

Awaken to God's Presence | Black History Month

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Black History Month, spiritual practice, Community of Christ, prayer, Howard Thurman, meditation, Unity in Diversity, Worth of All Persons, Blessings of Community

SPEAKERS

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Joelle Wight 00:04

A gift of peace in the midst of troubling times. Project Zion Podcast offers this series of guided practices to help you connect with the divine no matter where you are or what's going on around you, take a deep breath and allow your spirit to find calm in the storm of life.

Blake Smith 00:28

Welcome to Awaken to God's Presence and this time of meditation. This is Blake Smith, Community of Christ minister and your companion for today's spiritual practice.

February is Black History month. It is important for us to take time to acknowledge and honor the contributions of so many whose voices have for so long gone unrecognized and even silenced... voices that have, often unbeknownst to us, contributed a richness to our lives.

In Community of Christ, we are guided by our Enduring Principles. In this moment, we are particularly reminded of our belief in the Worth of All Persons, Unity in Diversity, and the Blessings of Community.

For our meditation today, I want to share two prayers. The first is a "Prayer for Black History Month," and the author of this prayer is unknown.

I invite you to pause.

Find a comfortable place to sit.

If you are able, settle in and let your shoulders relax, close your eyes and simply breathe. Listen to the rhythm of your breath.

(pause)

*Spirit of Abundance, God of Grace, Mother of Hope,
We pause now to remember those stories that are all around us,
But so often passed over,
Those stories that when told are shared because
Of what someone is, not who they are.
This month in our nation's character
Is Black History month.
Help us to realize that Black history is
All our histories.
May the day come when these stories
Are so wildly taught that no month need
Be separately divided.
We know this day will not come until we as a people
Make different choices.
We pray now for those new choices.
May we come to see a day where the prison system
Becomes redemptive, not punitive.
A day where the legal system learns to focus more squarely on the facts,
And the not colors of our skin.
A day where our schools are as well funded, as the needs demand.
May our role models be allowed to excel when they thrive,
And not be taken down for their rich heritage.
We know this will require a shift in power.
And this can be scary for some.
Give those full of fear - hope.
May we come to know grace,
So that our hearts will not be hardened to the pain around us.
There are so many beautiful stories needing to be told.
And we need to get the chance to hear them.
Widen our vision so that the history that is shared this month,
And every month,
Come to be known as our history too.
We are most human when we see the humanity in others.*

Amen.

The next prayer was written by Howard Thurman

*Thurman who was born in 1899 and raised in the segregated South. He is recognized as one of the great spiritual leaders of the 20th century renowned for his reflections on humanity and our relationship with God. Thurman was a prolific author (writing at least 20 books); perhaps the most famous is *Jesus and the Disinherited* (1949), which deeply influenced Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. Thurman was the first black person to be a tenured Dean at a PWI (Boston U). He also cofounded the first interracial pastored, intercultural church in the US.*

The prayer is called “Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me” and comes from “*Meditations of the Heart*”

As I read this prayer, I will pause between each line and allow you to silently add your own words or allow an image to form in your mind.

Again, quiet your mind, and listen to the rhythm of your breath.

Open unto me, light for my darkness

(pause)

Open unto me, courage for my fear

(pause)

Open unto me, hope for my despair

(pause)

Open unto me, peace for my turmoil

(pause)

Open unto me, joy for my sorrow

(pause)

Open unto me, strength for my weakness

(pause)

Open unto me, wisdom for my confusion

(pause)

Open unto me, forgiveness for my sins

(pause)

Open unto me, tenderness for my toughness

(pause)

Open unto me, love for my hates

(pause)

Open unto me, Thy Self for myself

(pause)

Lord, Lord, open unto me!

(pause)

Amen!