



World Community for Christian Meditation  
(Singapore)



# Monthly Online Meditation

with Peter Ng

SESSION 4

SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

Good evening, meditators and friends. At these monthly meditation sessions we share with you the essential teaching on meditation, the essential principles of why we meditate and how we meditate. In the three previous sessions, we spoke first about the purpose of meditation, which is to share in the very being of God. In the second session, the theme was about leaving self behind, how meditation helps us in discipleship, how to follow Jesus as he asked us to, leave ourselves behind and find our true self in him. And in last month's session, we spoke about the meaning of the word 'Christian' when we talk about Christian meditation, how our practice of meditation is focused on the presence of the Spirit of Jesus within us, we speak about Christocentric meditation. So tonight I'd like to invite you to reflect on this theme of the reality of God and our own inner reality. (PETER NG)

## The Reality of God and Our Inner Reality

PETER NG

Now when we speak about reality, the word 'reality', what does it really mean? I think one easy way is for you to understand that there is a visible reality and there's an invisible reality. The fact that you don't see something does not mean it does not exist. For example, the force of gravity is a reality. You try to jump up, you will come falling down on the ground, you're being pulled down by the force of gravity. So in other words, there's an invisible force which holds you down to the ground, an invisible reality. Another example is electricity. You don't see electricity but it appears, it manifests itself in the light bulb, it lights up the bulb. So the light bulb is the physical manifestation of the invisible reality that we call electricity. In the same way, when we meditate we enter into what we call the invisible reality, and that invisible reality is God.

Now we know as Christians that this invisible reality that we refer to as God became incarnate in Jesus. So Jesus was the physical manifestation, incarnation at a certain point in history, revealing God in human form. But now the reality of God is to be experienced in the Spirit of

Jesus, the risen Spirit of Jesus alive in our heart. So there is this invisible reality that we speak about which is deeper than the visible reality that we see.

Another thing about reality is, when we speak about reality we speak of something that is unchanging, that is eternal. It does not change. Most of the things that we see is constantly changing. Even if it's here today, tomorrow it will be in a different form. And our bodies, for example, are temporary; they exist for a moment in time and when we die the body is gone. But the unchanging reality of us is our spirit. Our spirit is eternal, eternal in God. So the practice of meditation is about going deeper within ourselves and experiencing the reality of God, which is the invisible reality and is also touching into our own inner reality our spirit which doesn't change compared with our ego which is constantly changing.

So if you can understand it in those terms, meditation is a very important practice for anyone who wants to live their life in reality and not in illusion. The opposite of reality is illusion. So a meaningful life has to be a life that is rooted in reality, the reality of God and the reality of our own inner being.

Let's now listen to the founder of our community Fr John Main as he reflects on this theme of reality.

### **GOD IS SUPREME REALITY -John Main**

*Transcript of excerpts from The Heart of Creation, John Main, Collected Talks Vol V, 'The Unreality of Fear' and 'Surface and Depth'. Moment of Christ, John Main, Collected Talks Vol III. 'The Way of Liberation'. Fully Alive, John Main, Collected Talks Vol VIII, 'Heart Longing'. Word Made Flesh, John Main, Collected Talks Vol VI, 'Dropping the Anchor' and 'Integrity'.*

The basis of our Christian faith is that God is supreme reality. God is the one who is wholly real, the one who IS, and nothing exists or can exist outside of his reality. If we think that anything can exist outside of God, we are living and dealing with illusion and fantasy. Meditation is a commitment to reality. If we are committed to meditation, we are more and more profoundly committed to the reality of God, the reality of our own being, and the reality of all creation.

The truly religious man or woman is the one who lives their life responding to reality, not to goals, not to ambitions, not to secondary things, not to material things, not to what is trivial. Let me give you an example. The great illusion that we all start with is the illusion that we are at the centre of reality, so it seems as though the world is revolving around us. Then we begin to try to control that world, to dominate that world, to put that world at our service. What we find in meditation, from our own experience, is that God is the centre and that God is the source of all reality. And what we discover from our own experience is that there is nothing real outside God, only illusion. In meditation we find the courage to live in the clear light of reality, the reality that is God, the reality that is his creation, the reality that is my being, created by God. The result is that in meditation we are anchored in God, and we begin to know from our own experience that God is the ground of our being. In him we live, through him we live, and with him we live.

The purpose of all spirituality and of all religion is that we should be anchored in God, in supreme reality, in absolute reality, so that we can judge everything with his eternal insight.

That's what we call wisdom – knowing what is real, knowing what is false, knowing what endures, knowing what passes away, and rooting our lives here and now in what endures, in what is eternal. And the result is that we ourselves become more real and we are, as it were, even now in the present, living our lives out of eternal truth, out of eternal reality. Our morning meditation and our evening meditation is our commitment to what is true, to what is real, to what is important.

One of the great truths that appears in the traditional wisdom is that we have to discover our own inner reality. We have to go beyond the surface of things. What is real is the inner structure, the inner reality. Meditation is the process whereby we enter into our own inner reality. And the extraordinary thing about the process of meditation is that, in entering our own inner being, we make contact with the essential structure of all being, of all reality.

We all use words like 'God', 'truth', 'being', and so forth, but so often they are not words that spring from within ourselves. We live in a society that doesn't recognise the immense value of spiritual practice, that doesn't recognise the spiritual reality. In the sort of society we live in, we have to take radical steps. It's as though we were rushing through our lives and in our hearts there is the flame of a candle, and because we are moving at such high speed this essential interior flame is always on the point of going out. When we sit down to meditate, when we become still, when we are not thinking in terms of our own success, of our own self-importance, of our own will, but when we are just still in the presence of the One who is, then the flame begins to burn bright and we begin to understand ourselves and others in terms of the light and warmth of love.

Now we have to get to that point where we can learn to be still, and that is why we say our word, our mantra, maranatha. Saying the mantra leads us to the stillness where the flame can burn bright. We all know that we can't live a full life unless our lives are firmly grounded on some underlying purpose, unless we come to know that each of us has an ultimate significance. And that ultimate significance we can only discover if we find our rootedness in God. We must discover our rootedness in God – created by God, redeemed by Jesus, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. We must be open to the love that redeems us, and we must live out of our own infinite holiness. Each of us is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As we all know, we live in a world that makes great demands on most of us. In every society now, stress and strain take their toll on the nervous resources of so many people, and meditation is a way to stability, the stability which is the reality of our own being. Real stability for each of us can only come when we are firmly anchored in God.

## **REFLECTION** -Peter Ng

I'd like to share with you two practical consequences of this understanding of reality.

### *Authenticity*

The first is that we must learn to be ourselves, because only when we are truly ourselves then we are real. You might say that each of us has a true self, a real self, which is our spirit in union with the Spirit of God, but we also have an ego that we call our false self. So you can

think of your ego like your shadow. As you walk around you can see your shadow following you. The shadow is not the real self, your physical body you might say is the real self. But sometimes we live in the shadow, we live out of our ego, our self-centeredness, our selfishness. But if we can live in our true self, that's when we begin to reflect the Spirit of God. So when we are not our true selves, we are acting, we are trying to impress somebody that we are holier than we are, or whatever it is. It's not our true self, we're acting, we're trying to put on a nice impression. But if we can learn to go to our true self then we begin to live more and more out of that true self, and that's what we call our *authentic* being – real, authentic, something which actually doesn't change. So learning to be real is very important. You don't want to present an unreal self to others. What they see is the true person, not a fake which our ego is actually – a fake. But then we get so used to operating out of our ego that we think that is our true self.

So meditation is the process by which we gradually leave our ego behind, leave our false self behind. You peel away like an onion, you peel away the various layers until you reach the centre, and that is your real self, covered up by your false self. So meditation is the work of uncovering our true self and then living out of our true self.

### *Unbiased Perception*

Another important implication of reality is how we see things. When we look at a situation, there's always a tendency to interpret things, to see things, to process things that we see, through our ego, our biases our prejudices. So when we look at information we tend to choose the information which supports our point of view and we just ignore the information which does not support our point of view. In other words, our perception of reality is clouded or distorted by our ego. So we don't see something in its totality, we see it in terms of ourselves, and that is not reality. You're only seeing a partial view or even a biased view of reality. And that is quite dangerous, because you are not seeing things as they are. But in meditation, when we say our mantra, we stop thinking about ourselves. When we say the mantra we are shifting our attention to the presence of God, to reality, and we leave the unreality of our ego behind, our self-preoccupation behind. So over time you are like cleaning the window pane. We are looking at the outside world through a window that is dirty and we don't see things clearly. So meditation will help you over time to see reality clearly without it being clouded by your ego.

So these are two important implications of reality, and meditation, from my experience, is the way that we gradually come to live in reality. So now let's put all these words and all this theory into practice by our period of meditation. So we'll have Fr John Main lead us into meditation.

# Meditation

## HOW TO MEDITATE -John Main

To meditate, each of us must learn to be still, and that's a discipline. When we meditate in a few moments together, all of us should spend a few moments just getting into a comfortable sitting posture. Then all of us at some time probably during our meditation will feel like moving. And not moving, staying still, will perhaps be for us the first lesson in transcending desire, transcending that fixation that we so often have with ourselves. So I want you to understand that meditation does involve this discipline. And the first discipline you have to learn probably is to sit still, to *be* still.

When you sit down and sit still, close your eyes gently, and then begin to repeat your word. The word I suggest you use is 'maranatha'. That's four syllables: ma-ra-na-tha. The purpose of repeating the word is to gently lead you away from your own thoughts, your own ideas, your own desire, and to lead you into the presence of God by turning you away from yourself towards God. Say the word gently, but deliberately. Say the word in a relaxed way, but articulate it silently in your mind: ma-ra-na-tha.

### *Opening Prayer*

Heavenly Father, open my heart to the silent presence of the spirit of your Son. Lead me into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call. Maranatha, maranatha, come Lord Jesus.



<https://wccm-singapore.webflow.io/meditation-timer-moment-of-christ>

*For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)*

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## PRAYER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

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May this community be a true spiritual home for the seeker, a friend for the lonely, a guide for the confused.

May those who pray here be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to serve all who come, and to receive them as Christ himself.

In the silence of this room may all the suffering, violence and confusion of the world encounter the Power that will console, renew and uplift the human spirit.

May this silence be a power to open the hearts of men and women to the vision of God, and so to each other, in love and peace, justice and human dignity.

May the beauty of the Divine life fill this room and the hearts of all who pray here with joyful hope.

May all who come here, weighed down by the problems of humanity, leave giving thanks for the wonder of human life. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen