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## “BREATHING WITH GOD”

LUKE 9:28-36

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*Introduction:* Through the pitch-black night, the captain of a large naval vessel sees a light dead ahead on a collision course with his ship. He sends a signal to what is assumed to be another ship. “Change your course 10 degrees to the east.” The light signals back: “Change your course 10 degrees to the west.” Angered, the captain sends another message: “I’m a navy captain! Change your course, sir!” “I’m a seaman, second class” comes the reply. “Change your course, sir.” Now the captain is furious. “I’m a battleship! I’m not changing course!” There is one last reply: “I’m a lighthouse. It’s your call.”

**God shines light into our every day lives and we make the call as to what adjustments we are willing to make.**

The message from the experience of Jesus with Peter, James, and John, Moses and Elijah, is a lighthouse story. God seeks to break into the darkness and distress of their lives as in ours, to show an enlightened path for us all to follow. God brings light to **inspire** you as God seeks to **conspire** with you with divine insights. **Are you open to the conspiracy? Will you breathe with God?**

**RUAH** . . . I can still hear Dr. Bill Mallard, Emory Seminary Professor of Church History, loudly saying the word “**RUAH!**” in his booming voice. Dr. Mallard and Dr. Hoberta Bondi taught this class at eight o’clock in the morning, three days a week. Now church history can be rather boring, especially first thing in the morning, but not so with Mallard and Bondi – it was worship. The word “Ruah” means “breath of God – the breath of God’s Spirit”. Breathe it in . . . breathe it out. “Ah,” said Dr. Mallard, “just breathe.”

### **Breathing with God**

Breathing with God is more than just air . . . it’s Inspiration and Direction. Let me show you a little more of the power of this Ruah. Do this breathing exercise with me. Breathe in, real deep. Ok, now breathe out. Be very aware of breathing in and breathing out. Now, as you breathe in, say/think, “Jesus Christ, Son of God” and as you breathe out, say, “Have mercy on me.” Do that. Good, now do it three times.

Does that give you peace?

You can also do it this way: Breathe in with the words “Holy God” and out with the words “bring me peace.” Do that three times. These are breathe prayers in which we are actually breathing with God – receiving – **Conspiring** with God.

### **The Divine Conspiracy**

**Conspiring** you say. Yes, for that’s what the word conspiring literally means -

“breathing together.” I’m not speaking here about the conspiracy that’s long been a part of the assassination of JFK or plots like those uncovered last year in London when they revealed plans of terrorist planning to put bombs on planes bound for America, then blowing them up over American cities. Those are conspiracy theories of people who are breathing together some pretty bad air into our world.

I speak here from our text of the **Divine Conspiracy** by which God *shines the light of inspiration and direction*. Look at this conspiracy, this breathing with God, on the day of Christ’s transfiguration in preparation for the difficult work that reconnected us with God. Look here for the work God **conspires** to do in your life so that you live in and live out your inspiration – your purpose.

Ruah – breathe with God.

### **What Does It Mean To Breathe With God?**

To breathe with God means to conspire with God – to obtain divine insights into your life, your work, your vocation, your relationships. . . to live inspired in the way you use your energies, your time, talents. . . to live with the purpose God intends for you. Yes ... to live each day with intention, God’s intention for you. *This is cooperative living, living in cooperation with God.*

Yes, you say, this is what I want in life, but where do I begin? What does this way of living look like? How will it appear and how will I appear in it? What does such **conspiring** with God evolve? And, what does it create? Well, let’s ask our text to answer these questions. Where does inspiration and conspiracy living begin?

### **Breathing with God Begins with Prayer**

In our story, Jesus, Peter, James, and John go up on a mountain. There Jesus prays. We notice that such prayer time in Christ’s life is a regular practice, not an uncommon event. For Christ, prayer is *active breathing with God*. We need active prayer, thoughts turned and directed to God to enhance our breathing.

Prayer does two things for us: one is down and the other is up.

One’s a downer and the other’s an upper. Two opposite and very much needed directions in our lives. You ask, are you a drug dealer? My response, no, I’m a prayer dealer. Prayer settles us down. In this way, prayer grounds us. When our thoughts turn to prayer, we settle down from all that stuff stirring around us. This is so important.

Also, prayer opens us up. As our thoughts turn to prayer, we are opened upward to receive what the Divine Source has to offer, that breaks into our existence. Let’s face it, our brains are computers that are in need of input, of direction; without such direction, they sit in a down mode or else run helter-skelter. Prayer

settles us down, calms us into peace, and then opens us up to notice, look for, and find inspirational, intentional, Divine direction. Our hearts are changed and open when prayer brings us into God's presence, where we get just what we need.

If we are to breathe with God, we must be present with God. Prayer takes us there in a very special way.

During that time of prayer on that mountain that day, the disciples slept. But Jesus received the glowing light of God and the presence of Moses and Elijah as the final plan of action was discussed and laid out. Oh, I know you want this kind of communication. If Moses, Elijah, and Jesus Christ himself were to gather with you in your time of prayer, and they gave you the plan, the business plan, the next step by step plan for you that would just be great. You'd glow too. But for you and me it works more like this: As we settle down and open up, we experience the presence of God and that presence in our process is exactly what we need.

Our mindfulness that God is involved.

Our mindfulness that we are not alone.

Our mindfulness that the decisions we are making are being guided by the spiritual presence of God.

Our mindfulness that we have free will of choice and that by breathing with God, we can choose to follow the leadership of God as we understand it, and adjust and change direction when we have chosen wrongly.

Who needs Moses and Elijah when we have the Spirit of God to Inspire our directions. What a Relationship!

And what about that glowing appearance change?

### **Breathing with God Effects a Change In Our Appearance**

It becomes obvious to others when you and I breathe with God. As you and I consult and conspire with God – we glow with:

- A more positive approach and attitude in our daily life.
- We confront the same problems, difficulties, and conflicts, but we do so with an optimistic, can do attitude.
- We know we have resources to use to address these issues.
- We know that we are learning and growing through them.
- We know that we will not lose, despite the difficulties.
- We look, sound, and act differently – we glow.
- We greet our enemies, looking for the gifts they are bringing our way.
- We speak truth, we live, speak, and act in and out of love, the love we find in Christ.

**We're kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, and gracious, because the air we are breathing has the very particles of God's breath through which we are receiving Grace, Mercy, Truth, Love, and Peace. Ruah – Just Breathe!**

Breathe in the grace, out the grace --- in the mercy, out the mercy --- in the love, out the love --- in the peace, out the peace.

Breathe and **glow. . . glow. . . glow!**

With these particles we virtually begin to glow, reflecting the radiance of God.

But I want to be real clear:

### **Breathing with God Involves Discipline and Self Denial**

When Jesus was transfigured, he glowed alright, but it was the glow of one who had surrendered to a most difficult, yet glorious task - the task of bringing broken humanity back into relationship with God. This task would require great personal discipline and denial of self. And as you and I breathe with God, we discover for us as well that it means two things:

- 1) Death of our selfish desires  
and
- 2) Birth of Godly desires.

It is no longer just what I want, how I want to do it. My way, my will, at all costs. It becomes, what I need to do, how I need to use my resources, how I will now live to accomplish God's good purposes.

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**We can conspire with God to be Inspired to live into who we are Intended to be and do what we are Intended to do.**

Self's will finds rebirth into God's will and requires diligent discipline of ourselves if we are going to live in conspiracy with God.

### **Breathing with God Creates Fellowship**

Peter saw the transfiguration of Christ. He saw Moses and Elijah, and heard the communications about the journey to Jerusalem, and Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. Peter's responded: "Let's build three monuments. Let's stay right here on this holy ground, let's keep it for ourselves." God was so moved by Peter's inappropriate response, that he brought a cloud over the mountain and the voice of God was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son, The Chosen! Listen to him. He's the one with the plan. We've conspired together – listen to and follow his directions." From there, they followed Christ down the mountain to Jerusalem, as conspirators with the plan of God in Christ.

Breathing with God brought them into fellowship with God's intentions.

Church, as we breathe with God together, we have a mission to accomplish, individually and collectively. Together, we are to carry the message to others of how they too can breathe God into their lives. Individually, our task is to conspire, breathe with God into our own lives, finding our purpose, living our intended, inspired life.

And it is about your transfiguration, your transformation. Just as with the “trans” or changing plan for Christ’s life, so it is with yours, that there are three stages each time you gain new insights. These three stages are:

- 1) A time in which what has been ends
- 2) A time of fertile emptiness
- 3) A time of new things, new beginnings.

The most fertile ground is found in the in-between time of emptiness when it seems like all is lost and out of control. Here’s where your energies as well as your times of refreshment are key to the richness of the new coming your way. If you think of parachuting out of an airplane, something I used to want to try before age changed my desire, the most exciting time is when you are free-falling through the air. Not when you’re first jumping out of the plane – that’s the end of what has been (security inside the walls of the plane). The free fall is the fertile emptiness when you can find the best as you prepare for the landing. You have to trust the process and give yourself to this time when God’s work of preparation is great. And then, then comes the opening of the chute and the landing in a new place.

Breathe deeply with God in the fertile emptiness you find yourself in, as preparation for the new.

**RUAH!**

**Breathe With God.**