing on what is seen compared to what is unseen?*

*How could self-examination before God be a better path to character change than behaviour management?*

*Why do you think many don't want to engage in uncovering themselves even before God?*

*In what relationship are you most deeply known? How important is that for you?*

*Share any experiences you have with confronting wrong attitudes, values, or beliefs in yourself.*

*What is it like for you to confess specific sins to God (not just say "Forgive my sins, dear Lord")?*

*How would confessing specific sins add to your self-awareness?*

*Are you willing to expose the deep parts of your life to God? How will you do it?*

# **Monday Devotion: Wisdom and Understanding**

***Read Colossians 1:9***

When the Apostle Paul prayed for the people of Colossae, he asked God to fill them with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. As we go through this week, we are going to challenge you to pray the same prayer.

Ask God to give you wisdom and understanding about the deep parts of your life so that you might receive healing and be able to do His will.

To do this we are going to focus each day on questions to slowly consider.<sup>1</sup> Consider reflecting on the questions each day, praying through them and journaling one or two things God reveals to you about the deep parts of your life.

Here are today's questions:

*What was the most life-giving part of my day?*

*What was the least life-giving part of my day?*

*What does this tell me about myself?*

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<sup>1</sup> Many of these questions and exercises come from the *Spiritual Discipline Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

## **Tuesday Devotion: Depth of Insight**

***Read Philippians 1:9-10***

Many of the questions we are going to ask this week are questions of deep introspection. We need to be careful in asking these questions that they do not become a tool for condemnation or self-obsession.

The point of knowing ourselves more is that we can ask God for healing and, as Paul says in Philippians 1, that our knowledge and depth of insight will lead to a love that abounds more and more.

As you explore today's questions look for areas of your life where the Holy Spirit is not Lord. Consider what might be preventing the Holy Spirit from being Lord in these areas.

Here are the questions:

*Where was I aware of living out the fruit of the Spirit today?*

*Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?*

Think about the parts of your day you over-reacted, got hot and angry or where you withdrew. The chances are these times came from a hidden fear to do with your identity, security or belonging.

Bring these to God in prayer.

## **Wednesday Devotion: The Secret Place**

***Read Matthew 6:5-13***

It is said the hardest part of the Lord's prayer to pray is the line: "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This can be difficult because it is hard for us to surrender our way of doing life and take up God's way.

Jesus tells His disciples to pray in secret for this very reason. He wants them to take time alone in God's presence and consider the things they need to surrender.

Here are today's questions and an exercise to do in the secret place:

*For what moment am I most grateful today?*

*For what moment am I least grateful today?*

*Find a quiet moment and reflect on your day. Open your palms and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the moment for which you are least grateful. What made the moment difficult?*

*Be with your feelings; don't try and change them or make them acceptable. Offer them up to God and talk to Him about them.*

*Where was God in this moment? Thank God that He is always willing to be with you even in your difficult moments.*

## **Thursday Devotion: Repentance**

***Read Psalm 32:1-2***

Blessed, says the Psalmist, is the person in whose spirit is no deceit. It would be amazing if we could get to the point where we have no deceit in our spirit.

The last three days have been important in helping us get there. If we have done the exercises we will have become more aware of the things in our life that do not line up with God's way. However, this can feel quite exposing. It can feel like we have uncovered ugly parts of our life and that God must detest us.

The beauty of Christianity is that as we uncover these things God is big enough to take them and cover them with His grace. As He does that He brings healing and life to them.

Here are today's questions:

*Who have I injured recently through thoughtlessness, neglect, anger and so on?*

*Imagine the kind of person you want to be in your old age. Confess to God the areas you need to change to become more like this person.*

*Thank God for His love grace and forgiveness. Imagine it is raining down on you as though you have stepped into a hot shower.*

## **Friday Devotion: Confession**

**Read James 1:5**

We need other people. We cannot do life without them. It is our desire for every St Martins C3 member to commit to discipling relationships where they invest in others and others invest in them to grow closer to Christ, live a Christian lifestyle and fulfil their mission to the world.

One way we can do this is by confessing to others our sins. I admit this is a very scary thing to do. It is one thing to bring our attitudes to God, He already knows everything and His amazing grace covers our sins.

It is another thing entirely to confess to another person. What if they judge us? What if they don't keep confidence?

You must do this step wisely, but the healing benefits are immense. They can be the grace of God to you and bring healing and love to your broken parts. Confession also breaks the need to be seen as a good person.

Think of someone you can talk to, a Pastor, small group leader or even your spouse. Ask them to help you process the things God has been doing in you. Then share with them some of your learnings from this week of devotions.

Share the deep parts of your life and ask them to pray for you that God would transform those parts and cause His love to overflow from a renewed self.