

Hey Beloved,

Good to be with you today. I'm Trecia and I'll be inviting you into a moment of spiritual practice.

*For our spiritual practices each week in Advent we will invite you to open your heart, to prepare room for Jesus and the new way, the new love that he invites us into.*

*And there is only one way to bring in the new, and that is to make room for it.*

In a few minutes we're going to get to hear about the shepherds and I really loved meditating on the story of shepherds as laymen, people who weren't clergy, didn't necessarily belong to a particular profession and not considered an expert in any particular field.

I don't know about you but I come from a long line of laymen....who've worked in weary environments, perhaps under the extreme haze of heat and frigid cold.... and worked lands that they did not own day in and day out.

I wonder where you might be feeling the impact of *your* environment" today? Where are you weary and tired?...Where are you feeling the impact of your constant toiling today? Where are you aching? Where are the physical symptoms of your daily toil manifesting?

*"Just begin to write them into the chat..."*

*"Depleted, unsure, fear, physical symptoms of your daily toil."*

Take a moment to feel your weariness and aches your \_\_\_\_\_.

Leave them on the surface and allow them to be exposed.

Take a moment to feel your physical symptoms. Your \_\_\_\_\_.

*Feel the aches in your back, your hands, allow the worries of your mind to bubble up.*

**Let them bubble up and leave them on the surface. Allow them to be exposed.**

Now stop and close your eyes, Look up in your minds eye (look up without opening your eyes). And with all that is exposed and raw on the surface began

to allow and feel the small cleansing showers of warmth and light.....feel it fall on your face and let it wash over you like a warm shower. Release all that is on the surface, just let it wash away.

Now Receive...receive the affirmation, glory and joy of God where you are, right now. Let it trickle down into your hair follicles, eye sockets, let it flow deep into all the exposed places all the way down, even more...

Now slowly open your eyes.... Lean in and taste what is good. You are his beloved. You are the head and not the tail. You are blessed and highly favored.

*Turning over to you Steve.*

-----

*Thanks Steve. I now invite you into a moment of visual reflection.*

Take a look at this image....(1-2 min)

These are the shepherds....I think of my grandfather Algie's life, Algie Crawford who grew up in rural Mississippi, just before the great migration, tealing lands in harsh, weary environments, driven out from bullets from those who did indeed steal and kill-- stealing our family generational lands his parents had worked all of their lives for and taking his father's life while my grandfather nearly escaped with his own...BUT his stories run rampant throughout our family about God's great favor over his life, his life of almost 100 years---endless stories of praise about the glory of God's faithfulness. An unpredictable history endured with God's continuous, gritty comfort.

What does this image stir in you? Who are you among the shepherds? What does God want you to know?

Let me pray this word over you whether something came up for you or not, fear not, your savior was born in David's city, and He is the Christ!, fear not, fear not.

*Now we'll be invited into a time of worship. (video will pop up)*