

## MIDRASH

Midrash is the ancient practice of searching out and engaging the biblical text. It was a rabbinic tradition that still holds a great allure for me while admittedly only vaguely familiar with this ancient practice. In Midrash, I have gleaned yet another meaningful and vital way to be positioned before Scripture. In Lectio Divina we are listening intently for a “shimmering word”. In Imaginative Meditation we are placing ourselves in the scene. We are a third party in the realm of the account being read. In generalized hermeneutical studies of Scripture we are the student – with a set of guidelines, skill sets, and interdisciplinary knowledge to provide the best possible interpretation and context of the passage. Midrash challenges us from seeing the text as a distant account of God’s biography and story, to immersing us into the story believing God is currently working, currently available, and currently present to reveal Himself anew.

Midrash minimizes the authority of the wording of the text as communication, normal language. It places the focus on the reader and the personal struggle of the reader to reach an acceptable moral application of the text. While it is always governed by the wording of the text, it allows for the reader to project his or her inner struggle into the text. This allows for some very powerful and moving interpretations which, to the ordinary user of language, seem to have very little connection with the text. The great weakness of this method is that it always threatens to replace the text with an outpouring of personal reflection. At its best it requires the presence of mystical insight not given to all readers.

As we borrow from the historic idea of midrash, for our community, we see Midrash being the collaborative process of searching out and engaging the Story of God (Scripture); that we might be shaped by the Spirit of God in this process.

### SCRIPTURE IS MORE THAN WE MAKE IT TO BE

Debbie Blue, author of *Living Stones*, purges her own understanding of Scripture and finds God more real, near, and present, in the process.

*"Christians have viewed the Bible in various ways: as a map to follow, an instruction manual for life, a moral code to live by. It's been called a firm foundation, a sword, a rock. But what if the Bible is more like an octopus than a rock? What if it's wild, unpredictable, and unmanageable?"*

### COMMUNITY MIDRASH

We’ll introduce the idea more fully in the coming days. But, one way we will grow in the collaborative effort to engage scripture communally is to offer the specific passage of Scripture to be prayed through, written about, researched, and ‘chewed on’ a week prior to our dialogue of the passage. We will post the passage on the fusion blog – with a midrash symbol – signaling you to begin engaging and writing all the thoughts that come to mind.