

## Morning Meditations ~ **August 2** –

The question falls innocently from my lips and is asked of me by others countless times every single week, “How are you doing?”

Usually, we are so quick to respond, “Fine.” We do so without thinking, “How am I *really* doing?” Honestly, in the deepest part of your heart, as we begin the eighth month of this year, what is going on around you and within you?

You could think of this four dimensionally:

Intellectually

Emotionally

Spiritually

Physically

Let’s take each one individually. Intellectually: I know for me, there are so many thoughts stirring and swirling around my mind. Trying to process the information I encounter each day. It said you experience and encounter 30,000 words daily. Rewind and review some of the words you have already read or heard or wrote today. Some words can simply float in and out, other words leave an impact – good and not so good. Is your mind swirling or feeling like it’s calmly floating on a sea of glass?

Which leads me to...emotionally.

Our Buddhist brothers and sisters talk about our “monkey minds.” I know my mind can sometimes seem like an awful boss pointing out all my stumbles and bumbles. There are times that negative thoughts get caught on a loop like a record player needle stuck in a groove that I can’t get past. Then, there are times people words just hurt and leave a put cut on my soul. Emotions can be good too! There are moments when laughter and joy make me feel lighter. Some emotions are neutral. There are ordinary moments that are neither awesome or awful. I wonder how could you keep track of your emotions this week?

Which leads me to...spiritually.

I believe there is a holy connection from our head to our heart to our soul. There are threads that tie and teether all three together inside us. So often, in faith, we tend to isolate or overemphasize one. Churches speak to the head or only to the heart or only talk about the uncontrollable swirling Spirit like the wind. Yet, in my experience all three are important parts in the Sacred Symphony God is conducting.

Which leads me to...physically.

We exist in a body where internally all the above is happening. You inhabit the world in a body – incarnationally. Just as head, heart, and soul are connected, so there are threads to your

physically body. When I am feeling stress or strain emotionally or spiritually that can have outward, physical manifestations. Emotional wounds can be felt in my physical body. Someone tells me about a loved one who died and I feel punched in the gut. So today prayerfully ponder how you are doing and offer your heartfelt, honest response to God.

**Prayer: Lord, listen to the Your children praying from our head, heart, soul, and whole life. Send us love, send us power, and send us grace. Amen.**

**August 3**

We continue this week to center on the question, “How are you *really* doing?” Each day, I invite you to check in with yourself – intellectually; emotionally; spiritually; and physically. I am currently using a four-quadrant grid with each of the above in one of the boxes. I then prayerfully ponder, what is good or bad or even ugly for each area. Like this (only bigger):


I then prayerfully ponder, what is good or bad or even ugly for each area. For example, is your back hurting or do you feel pretty good from the top of your head to your pinkie toe? Name both the good and the not so great.

Check in with yourself emotionally – when did you laugh in the last twenty-four hours? Did you shed any tears? Did gratitude wash over you in an unexpectant moment? Does your heart feel heavy or light?

Next, see how your soul is doing, let the sacred spark of God get a word in edgewise. I find my soul can be shy and takes times to really tell me how this part of my life is doing. Be patient and kind, giving space for your soul to speak.

Finally, how is your mind doing? Perhaps you are processing a new idea or opportunity. Or maybe your mind is conjuring a creative endeavor. My brain is great at coming up with fictional problems for me to fix. What is roam around your mind today?

“How are you *really* doing?” is a spiritual question that culminate and combines of all these four dimensions. Continue to pay attention, be loving, resting in God’s presence, and calling you, “Beloved.”

**August 4**

We continue to dance with the question, “How are you *really* doing,” this week. This morning, I invite us to read slowly, savoring every single syllable, the first 6 verses of Psalm 139. Here is The Voice translation:

O Eternal One, You have explored my *heart* and know *exactly* who I am;  
<sup>2</sup> You even know *the small details like* when I take a seat and when I stand up again.  
Even when I am far away, You know what I'm thinking.  
<sup>3</sup> You observe my wanderings and my sleeping, *my waking and my dreaming*,  
and You know everything I do in more detail *than even I know*.  
<sup>4</sup> You know what I'm going to say *long before I say it*.  
*It is true*, Eternal One, that You know everything *and everyone*.  
<sup>5</sup> You have surrounded me *on every side*, behind me and before me,  
and You have placed Your hand *gently* on my *shoulder*.  
<sup>6</sup> It is the most amazing feeling to know *how deeply* You know me, *inside and out*;  
*the realization of it is so great that I cannot comprehend it*.

Now, go back and read the words aloud. You may even want to try reading from a different translation.

**Which of the words leapt off the page into your heart?**  
**Which of the words evoked and provoked questions?**

Trusting in God's presence who knows us fully and loves us unconditionally gives us courage to answer the question, "How are you **really** doing?" with heartfelt honesty. May this psalm be a prayer for you and me this day. Amen.

## August 5

Sometimes our tentativeness around answering, "How are you **really** doing?" comes from this fear that what will people think of us if we do answer honestly? On top of this, there is a confidence and competence bias baked into your brain. We were all taught to put on a happy face and make the best of it. We are taught by our culture not to stumble or bumble or admit our mistakes. We don't want to come across looking like Eeyore. Pushing down the pain – physically or emotionally or spiritually or mentally – is part of what I was taught growing up.

At the same time, I love this passage from the Apostle Paul in Romans 8

<sup>38</sup> *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,* <sup>39</sup> *nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

So, why do I think that I am separated from God? Why do I think that if God **really** knew what I was thinking, God would be done with me? Paul says, "Nothing can create a chasm between us and the Divine." But our thoughts sometimes lead us to question whether this can be true and trustworthy. Instead, we believe that we have to be perfect or present only a polished part of ourselves. Social media plays into this with pictures of smiling people on a beach or laughing.

God's way is to embrace and enfold all of us – the good, the bad, and the broken. One of the ways we build our trust muscle is to exercise it. When we say to God, “I am having a no good, rotten day.” Or when we sing to God prayer and praise for a joyful moment. Or when we sit with God in the ordinariness of this Thursday. All of this, Paul says, is in God's embrace. While God doesn't need us to tell God how we are doing, I believe it does *us* well to name and notice the four dimensions of our life – intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual. To tend to these each day as a prayer practice. In doing so, we invite God in with God's wisdom and a remember that God is love from beginning, middle, and end. Nothing, not even our most honest emotions, can separate us from the Sacred.

Go ahead...try this out today. I pray you will hear God saying to you, “I love you.” Amen.

## August 6

I invite you to pause, breathe, and be in this moment. How did it go holding the question, “How are you *really* doing” all week long? Did a new insight or idea stir within you? At times, did the prayer practice feel forced? Did you find some mental resistance or wonder, “Is this working?”

I know I can be so goal oriented that I want to see the fruits of prayer *now*. Or seeing results yesterday would be even better. Or if I have a breakthrough, my mind says, “Well, you should be knocking this out of the park *every time now*. Or you must not be doing this right.” We can internalize others' expectations of ourselves in ways that impact us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We can set our own bar for being human so high that no one, not even Jesus, could clear it. I know that last sentence is especially true for me.

Take time today to reflect on what was helpful and what wasn't so helpful about this practice. No one prayer practice is the be all and end all. Like toys in a toy box, some are great for one moment and not for another. I do pray you will hold this prayer practice within you as a way you can connect deeply with yourself and with God in whose image you are made. When we do, I believe we experience the truth of Psalm 42:7 – “Deep calls unto deep”. The depth of God is felt within us. In those moments, I feel the holy hovering and humming. I am, to quote the hymn, *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*, “Lost in wonder, love and praise.”

**Prayer: Unceasing and Unconditional Loving One, continue to open me to You and to myself so that I may live fully into the image in which You are forming and fashioning me into being. Amen.**