

with
palms
open

**an 8-day devotional,
a journey from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday.**

www.nathaniaaritao.com

Hello, dear friend,

April 2020

As we approach this year's Holy Week, the world is in a very different place than any of us might have imagined it would be. Around the world, due to the pandemic, we are confined to our homes; and perhaps beginning to struggle to make sense between the days and the weeks, between the new normal and the old reality, between the news cycle and the hopes in our hearts. We may have even forgotten that Easter is just around the corner.

This eight-day devotional has been designed to help us carve out the time to honor and remember Jesus' life, death and resurrection, especially as we face all the realities of the present. Many of us may need a stronger nudge to approach the Holy Throne with grace and honesty.

I have always loved celebrating Easter and observing the church's traditions leading up to the resurrection celebration. I love waving palms on Palm Sunday and sitting down for a simple meal and a foot-washing ceremony on Maundy Thursday. I would soak in the darkness of the Good Friday service and the color of the Easter sunrise. I love how all these traditions prepare my heart for remembering.

This year, all the gatherings will look different, and all the traditions redesigned.

But the encouragement is this: despite all that is changing in the world we live in, Jesus remains unchanged and faithful to His Word. His story of redemption stands true and unaltered. And in a time when the world aches for truth and hope, we have a Light that guides our way, and a Light that we can share with others.

May our faith not get lost in the waves of news, the threat of global breakdown, or the reality of grief, loss and brokenness in many areas of life today. My prayer is that in this season, we can turn our hearts and attention to the certainty of God's loving plan of salvation, and be encouraged on our way, as we remain His servants in all circumstances.

A special anchor in this devotional are 'postures' that I have included as key elements in the rhythm of the daily practice. The postures for each day are simply themes and suggestions for how to approach the presence of God, in line with the day's reading and reflection. You may explore these as spiritual or mental postures, but the special invitation and intention, is to guide you towards experiencing God's presence with the support of your physical posture. A guide to the rhythms of the devotional follows this page.

During this time of sheltering in place, when we may be resigned to our couches and desks for too many hours of the day, it may be an extra delight to introduce a bit of movement into our daily moments with God.

The posture of the heart is what truly matters. However, our hands and our movements, can also help draw us into intimacy with the Father. It may be as simple as opening up your palms to Heaven as you pray, standing as you read the Word, or bowing in quiet meditation. I invite you to come into this season of remembering with palms and hearts open.

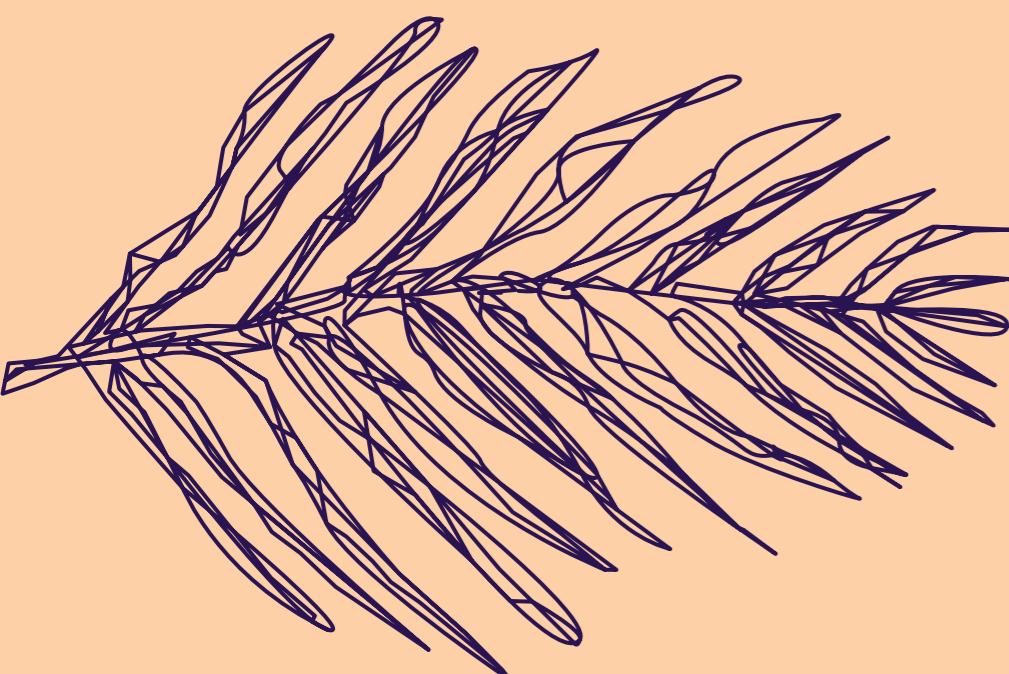
With you in worship and expectation,

Tanya

with palms open

an 8-day devotional,
a journey from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday
designed by nathania aritao

Each day, let us approach our Father
with palms open - ready to receive,
ready to give, and ready to rest
in His presence with joy.



A guide to the devotional: daily rhythms

There are four main rhythms for each day: **Bible reading, a posture of worship, reflection questions and a space for prayer.** There are also some excerpts of writing and quotes from beloved authors and theologians.

You may choose to do the activities in one sitting, or return to the devotional throughout the day.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

0

Before you begin your devotional each day, **signal a change for your mind and body.** You can do this by moving to a specific place in your room or house for the devotion time, rolling out a yoga mat or favorite blanket, or clearing your desk or space of distractions.

Before you settle in, physically wake up the body by shaking out your arms and legs, loosen up by gently drawing circles with your shoulders, wrists and head; or even gently patting your muscles awake with open palms or closed fists, going up and down your legs, arms and back.

Take a few, slow deep breaths to clear your head before you begin.

GUIDED RHYTHMS

1

Bible Reading: Start each day with the Word. Each day has assigned reading from Scripture. Excerpts of the readings are included in this devotional, but have your Bible with you so you can read the full chapters. All Bible verses quoted in this devotional are from the Message translation by Eugene Peterson.

2

Posture of Worship: Step into the suggested posture for each day - as a spiritual posture that you adopt in your quiet time and your day; but also as a physical posture that you embody in your time of prayer or worship. I have included sketches of physical postures as inspiration.

3

Reflection Questions: Respond to a few questions each day to spark thought and action. There is space in the devotional for you to write or type in your responses.

4

Space for Prayer: Write a prayer in response to the reading and reflections.

Conclude your quiet time by reading your prayer out loud or praying from the heart - as you physically adopt the posture of the day in whatever form feels meaningful and honest to you.

At the end of the devotional are more pages for reflection and response.

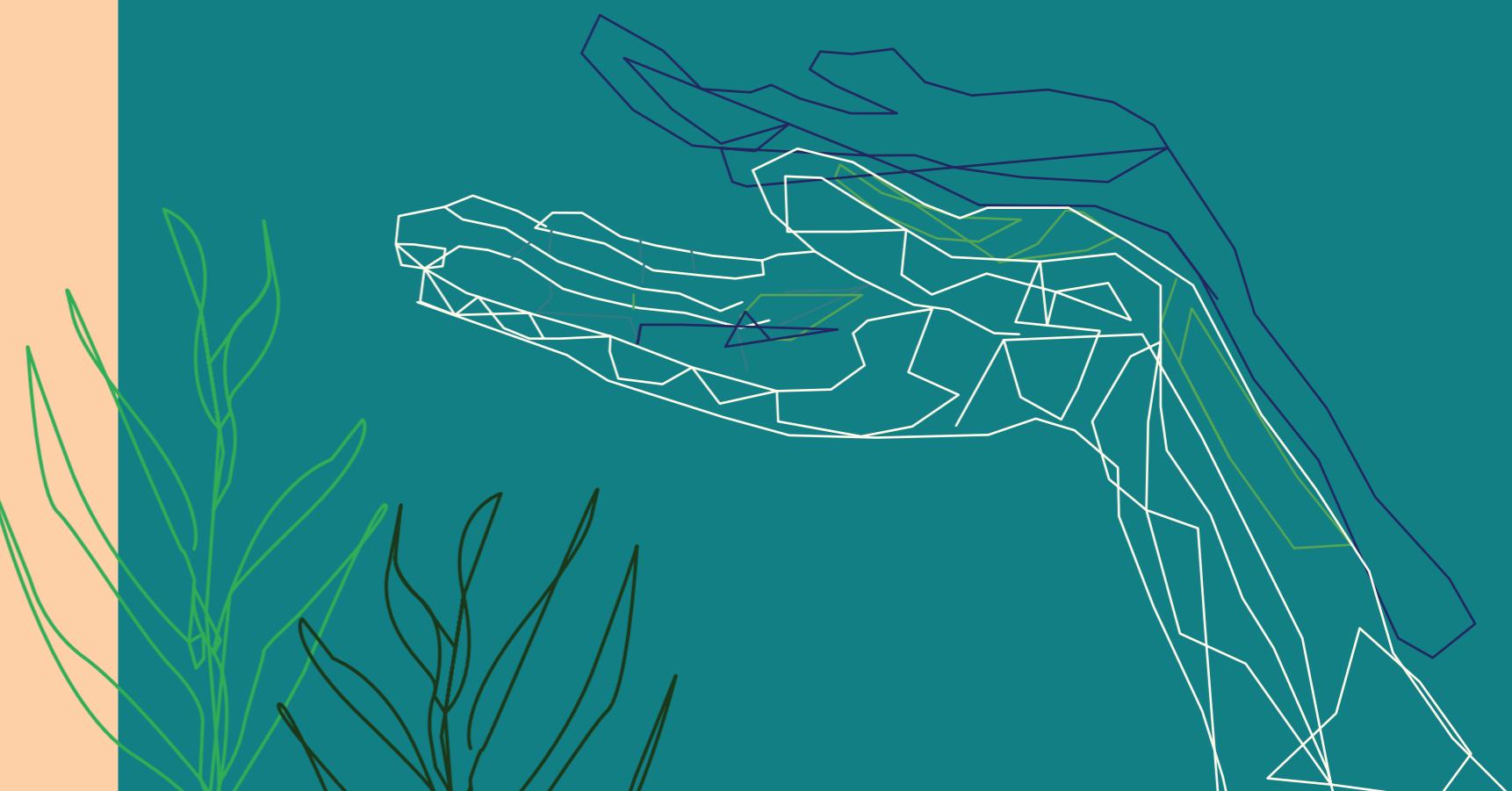
I would love to hear about your experience with this devotional.
[Send me your thoughts and feedback.](#)



"We do not forget to eat: we do not forget to take the shop shutters down: we do not forget to be diligent in business: we do not forget to go to our beds to rest:

but we often do forget to wrestle with God in prayer, and to spend, as we ought to spend, long periods in consecrated fellowship with our Father and our God."

— Charles Spurgeon



Day 1: Palm Sunday

INVITATION

Read: John 12, Luke 19:28-48

John 12:24-28

Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.

"If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you'll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The Father will honor and reward anyone who serves me.

"Right now I am storm-tossed. And what am I going to say? 'Father, get me out of this'? No, this is why I came in the first place. I'll say, 'Father, put your glory on display.'"

A voice came out of the sky: "I have glorified it, and I'll glorify it again."

Luke 19:28-48

God's Personal Visit

After saying these things, Jesus headed straight up to Jerusalem. When he got near Bethphage and

Bethany at the mountain called Olives, he sent off two of the disciples with instructions: "Go to the village across from you. As soon as you enter, you'll find a colt tethered, one that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says anything, asks, 'What are you doing?' say, 'His Master needs him.'"

The two left and found it just as he said. As they were untying the colt, its owners said, "What are you doing untying the colt?"

They said, "His Master needs him."

They brought the colt to Jesus. Then, throwing their coats on its back, they helped Jesus get on. **As he rode, the people gave him a grand welcome, throwing their coats on the street.**

Right at the crest, where Mount Olives begins its descent, the whole crowd of disciples burst into enthusiastic praise over all the mighty works they had witnessed:

Blessed is he who comes, the king in God's name!

All's well in heaven!

Glory in the high places!

Some Pharisees from the crowd

told him, "Teacher, get your disciples under control!"

But he said, "If they kept quiet, the stones would do it for them, shouting praise."

When the city came into view, he wept over it. "If you had only recognized this day, and everything that was good for you! But now it's too late. In the days ahead your enemies are going to bring up their heavy artillery and surround you, pressing in from every side. They'll smash you and your babies on the pavement. Not one stone will be left intact. All this because you didn't recognize and welcome God's personal visit."

Going into the Temple he began to throw out everyone who had set up shop, selling everything and anything. He said, "It's written in Scripture,

My house is a house of prayer;

You have turned it into a religious bazaar."

From then on he taught each day in the Temple. The high priests, religion scholars, and the leaders of the people were trying their best to find a way to get rid of him. But with the people hanging on every word he spoke, they couldn't come up with anything."

"God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. **These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.**"

— Jonathan Edwards

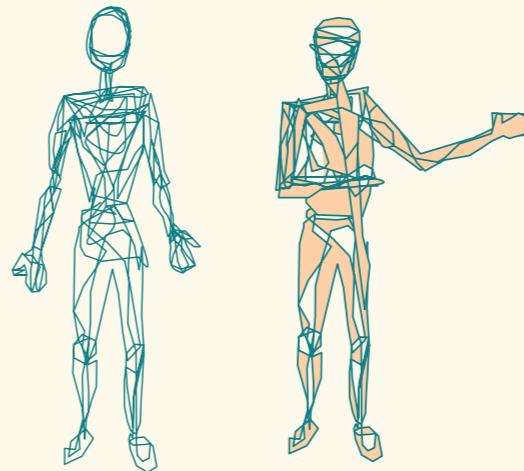
Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

Posture of Worship INVITATION

Today's posture: invite Jesus into this season with you.

Open up your palms. Gaze toward Heaven, with your chest open and ready to receive. Feet firmly planted.

With open palms, gently bow your head, position your arms in a gesture of invitation and warm reception.



Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of invitation, offering a grand welcome to Jesus.

Reflection Questions

What comes to mind when you think of God's glory? How have you experienced God's glory in the past?

In this season of physical distancing and city lock-downs due to the pandemic, how is God inviting you to experience His glory? What area of your day or life do you need to invite God to fill with His presence?

In the reality of responding to Covid-19, how can we as believers invite others to experience the glory of God?

In one word or phrase, what is the invitation God is extending to you today?

Day 2: Monday

ANTICIPATION

Read: Isaiah 42

Isaiah 42:1-9

God's Servant Will Set Everything Right

Take a good look at my servant.

I'm backing him to the hilt.

He's the one I chose,

and I couldn't be more pleased with him.

I've bathed him with my Spirit, my life.

He'll set everything right among the nations.

He won't call attention to what he does with loud speeches or gaudy parades.

He won't brush aside the bruised and the hurt

and he won't disregard the small and insignificant,

but he'll steadily and firmly set things right.

He won't tire out and quit. He won't be stopped

until he's finished his work—to set things right on earth.

Far-flung ocean islands

wait expectantly for his teaching."

The God Who Makes Us Alive with His Own Life

God's Message,

the God who created the cosmos, stretched out the skies,

laid out the earth and all that grows from it,

Who breathes life into earth's people,

makes them alive with his own life: "I am God. I have called you to live right and well.

I have taken responsibility for you, kept you safe.

I have set you among my people to bind them to me,

and provided you as a lighthouse to the nations,

To make a start at bringing people into the open, into light:

opening blind eyes,

releasing prisoners from dungeons,

emptying the dark prisons.

I am God. That's my name.

I don't franchise my glory,

don't endorse the no-god idols.

Take note: The earlier predictions of judgment have been fulfilled.

I'm announcing the new salvation work.

Before it bursts on the scene,

I'm telling you all about it."

Men have a great deal of pleasure in human knowledge, in studies of natural things; but this is nothing to that joy which arises from divine light shining into the soul. **This spiritual light is the dawning of the light of glory in the heart.**

There is nothing so powerful as this to support persons in affliction, and to give the mind peace and brightness in this stormy and dark world. This knowledge will wean from the world, and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the scheme of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Savior."

— Jonathan Edwards

Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

Posture of Worship

ANTICIPATION

Today's posture: come forward with expectation.

With palms open, stand ready for the embrace and blessing of the Father. Kneel, with your heart glowing with expectation.



Reflection Questions

What are the storms and areas of darkness that you are experiencing today, this week, or in this season of crisis in the world?

In these storms and areas of darkness, how do you envision God will shine His light? How has God's light broken into a time of darkness in your own past?

Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of anticipation, full of expectation for God's light to fill your day.

In some regions of the world, we have been anticipating and welcoming spring after a cold, dark winter time. What inspiration for our faith can we draw from the seasons we experience in God's creation?

In one word or phrase, what is the promise you are hearing from God today?

Day 3: Tuesday

DEVOTION

Read: John 8 and John 10

John 8:12-18

You're Missing God in All This

Jesus once again addressed them: "I am the world's Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in."

The Pharisees objected, "All we have is your word on this. We need more than this to go on."

Jesus replied, "You're right that you only have my word. But you can depend on it being true. I know where I've come from and where I go next. You don't know where I'm from or where I'm headed. You decide according to what you can see and touch. I don't make judgments like that. But even if I did, my judgment would be true because I wouldn't make it out of the narrowness of my experience but in the largeness of the One who sent me, the Father. That fulfills the

conditions set down in God's Law: that you can count on the testimony of two witnesses. And that is what you have: You have my word and you have the word of the Father who sent me."

John 10:6-18

Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about. So he tried again. "I'll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep. All those others are up to no good—sheep stealers, every one of them. But the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture. A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself

if necessary. A hired man is not a real shepherd. The sheep mean nothing to him. He sees a wolf come and runs for it, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and scattered by the wolf. He's only in it for the money. The sheep don't matter to him.

"I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me. In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I put the sheep before myself, sacrificing myself if necessary. You need to know that I have other sheep in addition to those in this pen. I need to gather and bring them, too. They'll also recognize my voice. Then it will be one flock, one Shepherd. This is why the Father loves me: because I freely lay down my life. And so I am free to take it up again. No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down; I also have the right to take it up again. I received this authority personally from my Father."

"God travels wonderful ways with human beings, but he does not comply with the views and opinions of people. God does not go the way that people want to prescribe for him; rather, his way is beyond all comprehension, free and self-determined beyond all proof. Where reason is indignant, where our nature rebels, where our piety anxiously keeps us away: that is precisely where God loves to be. There he confounds the reason of the reasonable; there he aggravates our nature, our piety—that is where he wants to be, and no one can keep him from it. Only the humble believe him and rejoice that God is so free and so marvelous that he does wonders where people despair, **that he takes what is little and lowly and makes it marvelous. And that is the wonder of all wonders, that God loves the lowly.... God is not ashamed of the lowliness of human beings. God marches right in. He chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them. God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak and broken.**"

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas

Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

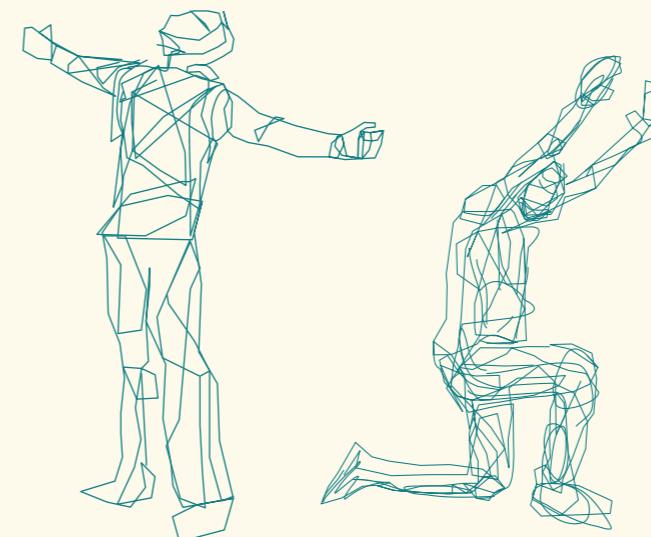
Posture of Worship

DEVOTION

Today's posture: devote yourself to God.

Open up your palms. Dedicate your hands and heart to Heaven, ready to do the work of God.

With palms open, lift your hands and heart in praise, kneel in the presence of God.



Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of devotion, full of enthusiasm and loyalty.

Reflection Questions

Have you ever felt too small or too lowly to enter into worship in the presence of God? How does Jesus' image as the Good Shepherd make you feel in His presence?

Are you able to recognize Jesus' voice in your life today? What practical actions help you reduce the noise of the world and amplify God's voice in your day to day?

God has chosen us as His instruments. How would you like God to use you as an instrument for His glory?

In one word or phrase, what is the affirmation you are hearing from God today?

"Worship is nothing less than obedience to the command of God: "Delight yourself in the Lord"!"

— John Piper

Day 4: Wednesday

PREPARATION

Read: John 6, John 14

John 6: 32-40

Jesus responded, "The real significance of that Scripture is not that Moses gave you bread from heaven but that my Father is right now offering you bread from heaven, the real bread. The Bread of God came down out of heaven and is giving life to the world."

They jumped at that: "Master, give us this bread, now and forever!"

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life. The person who aligns with me hungers no more and thirsts no more, ever. I have told you this explicitly because even though you have seen me in action, you don't really believe me. Every person the Father gives me eventually comes running to me. And once that person is with me, I hold on and don't let go. I came down from heaven not to follow my own whim but to accomplish the will of the One who sent me."

"This, in a nutshell, is that will: that everything handed over to me by the Father be completed—not a single detail missed—and at the wrap-up of time I have everything and everyone put together, upright and whole. This is what my Father wants: that anyone who sees the Son and trusts who he is and what he does and then aligns with him will enter real life, eternal life. My part is to put them on their feet alive and whole at the completion of time."

John 14:1-4

The Road

Don't let this throw you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me. There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I

live. And you already know the road I'm taking."

John 14:21-24

The person who knows my commandments and keeps them, that's who loves me. And the person who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and make myself plain to him."

Judas (not Iscariot) said, "Master, why is it that you are about to make yourself plain to us but not to the world?"

"Because a loveless world," said Jesus, "is a sightless world. If anyone loves me, he will carefully keep my word and my Father will love him—we'll move right into the neighborhood! Not loving me means not keeping my words. The message you are hearing isn't mine. It's the message of the Father who sent me."

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. **You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace.** He intends to come and live in it Himself."

— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

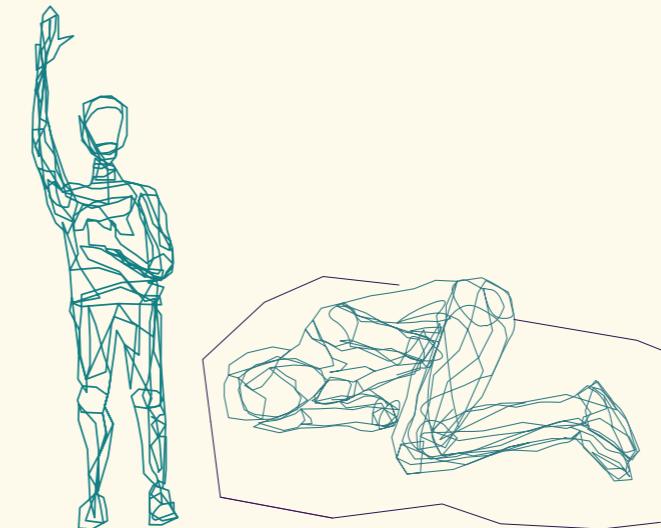
Posture of Worship

PREPARATION

Today's posture: preparing our hearts.

With palms open, stand or sit in worship, ready to receive instruction, willing to be moved, allowing our hearts to be molded into God's design. Place one hand on your heart, and invite God to speak deep into your heart today.

With heart open, lay on one side and curl up like a child. Close your eyes and feel carried in the palm of God's hand.



Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of preparation, humbly allowing your heart to be prepared for the work He has planned in your life.

Reflection Questions

How have you experienced Jesus as "the Bread of Life" in your life? What other sources or distractions do you tend to turn to for fuel and fulfillment in your day to day?

Have you experienced God's process of rebuilding your house, as C.S. Lewis describes? How has God been rebuilding and how have you responded?

How can you prepare your heart for God's rebuilding? What are practical steps you can take to make room for God to do His work?

In one word or phrase, what is the prompting that you are hearing from God today?

Day 5: Maundy Thursday

SUBMISSION

Read: John 13, John 16

John 13:3-17

Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash my feet?"

Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later."

Peter persisted, "You're not going to wash my feet—ever!"

Jesus said, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing."

"Master!" said Peter. "Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!"

Jesus said, "If you've had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you're clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you're clean. But

not every one of you." (He knew who was betraying him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you.") After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

Then he said, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Master,' and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other's feet. I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do. I'm only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn't give orders to the employer. If you understand what I'm telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life."

John 16:19-24, 31-33

Jesus knew they were dying to ask him what he meant, so he said, "Are you trying to figure out among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'In a day or so you're not going to see me, but then in another day or so you will see me?' Then fix this firmly in your minds: You're going to be in deep mourning while the godless world throws a party. You'll be sad, very

sad, but your sadness will develop into gladness.

"When a woman gives birth, she has a hard time, there's no getting around it. But when the baby is born, there is joy in the birth. This new life in the world wipes out memory of the pain. The sadness you have right now is similar to that pain, but the coming joy is also similar. When I see you again, you'll be full of joy, and it will be a joy no one can rob from you. You'll no longer be so full of questions.

"This is what I want you to do: Ask the Father for whatever is in keeping with the things I've revealed to you. Ask in my name, according to my will, and he'll most certainly give it to you. **Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks!**"

"Jesus answered them, "Do you finally believe? In fact, you're about to make a run for it—saving your own skins and abandoning me. But I'm not abandoned. The Father is with me. **I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world.**"

God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart."

— Charles Spurgeon

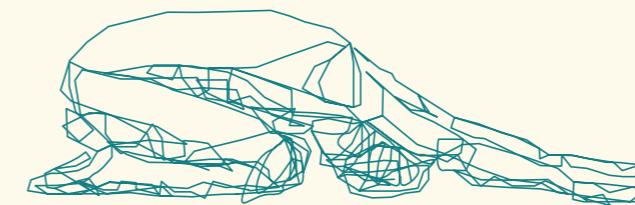
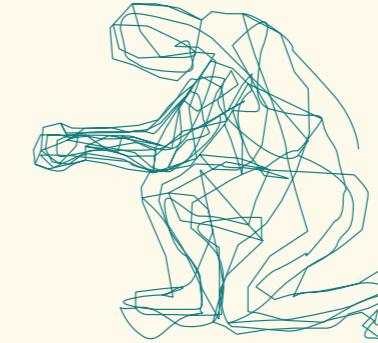
Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

Posture of Worship

SUBMISSION

Today's posture: submit to God.

With palms open, offer all you have, all you are, and all you hope for - to God's heart. Present yourself with humility and acceptance.



Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of submission - accepting and yielding to God's Voice and Presence.

Reflection Questions

In your recent experiences, have you been able to trace God's hand in your life, or have you had to trust His heart? Recall a recent situation in which you have found yourself challenged to trace God's hand.

What do you know about God's heart that strengthens your faith and hope in Him? What do you need to submit to God's heart today?

What does it mean to have Jesus wash your feet today? And what would washing other's feet look like in light of what is happening in the world today?

In one word or phrase, what is the whisper you are hearing from God today?

Day 6: Good Friday

REVERENCE

John 15:1-17

The Vine and the Branches

I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

"Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in

Isaiah 53:2-6

The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.

my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

"I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.

"You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

"But remember the root command: Love one another.

Matthew 27:45-56

From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around midafternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you

Read: John 15, Mathew 27:35-66

abandoned me?"

Some bystanders who heard him said, "He's calling for Elijah." One of them ran and got a sponge soaked in sour wine and lifted it on a stick so he could drink. The others joked, "Don't be in such a hurry. Let's see if Elijah comes and saves him."

But Jesus, again crying out loudly, breathed his last.

At that moment, the Temple curtain was ripped in two, top to bottom. There was an earthquake, and rocks were split in pieces. What's more, tombs were opened up, and many bodies of believers asleep in their graves were raised. (After Jesus' resurrection, they left the tombs, entered the holy city, and appeared to many.)

The captain of the guard and those with him, when they saw the earthquake and everything else that was happening, were scared to death. They said, "This has to be the Son of God!"

There were also quite a few women watching from a distance, women who had followed Jesus from Galilee in order to serve him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the Zebedee brothers.

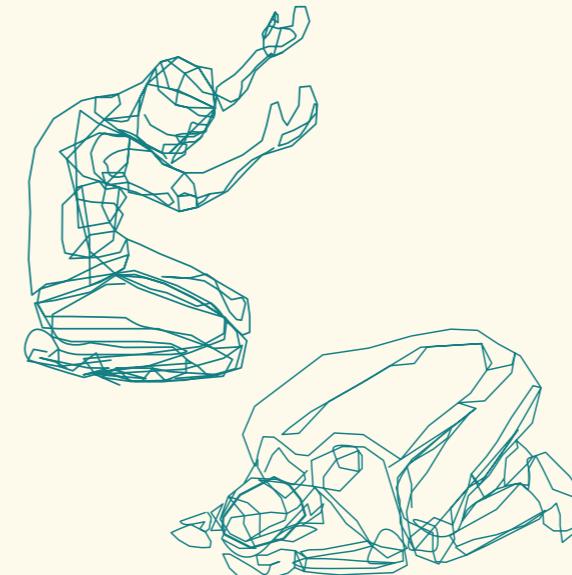
Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

Posture of Worship REVERENCE

Today's posture: come with deep admiration and reverence.

With palms open, recognize God's Holiness, His Wondrous love, and the gravity of His sacrifice on the Cross.

Humble your heart before Heaven, kneel before the Cross.



Reflection Questions

Consider the people who surrounded Jesus at the time of His crucifixion. Examine your heart. Who would you most be like if you were present on that day? One of His followers? A bystander? One of the guards?

Reflect on what this day may have felt like for a disciple of Jesus, without fully understanding the resurrection that was to come. How would you have received Jesus' death?

Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of reverence, expressing your adoration for Jesus.

What does it mean to "Make your home" in Jesus?

In one word or phrase, what mercy you are hearing from God today?

Day 7: Black Saturday

STILLNESS

John 17:1-5

Jesus' Prayer for His Followers

“Jesus said these things. Then, raising his eyes in prayer, he said:

Father, it's time.

Display the bright splendor of your Son

So the Son in turn may show your bright splendor.

You put him in charge of everything human

So he might give real and eternal life to all in his charge.

And this is the real and eternal life:

That they know you,

The one and only true God,

And Jesus Christ, whom you sent.

I glorified you on earth

By completing down to the last detail

What you assigned me to do.

And now, Father, glorify me with your very own splendor,

The very splendor I had in your presence

Before there was a world.

John 17: 13-19

“Now I'm returning to you.

I'm saying these things in the world's hearing

So my people can experience

My joy completed in them.

I gave them your word;

The godless world hated them because of it,

Because they didn't join the world's ways,

Just as I didn't join the world's ways.

I'm not asking that you take them out of the world

But that you guard them from the Evil One.

Read: John 17 , Isaiah 30:18

They are no more defined by the world

Than I am defined by the world.

Make them holy—consecrated—with the truth;

Your word is consecrating truth.

In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world,

I give them a mission in the world.

I'm consecrating myself for their sakes

So they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission.

Isaiah 30:18

“But God's not finished. He's waiting around to be gracious to you.

He's gathering strength to show mercy to you.

God takes the time to do everything right—everything.

Those who wait around for him are the lucky ones.

“He died not for men, but for each man. If each man had been the only man made, He would have done no less.”

— C.S. Lewis

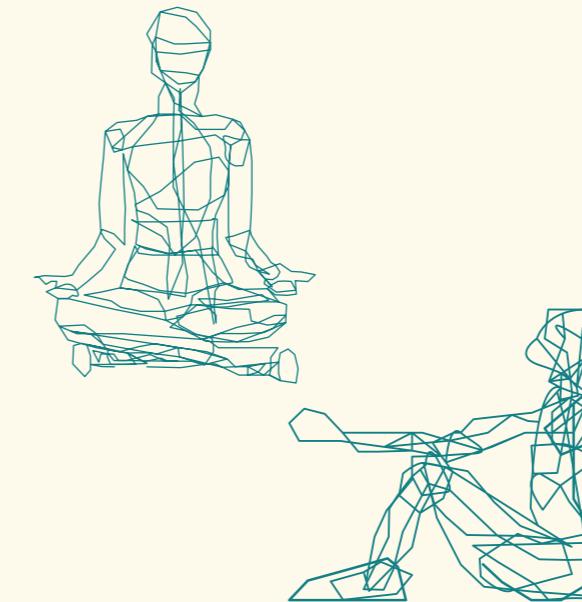
Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

Posture of Worship

STILLNESS

Today's posture: be still in God's presence.

Be still in mind, body and spirit. With palms open, come to a quietness in the presence of God. Allow Him to anoint you with His peace.



Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of the stillness, expressing your steadfastness, waiting on the Lord.

Reflection Questions

How easy or difficult is it for you to come to stillness before God? What do you find challenging about being quiet and still?

What can we learn from the way Jesus prayed for His followers before He was betrayed and brought to the Cross?

What do we know about God's timing? What can we learn about God's timing through the life of Jesus?

In one word or phrase, what is the comfort are hearing from God today?

Day 8: Easter Sunday

AWE + WONDER

Read: John 1, Luke 24, Matthew 28

John 1:1-14

The Life-Light

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word.

The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.

Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!—came into being without him.

What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;

the darkness couldn't put it out.

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

The Life-Light was the real thing: Every person entering Life he brings into Light.

He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice.

He came to his own people, but they didn't want him.

But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said,

He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves.

These are the God-begotten, not blood-begotten, not flesh-begotten, not sex-begotten.

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.

We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

Luke 24:1-8

Looking for the Living One in a Cemetery

At the crack of dawn on Sunday, the women came to the tomb carrying the burial spices they had prepared. They found the entrance stone rolled back from the tomb, so they walked in. But once inside, they couldn't find the body of the Master Jesus.

They were puzzled, wondering what to make of this. Then, out of nowhere it seemed, two men, light cascading over them, stood there. The women were awestruck and bowed down in worship. The men said, "Why are you looking for the Living One in a cemetery? He is not here, but raised up. Remember how he told you when you were still back in Galilee that he had to be handed over to sinners, be killed on a cross, and in three days rise up?" Then they remembered Jesus' words."

Matthew 28:1-10

Risen from the Dead

After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to keep vigil at the tomb. Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven, came right up to where they were standing. He rolled back the stone and then sat on it. Shafts of lightning blazed from him. His garments shimmered snow-white. The guards at the tomb were scared to death. They were so frightened, they couldn't move.

The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed.

"Now, get on your way quickly and tell his disciples, 'He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' That's the message."

The women, deep in wonder and full of joy, lost no time in leaving the tomb. They ran to tell the disciples. Then Jesus met them, stopping them in their tracks. **"Good morning!" he said. They fell to their knees, embraced his feet, and worshiped him.** Jesus said, "You're holding on to me for dear life! Don't be frightened like that. Go tell my brothers that they are to go to Galilee, and that I'll meet them there."

God, it seems you've been our home forever; long before the mountains were born, Long before you brought earth itself to birth,

From "once upon a time" to "kingdom come" - you are God." Psalm 90:1-2

Jesus is with you today, right in this moment. Consider the way you stand, sit, kneel, and move - in spirit and body - as you rest in His presence.

Posture of Worship AWE + WONDER

Reflection Questions

Read the account of Easter morning, as if for the first time. What stands out to you about the events of that morning?

If you were one of those who ran to the tomb that morning, how do you think you would have responded? What would you have said to Jesus?

How differently would you go about your day or your life, if you greeted every morning with the celebration of Easter - an empty tomb and Jesus' resurrected Life?



Space for Prayer

Pray in the posture of awe and wonder. Celebrate - and if the Spirit moves you, dance!

In one word or phrase, what is the redemption you are hearing from God today?

Today is the last day of the 8-day journey. Set a date in the future to revisit this devotional and your written reflections and prayers. Put a date in your calendar.

Space for further reflection

“Love is the overflow of joy in God that meets the needs of others.

The overflow is experienced consciously as the pursuit of our joy in the joy of another.

We double our delight in God as we expand it in the lives of others.”

- John Piper

Have you experienced God's love and faithfulness through the overflow of joy from other believers?

Reflect on surprising ways that God has blessed you and provided for your needs through other people.

How is God encouraging you to meet the needs of someone you know today?

Commit to a few practical ways you can overflow joy into the lives of the people around you over the next few days and weeks.

my heart rests on the sunrise
though there is no trace of its advent

with faith
I can sit in the night,
without sense of time,
without fear

in the dark, i find my feet. i can rise to stand, without bowing to the heights before me.

i sense the power of the high hill, while the night amplifies its faint silhouette.

yet what appears to be a tall shadow
is but a lowly valley,
and faith a true mountain

barrier to the wind, in whose canopy of conviction,
the darkness descends in surrender.

i can listen to the noise of the unknown and the unwanted; and sing in my heart a song of golden leaves dancing in a breeze.
i can perceive, even with eyes in darkness, the story of Life unfolding, the summit of Heaven, a lighthouse in the tempest.

this vision stirs the embers of a watchful soul,
and the light i thought was a glimmer, is now inside me a fire.

though the reality of earth's brevity is a drop of dew in the coming morning, i am thrown into the joy of hope, with the courage of the angels filling my breath, because the dawn is fast approaching.

by nathania aritao

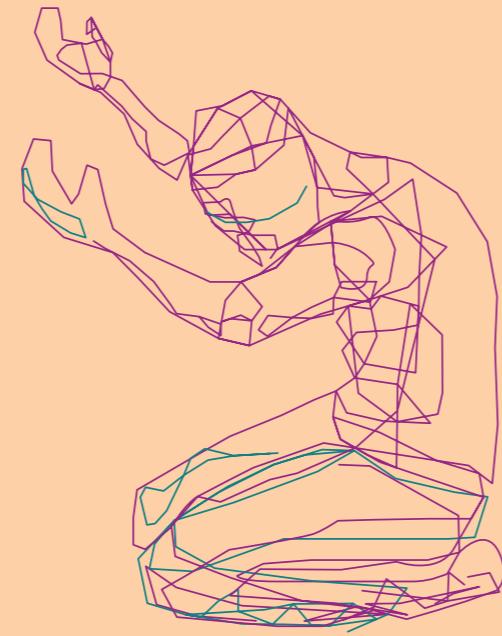


“Never be afraid to trust
an unknown future to a
known God.”

— Corrie Ten Boom

Make a list of the unknowns or uncertainties about the present or the future that are on your mind:

Look for three verses in the Bible that help you surrender these unknowns and uncertainties to our known and loving God. Write these verses down:



My help and glory are in God –
granite-strength and safe-harbor-
God – So trust him absolutely,
people; lay your lives on the line for
him. God is a safe place to be.

Psalm 62:7-8

Creator

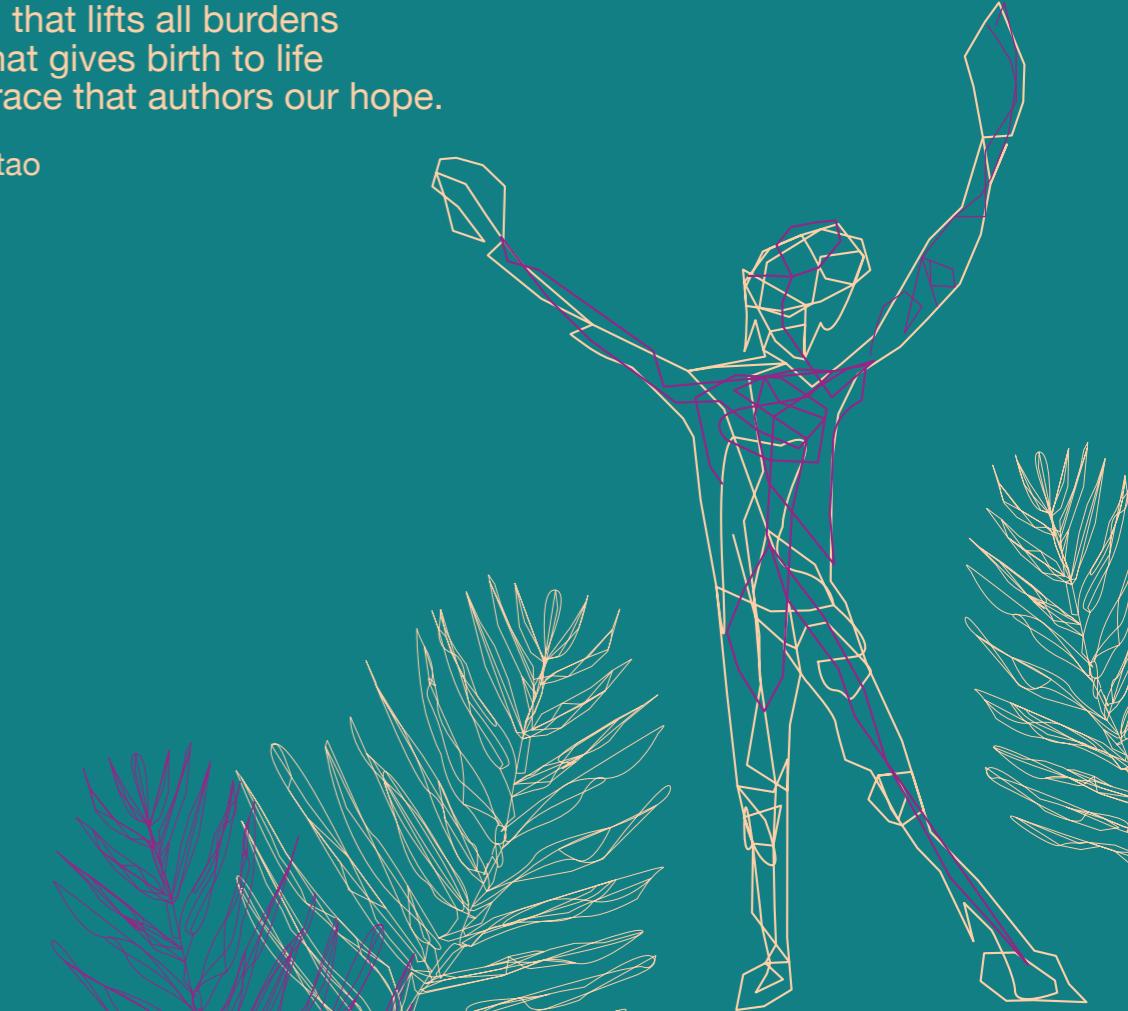
the music is in the unwinding,
in the telling
of the story that
comes alive in the
listening, in the rustling,
wrestling break of spring
when the vines of slow
warmth come unwrapping
in sunlight song
of morning and mourning.

not here, not on earth,
not in Heaven, does the frost reign over light.
no creature bows to the darkness, no kingdom
can stand on pale stones of gray.

it is the warmth, the
pouring, raining, reigning
light, that with compassion
with mercy, with sacrifice,
cracks open the dead bark
the dry seed,
the exiled heart,

with a breath that lifts all burdens
with a love that gives birth to life
with an embrace that authors our hope.

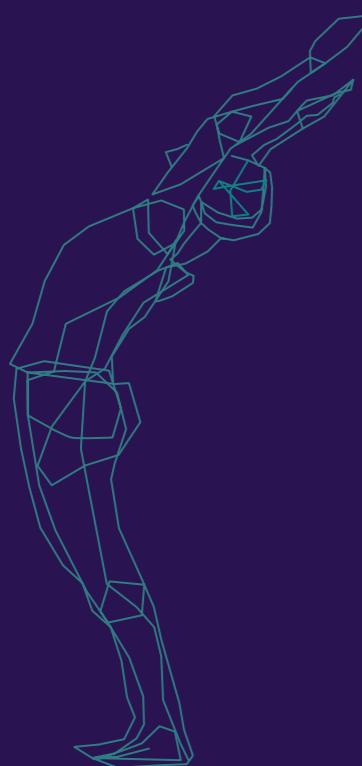
by nathania aritao



Continue exploring movement and worship:

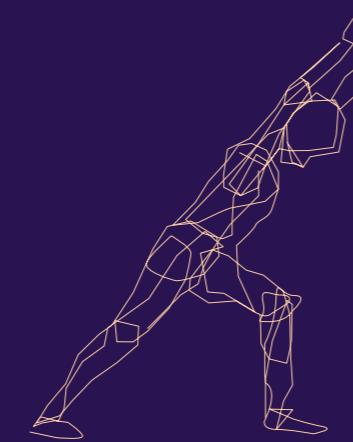
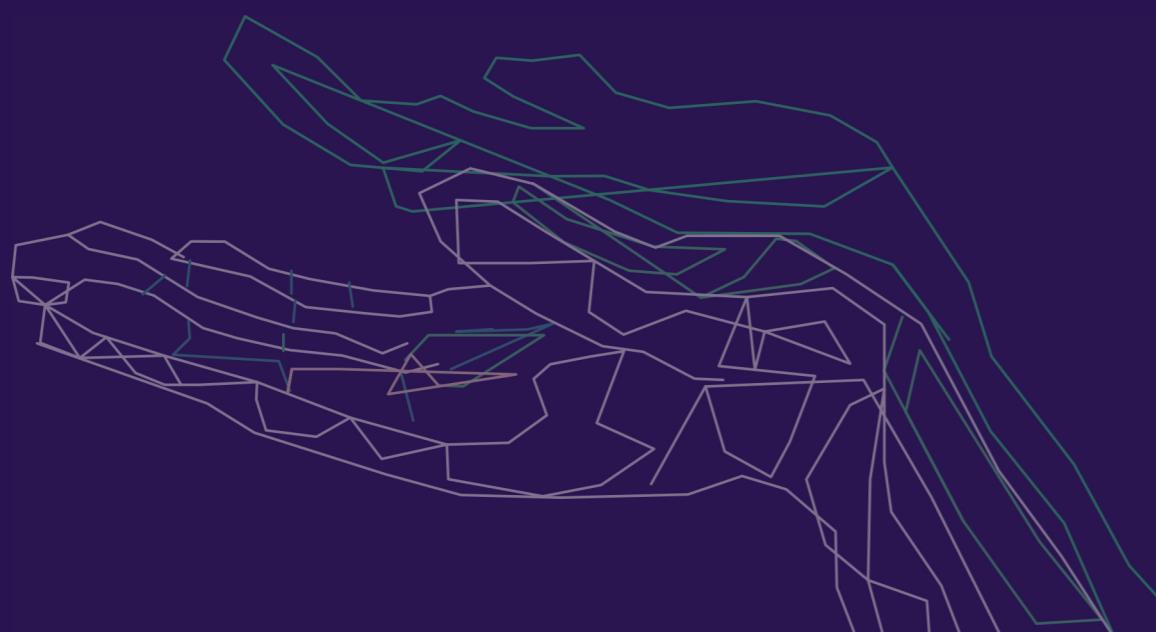
Move with prayerful intention, not for the aesthetic of the physical movement, but to use your body to lead your heart to alignment with God, and your spirit into adoration.

Breathe into the posture or movement, and do not hurry. You are in the patient presence of the Father.



“Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb. I thank you, High God—you’re breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, The days of my life all prepared before I’d even lived one day.”

Psalm 139:13-16



Questions to reflect on the postures of worship:

What did you observe about your experience of worshipping through different postures during your quiet time with God this week?

Did the postures change the way you encountered God? If they did, how?

Was there a specific day or posture that felt the most intimate with God?

Was there a specific day or posture that felt the most challenging or uncomfortable?

Did anything surprise you during the week of worship?

What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God?

Write a prayer praising God for creating you in His image and likeness.

Going through the motions doesn’t please you,

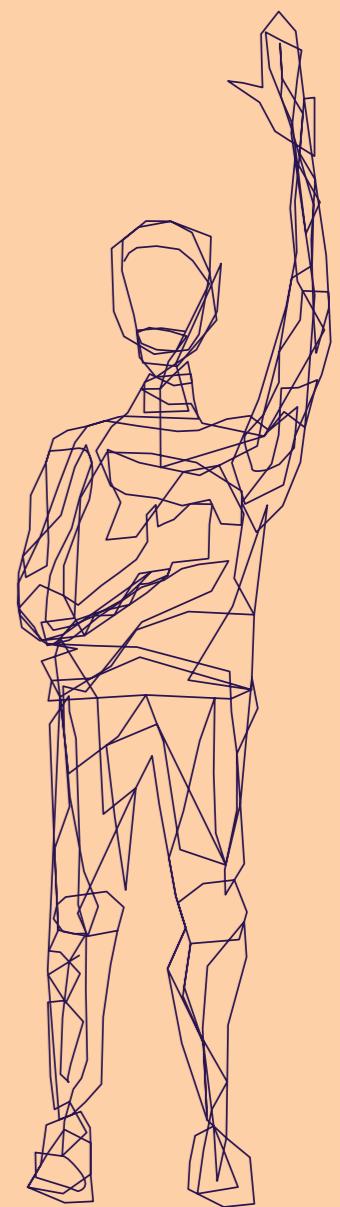
a flawless performance is nothing to you.

I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered.

Heart-shattered lives ready for love

don’t for a moment escape God’s notice.”

Psalm 51:16-17



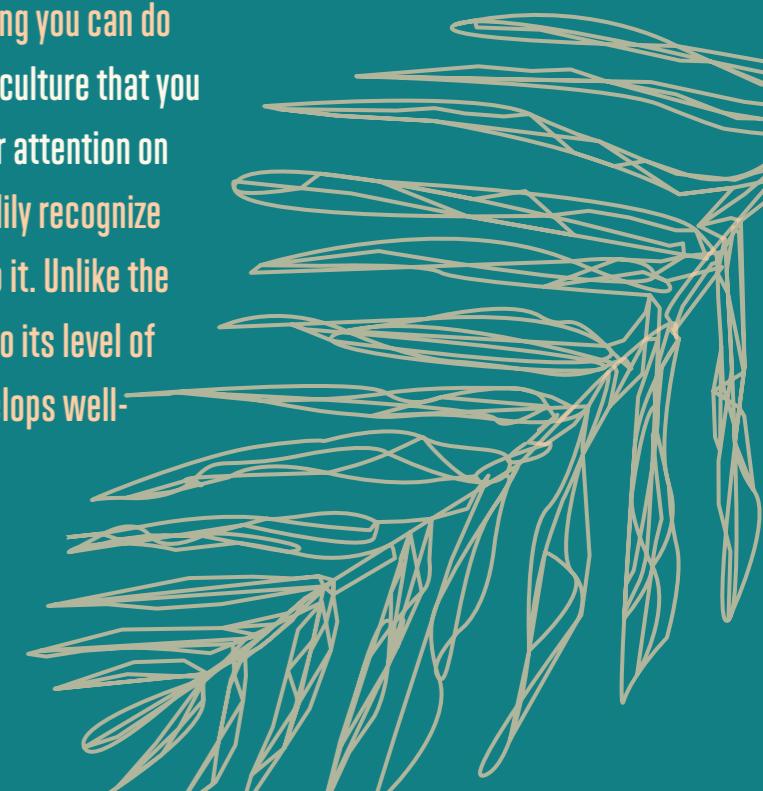
notes | prayers | reflections

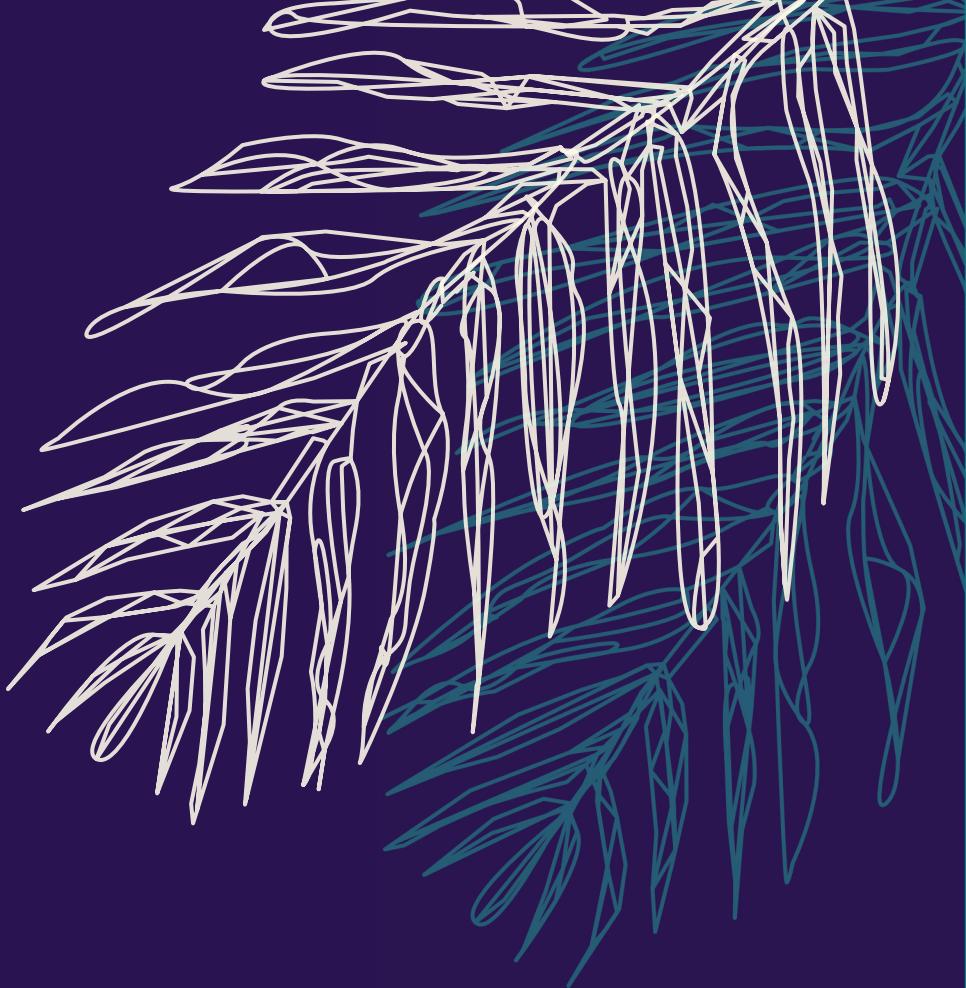
notes | prayers | reflections

Romans 12: 1-2

"[Place Your Life Before God]

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."





with palms open

an 8-day devotional,
a journey from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday

designed by nathania aritao

**Each day, let us approach our Father
with palms open - ready to receive,
ready to give, and ready to rest
in His presence with joy.**

www.nathaniaaritao.com

nathania aritao: I want my art to show the world that we are loved.