

**5<sup>th</sup> July 2020 6 pm Healing and Refreshing – *transcription of meditation***  
Meditation by Lynda Howells

***Meditation: Pearls from pain.***

God invites us to rest awhile.

Be still.

Come away to let Him carry our load.

So relax and be comfortable.

Breathe out your burdens.

And breathe in God's love for you and hope for the future.

My pain, Father, comes in so many forms.

I try to sleep, but I toss and turn.  
Thoughts, doubts, failures, worries, all mixed up, whirling around in my  
mind like a whirling dervish, tossed like a small boat, fighting against a  
wind and a rough sea, buffeted, out of control.

Still I toss and turn, wide awake, exhausted.  
Tired, defeated.  
And in my own eyes, a failure.

Pain, Father, pain.

I feel for those I love: those in my family, my church family,  
who hurt, who are suffering, grieving.  
sad, lost.

Pain.  
The pain I feel when I watch the TV, the news.  
The violence.  
Suffering because of man's inhumanity to man.  
Children left as orphans.  
War and terror tearing lives apart.  
And I watch.  
Helpless, sad.  
I watch.

Pain.  
I feel for those I care about who are so ill, with no hope.  
Pain as I watch their families suffer  
Helpless, sad.  
I stand by and watch.

Pain I feel when I try to understand our politics in government  
and the church.  
Where are you, Lord, in all the chaos?  
As we seem to lurch from crisis to crisis,  
and all with our own point of view.  
Helpless, lost.  
I stand by and watch.

What's the point, Lord?  
What do I do with my pain?  
Where does it hurt me?  
My confused mind, my tired body.

When does pain come?  
Niggling doubts, arrows like darts nipping at my heels, wearing me down,  
robbing me of my peace,  
or at tides with the force of rushing water, torrential rain,  
flooding my whole being.

How does the pain come?  
Whispering muttering in my inner soul:  
"Failed again. No good, give up. You're letting everyone down."

Why, why do I lay awake, tossing, turning, suffering?  
Why do I feel this emotional pain, physical pain?  
After all, I'm a Christian and shouldn't suffer these agonies.

Where are you, Father God, in my pain?  
Tell me. Show me. What do I do with my pain?  
My feelings of worry anger confusion, hopelessness?  
Help me Father, please. I can't help myself.

Jesus. Jesus.

We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who's suffered more than we can ever begin to know. We will never experience suffering as He did. And yet He never turned back.

John gives us a picture in Revelation 21 verse 22: 12 gates for 12 pearls. And each gate was made of a simple pearl.

So where do pearls come from?  
There is an oyster into whose shell one day comes a grain of sand.  
This tiny piece of quartz lies there imposing pain and stress.

So what does the oyster do?  
Lots of choices.

The oyster could do as so many men and women have done in times of adversity, and openly rebelled against God.

The oyster could, metaphorically speaking, shake a fist at God in His face, saying, "Why is this happening to me?"

"It's not fair."

"It's not true,"

or even, "There's no such thing as pain."

"It's in my mind playing tricks."

"I must think positive thoughts."

And yet the oyster does none of these.

The oyster slowly and patiently, and with infinite care, builds upon the grain of sand, layer upon layer of a milky substance, which covers every sharp corner and coats every cutting edge.

Gradually, slowly, a pearl is made.

The oyster has learned, by the will of God, to turn a grain of sand, which is a pain and an irritant, into a pearl.



As John has told us, the entrance into the New Jerusalem is through a gate made of pearl, pointing and reminding us that the way into the City of God is through a wound, which has been healed.

As I lay in my confused state, lost, searching, struggling,  
I stop.  
I look into the face of my Saviour:  
My Jesus, who gave up everything for me, for you.  
He is your Jesus too.

Our Father God, arms outstretched, to hold us, to comfort us,  
to take our pains and turn them into pearls.

Our Father who loves and cares for us more than we can ever believe or understand.

Our Father who understands us better than we understand ourselves.

Our Father who never gives up on us, even when we give up on ourselves.

Our Father who's always there to take our hand and walk with us,  
guide us through confusion and uncertainty.

He's always there to guide us in our prayers  
and through the fog of daily living.

Father God, we come to you in trust for healing and wholeness.  
Help us to turn every wound we bear in our lives into a pearly gate,  
something through which we can help others to pass through,  
to find faith, hope and love,  
and knowing the precious peace and love of Jesus.

May my pain, my confusion, anything which rubs me and separates me from  
the precious peace of God, be turned into pearls through the love and the  
power of the Holy Spirit living in my life and in your life,

Amen.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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