

# Finding your HEART SPACE

A Bible reading, reflection and guided meditation



Stephen G Wright

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## **Introduction**

This reflection and meditation was written out of the experience of lockdown due to Covid-19 in 2020, but could be used during any period in life in which you are feeling troubled or perplexed, and are seeking to journey deep within for answers and the Self beyond your ordinary self: the very Presence in which you live and move and have your being, and which lives and moves and has being in you. This is a resource for any time in which you seek to be less attached to the relentless thinking, doubting mind and to settle into connection and possibility.

**Stephen G Wright**

**Bible reading:**

*But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

Matthew 6:6 (NRSV)

**Reflection:**

In these times of lockdown, there's a driven, almost frantic, need to fill up the space. Instead of being open to its possibilities, we seem intent on replicating what we did in life before Covid-19, except this time we're filling up the virtual space – with meetings, discussions, work ... with more of the same. It seems 'good' that we should seek to keep things normal, even under abnormal, isolating circumstances. 'Keep calm and carry on'.

Hang on a minute ...

We follow a God who is the '*Maker of all things visible and invisible*' and who makes '*all things new*'. There is no small print after those statements in which God tells us that the methods or the results of that making are necessarily going to be to our liking.

There's a lot of love going on at the moment, as huge numbers of people reach out to take care of each other. But there's an awful lot of fear too. If we make decisions or take actions on the basis of love, the outcome will be very different than if we are driven by fear (however well-hidden). Are we afraid that things will fall apart, or we'll be harmed in some way, or fall short of God's pleasure, or, or ... if we don't keep at it; if we don't keep on communicating, organising, worshipping, WhatsApping, Facebooking, Zooming, FaceTiming, with whatever device we can grab to keep on talking, meeting, doing? ...

In a time when there is so much fear and suffering on a global scale, it's understandable that we might reach for the familiar. But supposing we acknowledge and hold the fear? Supposing we open up to seeing what it has to teach us? Suppose, instead of trying to keep things as normal as possible, we look and listen for the Holy Spirit in what is going on, and what She is trying to tell us. Supposing it is the will of the Beloved<sup>1</sup> at this moment that we stop doing and instead spend more time in our *'inner chamber'* (Mt 6:6). Perhaps there we might learn what the Spirit is urging us to know that is extra-ordinary in these extraordinary times.

Suppose we are not being asked to keep church services going, but to stop them? Suppose we are not being asked to meet more, even virtually, but less? Is the Beloved challenging us to keep things as they are in the face of adversity, or sending us the message that we should be still, listen, take stock: see what is being created and know our part in it?

Perhaps this is a time to take advantage of the opportunity of being free of travel and work and to find more space for prayer and reflection. Even the Queen, the Head of the Anglican Church, in her address to the nation on 5th April, said as much. Perhaps this is a time to focus more of our attention on reviewing and renewing our personal relationship with the Beloved; to check our values and the way we are living; to see the good things we take for granted and learn to appreciate them deeply; to examine those places in our consciousness where we are afraid, and what they show us about not trusting in the Beloved completely. Are we being asked to explore our vows to the Beloved, the world and each other to see where we may have gone awry, and how we can take better care of each other and the planet?

Maybe, amid the confusion, there are gifts of time and space in which to come to a deeper awareness of our old ways of doing things, not least doing church, that are now past their sell-by date and need to be lovingly let go.

What is the *new thing* that is waiting to be born out of the Beloved, in which you are being summoned to participate in faith?

Perhaps this is a time to be more discriminating about all the Internet connections we make, and to use the space instead to be receptive to the Will not our own.

Suppose, at this moment, we are being asked to journey deep into a period of interruption-less discernment? ...

### **Meditation:**

First of all, allow yourself the next 20 minutes, at least, to be free of interruptions. Sit quietly in your usual way of preparation for meditation or prayer. I am going to ask you to focus on some questions that we use in the Kentigern School for Contemplatives in Cumbria and which will be familiar to anyone who has attended a retreat at the Sacred Space Foundation.

As you sit quietly, bring your attention to your breath and let yourself settle into slow, steady breathing.

Draw your attention further into your heart, perhaps aided by resting a hand over your heart and bowing your head slightly. We know there's solid flesh in that part of our bodies, but let that go and foster a sense of openness and spaciousness in the very centre of who you are. Let this be the space where you come to look deep within yourself for answers whenever you are seeking, perplexed or troubled in life: the place where you go to look for the Self beyond your ordinary self.

Now be aware that in that space is the very Presence in which you live and move and have your being, and which lives and moves and has being in you. For those who follow the Jesus Way, it is the very Christ consciousness itself: God. Use whatever term you are comfortable with. I will use 'Beloved' here.

As you sit quietly, be aware of the presence of the Beloved right now, whether near or far, felt, imagined – it doesn't matter, just go with your experience at this moment. Continue to breathe slowly, almost as if you are bypassing nose and mouth and breathing directly in and out of your heart space. Let your imagination and your feelings carry you into that space so that, just for a few minutes, you will be less attached to the relentless thinking, doubting mind, and settle into connection and possibility.

Lastly, as you ask each of the following questions don't worry if any answer doesn't make sense now; trust that it might become clearer later. Don't go all analytical and try to work it out, or make something happen, or edit it, or worry if 'nothing' is happening – you may find an offering in that too, from which to learn later. Sometimes nothing is something. Just allow a response to arise and sit with it for a moment. Then let it go to the back of your mind; file it away to return to later.<sup>2</sup>

Now take a deep breath, create a space and, as you breathe out, bring in the first question. Ask quite directly – no need to beat about the bush:

1. *Beloved, as I open myself to Your Presence – at this point in my life and with all that is going on for me and the world – what is it You want me to receive? What am I here to receive? Right now, what is it I am to receive? ...*

Allow an answer to arise ... After a few minutes, let it go to the back of your mind; file it away to return to later. Now take a deep breath, create a space, let the first question go and, as you breathe out, be ready to bring in the next question:

*2. Beloved, as I open myself to Your presence – at this point in my life and all that is going on for me and the world – what is it You want me to know? What am I here to know? Right now, what is it I am to know? ...*

Sit with any response to this question ... After a few minutes, let any response be put at the back of your mind along with what you are to receive, then take a deep breath, create a space, let the second question go and, as you breathe out, be ready to bring in the next question:

*3. Beloved, as I open myself to Your presence at this point in my life and all that is going on for me and the world, what is it You want me to let go of? What am I here to let go of? Right now, what is it I am to let go of? ...*

Sit with any response to this question ... After a few minutes, let any response be put at the back of your mind along with what you are to receive and know, then take a deep breath, create a space, let the third question go and, as you breathe out, be ready to bring in the next question:

*4. Beloved, as I open myself to Your presence – at this point in my life and all that is going on for me and the world – what is it You want me to do? What am I here to do? Right now, what is it I am to do? ...*

Sit with any response to this question ... After a few minutes, let any response be put at the back of your mind along with what you are to receive, to know and to let go of, then take a deep breath once more, create a space and let all the questioning go ...

Sit in meditation for a little longer if you wish. Offer gratitude to the Beloved for what you have been shown. Recall the questions and any impact upon you; perhaps make notes in a journal.

Whether the insights, if any, seem profound or superficial, be wary of acting on impulse. The dividing line between delusion and illumination is sometimes very thin. Share your responses with a trusted Soul Friend or Soul Community for discernment and sit with them prayerfully and reflectively in the days ahead.

**Stephen G Wright**

**Sources and notes:**

1. Those in the Contemplative Kentigern School call upon a name for the Divine that has no gender and suggests a loving relationship. I will use 'Beloved' here.

2. If you prefer to hear this meditation spoken, a version can be found online at [www.sacredspace.org.uk](http://www.sacredspace.org.uk) or on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/1irEj4orAAM> ('The four questions').

Part of this resource is an edited extract from 'Enjoy the great indoors: Twenty top tips for change amid crisis', *e-Coracle*, the online magazine of the Iona Community, March/April 2020, [www.iona.org.uk](http://www.iona.org.uk)

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