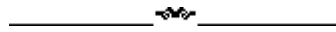


PLENTY EMPTY!

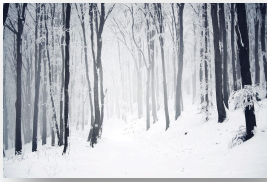
EMPTINESS
AS MAKING ROOM FOR PLENTITUDE



PERSONAL RETREAT RESOURCE



Joel Warne



Video Presentation, *part 1*

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped-⁷but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7

Kenosis “emptied himself” Philippians 2:7

emptying precedes birth

emptiness is a seeded garden hiding new life

emptiness is the normal state before life is miraculously created from nothing

Passive & Active Emptying

passive emptying

We make peace with an emptiness imposed on us by life, and rest with God there in love.

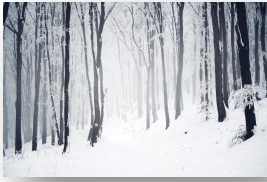
active emptying

We release our right to live the way we’ve always lived in the past, and do things the way we’ve always done them, in order to make space inside to notice and tend new things being born.

Until something emerges

“You have to endure the emptiness until something emerges in it, ‘... You can’t get back to known reference points or fill [your emptiness] with content from another season in your life. It’s about abiding in the desolation until your eyes adjust to the dark and your spiritual night vision kicks in.”

Cynthia Bourgeault



Video Presentation, *part 2*

Survival postures

“Before you get serious about Jesus, consider how good you are going to look on wood!”

Daniel Berrigan, on losing our life to find it. Matthew 10:38,39

survival postures that require intentional, repeated emptying to make space inside to notice and tend Jesus’ birth in us

cynicism and hiding; self-shaming and self-discrediting; fixed assumptions, timetables and demands; a spirit of remoteness, detachment and cool; an addiction to fear, sin and wounded ego; a need to perform, pretend or create drama; an insistence upon control, certainty and preferred answers; a demand for total clarity and assured outcomes (and maybe one or two things more...!)

Why we release

We release our substitutes and addictions not to get God to like us. We release them to clear debris away to reveal that God has been intimately with us all along—holding us in compassion even as we have clung for safety to our false survival and thriving strategies!

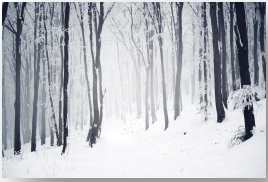
my fundamental truth

I’m held, celebrated, safe

All is well in Jesus Christ and always has been well, and always will be well!

I’m a beloved bride to his Groom; a secure branch in His vine; a precious member of a body celebrated by my Head, a temple, a house of God

Matthew 23:37 & 28:20; John 15:1-10 & 16:33; Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 & 12:12-31; 2 Corinthians 4:7-10; Revelation 19:7-9 & 21-22:5



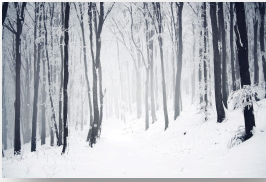
Video Presentation, *part 3*

Frozen memories

As we rest with God permeably in our pain, frozen memories and frozen identities gradually begin to soften and dissolve, and are replaced with a growing sense of our real selves, true situation and actual lives.

A necessary wounding?

Old, rigid and in-turned identities may receive a wound through painful life experiences. This can grow compassion in us, and a desire to extend blessing to others journeying through their own wounding toward a more whole, healed and real life.



Personal Time

Quotes

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped⁷ but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

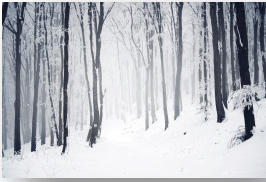
Philippians 2:5-7

Philippians 2:5-7

Is there anything that especially reaches out to me in the Philippians passage above? Does it hold anything I need right now? What word, picture or idea is bread and drink to me? (Listen to God and your own heart. Jot your yearnings and conversation with God.)

Presentation quotes

Is there any presentation quote on the preceding pages that especially calls to me today? What am I attracted to? Is there anything I'm resisting? What would I like to say to God about this? What is God's word to me in return?



Personal Time

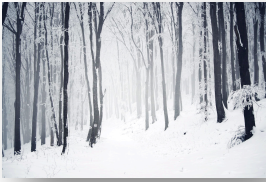
Passive Emptying

In passive emptying we make peace with an emptiness imposed on us by life, and rest there with God in love.

Has life imposed on me an emptiness I find myself unable to fill? How would I describe this emptiness?

What emotions are stirred as I consider the possibility of releasing my demand for a different life and instead simply rest with God in my life as it is? Do I find this possibility attractive? Threatening? Confusing? (Spend 5 minutes just feeling what you feel as you consider this possibility.)

When ready, experiment for 5-10 minutes just being with God in your emptiness. (Entrust to God your silence, weeping, anger, joy, wondering, confusion - yourself. Journal thoughts and feelings, create a poem or piece of art, or just rest quietly with God.)



Personal Time

Active Emptying

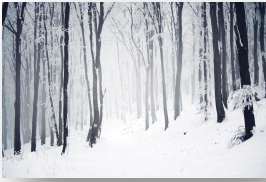
In active emptying we release our right again and again to live the way we've always lived in the past and do things the way we've always done them. This makes room inside to notice and tend a new life being born.

Skim the list of survival postures on page 3, above.

Is there any strategy, addiction or substitute I've relied on in the past that I feel ready to entrust into Jesus' care? What do I find attractive about releasing this? What risks might be involved?

What would my heart like to say to God about this? What is God's word to me in return?

Consider an experiment: For the next 8 weeks release into Jesus' care again and again the survival posture you identified above. Notice and lovingly tend anything new being born in you.



Personal Time

Doula – A Daily Practice

Self-criticism, self-blame and self-censoring squash my true self in Christ.

What words and habits will I adopt to replace self-shaming with loving myself in the way God loves me while my real self is being born deeply and broadly inside?

A doula is an encouraging companion during a mom's labor. The doula is not a medical expert but someone who surrounds the mom with love, encouragement and warmth. The presence of a doula has been shown to aid and comfort the birth process.

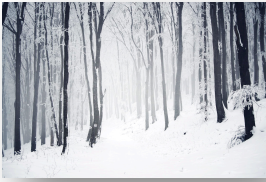
to ponder: Am I ready to become my own doula—my own best friend who surrounds myself with words of love, truth and encouragement to support Jesus' deepening birth in me? What's attractive in this? What do I resist? What would I like to say to God about this? What is God's word in return?

A PRACTICE – becoming my own Doula

Each day spend a little time picturing a doula attending a mom during labor.

Ask: What would a doula say to me right now as my real life is coming to fuller birth in me? What would be the tone in the doula's voice, the look in the doula's eyes? What endless patience and care would the doula extend?

Become your own doula.



Personal Time

Kenosis – A Daily Practice

cultivating a posture of release,
surrender and holding things loosely

Kenosis is agreeing with God

about what to keep and what to leave behind. We don't self-empty to become vacant inside. Instead, we release the clogging inner invaders that crowd and obscure Jesus' broadening birth in us. The joy and relief of making space in this way is that it precedes another birth, something you've been looking for all your life—*your own true self!* (Galatians 2:20)

A PRACTICE - Kenosis and Birth

In Jesus' kenosis—his transition from heaven to earth—he self-surrendered the way he'd always lived and had always done things. We do the same!

Practice Kenosis

Each day intentionally sit restfully with God in a posture of kenosis—releasing pressing thoughts, emotions, self-criticism, timetables and demands into Gods care.

Practice Birth

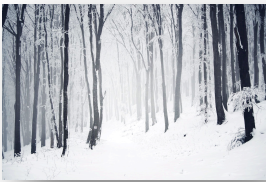
In the open space this creates attend Jesus, always lovingly present in you (Romans 8:10; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 3:17). Gaze, pay attention, enjoy and loop back to God repeatedly. The unexpected fruit of attending God in this way is the growing birth of your own true self! (Galatians 2:20)

Here's the simple pattern:

release and attend, release and attend—over and over, again and again

Wandering thoughts

When the mind wanders don't feel bad or hassle yourself—simply return gently again to Jesus. If the mind wanders a thousand times, great! That's a thousand opportunities to return to Jesus! ☺



Resources

BEING WITH GOD IN EMPTINESS

- ◆ *Dark Night of the Soul*, John of the Cross
- ◆ *Dark Night of the Soul*, Gerald May
- ◆ *The Critical Journey*, Guelich and Hagberg
- ◆ *Can You Drink The Cup?*, Henri Nouwen
- ◆ *Life of the Beloved*, Henri Nouwen
- ◆ *The Tree That Survived the Winter*, Mary Fahy
- ◆ *Darkness Is My Only Companion*, Kathryn Greene-McCreight

LISTENING WITH GOD

- ◆ *Open Mind, Open Heart*, Thomas Keating
- ◆ *Invitation to Solitude and Silence*, Ruth Haley-Barton
- ◆ *Sleeping with Bread*, Dennis Linn
- ◆ *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer
- ◆ *Soul Craving: An Invitation to the Feast*, Joel Warne
- ◆ *How to Eat Your Bible: God's Word as Food for Your Soul*, Joel Warne
- ◆ *Practicing the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence
- ◆ *The Naked Now*, Richard Rohr
- ◆ *The Cloud of Unknowing*
- ◆ *A Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly
- ◆ *Centering Prayer and the Healing of the Unconscious*, Murchadh O' Madagain

Wellbeing & Intimacy

- ◆ *The Life Model: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You*, James G. Friesen
- ◆ *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*, Madame Guyon
- ◆ *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Henri Nouwen
- ◆ *Sabbath*, Wayne Muller
- ◆ *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Francis de Sales
- ◆ *Anthony DeMello, Writings*
- ◆ *Jesus Calling*, Sarah Young
- ◆ *In The Name of Jesus*, Henri Nouwen
- ◆ *A Tree Full of Angels*, Macrina Weiderkehr
- ◆ *Hinds Feet on High Places*, Hannah Hurnard
- ◆ *Twelve Steps to a New Day*, Ron Keller

Journals

- ◆ *The Story of a Soul*, Theresa of Lisieux
- ◆ *The Genesee Diary*, Henri Nouwen
- ◆ *Journey to Daybreak*, Henri Nouwen
- ◆ *The Journals of Thomas Merton*
- ◆ *Confessions of St Augustine*