



## An Order of Worship for the Home

January 10, 2021

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*This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.*

*There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org) to give online.*

### Invocation

Reader 1: We gather to worship. We gather to pray.

Reader 2: We gather to our God and to his word.

Reader 1: We gather in the name of our God who is...

Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

Together: Amen.

### Psalm 119:9-16

<sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

<sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not wander from your commandments!

<sup>11</sup> I have stored up your word in my heart,  
that I might not sin against you.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed are you, O Lord;  
teach me your statutes!

<sup>13</sup> With my lips I declare  
all the rules of your mouth.

<sup>14</sup> In the way of your testimonies I delight  
as much as in all riches.

<sup>15</sup> I will meditate on your precepts  
and fix my eyes on your ways.

<sup>16</sup> I will delight in your statutes;  
I will not forget your word.

### Confession & Absolution

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith.  
Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.*

Christian Confessing: Jesus, you alone are my guide. Yet, I have often followed the guidance of this world or presumed to guide myself. You alone are the goal of my life. Here too, I have made substitutions, and I've allowed lesser goals to capture my heart. Forgive me and change me. Discipline my heart to love you, my will to follow you, and my hands to serve you. Grant this, Lord, by your grace.

Christian Responding: Your Lord always hears your confession, and he faithfully answers with grace, mercy, and pardon. When his children ask, he forgives. This promise is for you, and his forgiveness yours! Further, in Baptism he's given you his Holy Spirit. God's Spirit will guide your heart, your will, and your hands in every calling he's placed on your life.

Together: Amen.

### Deuteronomy 11:18-25

<sup>1</sup>“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>19</sup>You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>20</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, <sup>21</sup>that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. <sup>22</sup>For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, <sup>23</sup>then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. <sup>24</sup>Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. <sup>25</sup>No one shall be able to stand against you. The Lord your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.

### Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Message** (includes today's gospel from John 10:1-10)

## Guide and Goal

Over the next six weeks, I'd like us to explore spiritual disciplines. These are practices of faith intended to shape us as God's people. We'll touch on specifics as we go, but in this introduction Jesus' teaching from John 10 will help frame our thoughts.

*<sup>1</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. (John 10:1-6)*

The people listening didn't understand, but I think you do. You have the advantage of knowing the rest of the story. You know Jesus is the Son of God who rose from the dead. That helps put things into perspective. God is the shepherd. He was the Shepherd of Israel from the start. Once we know Jesus is God, the pieces fall into place. The Shepherd hasn't changed, but now we've met him face-to-face.

So, what is the picture in these verses? Jesus leads his sheep. He shows the way. Jesus is *the guide*.

As Jesus continues teaching, he changes the metaphor. Listen carefully as the images shift.

*<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the*

*door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. (John 10:7-9)*

How does Jesus present himself now? He's not the guide in this image; he's *the goal*. He is the door. Later in John's gospel, he will call himself the Way. The statement here is a precursor, revealing the same truth. Jesus is the goal. What will we see when reaching that goal? Jesus tells us.

*<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)*

Abundant life is life in Christ. However, this is not simply more of the life you already know. The life you know is tainted by sin, death, and decay. Abundant life is a fuller life. This is a life with more life in it. It's not more of what you've known. This is life better than you've ever known.

Let's slow down here. Take a moment to better understand this abundant life. I think we can define abundant life in this way: The abundant life we have in Christ is a life of provision, belonging, and character.

Our God is the provider of all good things. He supplies sunlight, food, and shelter. In the words of Luther's Small Catechism, "He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life."

Along with this provision, our God gives us places where we experience belonging. He gives us relationships and roles. You are part of a family; a parent, a child, brother, sister, wife, husband. You have friendships where you are understood and accepted. You belong.

Abundant life is also a life of character. This has to do with the inward person. The life God provides for you and I will change us to our core. We see this in our habits. Living in the abundance of Christ means we instinctively look to him as *guide* and *goal*.

Now that we have a basic understanding – provision, belonging, and character – you should realize that as a believer in Jesus you have this abundant life already. You have this life because the Spirit of God lives in you. You were given that your baptism. You received that Spirit when faith was awakened in your heart. You have this abundant life, like music your God plays over you.

Unfortunately, you also miss out on abundant life. You are broken, stained, and scarred by sin. If the life of Christ is music in you, it is muted and muffled. You can see this as you consider provision, belonging, and character. Your God provides all you need, yet you constantly desire what you do not need. As a child of God you have a place where you truly belong, yet you regularly wonder whether or not you “fit in.” Christ lives in you, shaping your character, yet so many of your habits and instincts look otherwise.

Let’s be clear about all of this. It’s not that you lack the abundant life of Christ. Rather, you and I struggle to separate ourselves from this world’s expectations of abundance. As we’re influenced by the world around us we substitute a new guide, or goal, or both. We lose sight of Jesus as our guide and goal, and we experience a very different life from the one he’s given us.

The struggle we’ve identified is one we cannot hope to escape, short of the final transformation of our sinful flesh. This side of eternity, you and I will always experience the abundant life of Christ in an incomplete way. When we are with him in the new Jerusalem we will fully know the abundant provision, belonging and character he intends for us. Until then, our experience will fall short.

However, let’s not throw up our hands in resignation. We still have a calling to follow Jesus. He remains our guide and our goal. While we follow him as guide, and we receive him as the goal of our faith, we grow in the abundant life he brings.

This is the place of spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are simply those practices and postures which have helped God’s people through the centuries to recognize Jesus as both guide and goal of faith. My guess is that some disciplines you know fairly well – prayer, worship, or service. Other disciplines may be new to

you, or long-forgotten – fasting, solitude, or guidance, for example. Over the coming weeks, we'll explore these and more.

I've titled this series "Rhythm & Melody" to remind us there is both structure and freedom in our practice of spiritual disciplines. They can provide helpful frameworks – and sometimes boundaries – for our lives, yet we also have freedom in how we make use of these time-honored tools. The disciplines do not rule our lives; Christ rules our lives. There is indeed a rhythm and melody we find in following Jesus together.

Before we go on, let me highlight one mistake which is all too easy to commit. If we're not careful, we can make abundant life the goal, and spiritual disciplines our guide. Let's avoid that at all cost! Jesus is our goal, and he alone is our guide. If spiritual disciplines are a benefit, they will help us see Jesus more clearly. If they seem at odds with personal desires or the world around us, they are helping us recognize the contrast between following this world and following Jesus.

Together we'll look at spiritual disciplines in three categories: inward, outward and corporate. The inward disciplines are those practices which you might call the most personal. You might be the only one aware of your activity in these areas (you and your Savior, of course). These include meditation, prayer, fasting, and study. You may have noticed the headphones in the "Rhythm & Melody" artwork. If the music of our lives is the abundance of our Savior, the inward disciplines are like headphones used in private listening.

The outward disciplines are more readily seen by the people around you, even though they are not done for that purpose. These activities require outward expression in their practice. Outward disciplines include simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. For the outward disciplines, we have the picture of household speakers. When we practice the outward disciplines the music will be overheard by others.

The corporate disciplines are practiced in community, and they actually require relationships in the body of Christ. When we talk about corporate disciplines we will look at confession, worship, guidance, and celebration. Following our music

analogy, these disciplines match best with the experience of a concert where we respond to God's music with others.

(The set of disciplines above is not exhaustive, nor are the categories fixed or rigid. I've adopted this structure from Richard Foster's book, *Celebration of Discipline*, which has been a helpful resource for my own understanding.)

Notice that in our music metaphor we can listen through headphones, speakers, or at a concert. Jesus is always the source of the music, but there is more than one way to listen. Without pressing the metaphor too far, this is a helpful way to understand spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are different ways to listen to Jesus. Jesus, as our guide and goal, always brings the music of his abundant life.

As we conclude this introduction to spiritual disciplines, let me take a minute to look at one more section of Scripture. The words Jesus shares with the church in Laodicea in the book of Revelation can help us appreciate why we pursue spiritual disciplines. After all, why put in the effort? Why do things that are difficult, when we know Jesus has done all that really matters? Why work to live different from the world around us? This is what Jesus says:

<sup>15</sup> I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3:15-19)

We do not pursue spiritual disciplines as an end to themselves. We pursue Jesus, and that requires discipline. We desire what Jesus offers. We want to buy the "gold



refined by fire,” and the “white garments,” and salve for our eyes so that we might see.

Too often we’re tempted to coast, like the church in Laodicea. Too often, we can live in the richness of the gospel and forget the source of those riches. We become our own guides, or we allow this world to guide us. We also lose sight of the goal. Our goal becomes comfort. Our goal becomes abundance, as we would define it.

As we see this in ourselves, we heed the words in verse 19. We repent. We ask our God to forgive. We ask Jesus to forgive us for the sake of his cross. We look to his death and resurrection as our only hope for true life... rich life... abundant life.

His abundant life is one of provision. He provides for all of our needs, not all of our wants. He teaches us to adjust our wants as we pray simply for “daily bread.” He provides the greater bread of his body along with the wine of his blood in communion. By these gifts and so many others he gives us a place in his family. You belong as a child of God. You belong in his family. You belong to one another in this family. You learn to care for one another in family as your character is shaped by the presence of Christ in you. He’s given his Holy Spirit to dwell in you and change you from the inside out.

These gifts come to you with the new life which is yours in Jesus. Guess what? This new life was given to the church in Laodicea as well. That means the next verse is Jesus speaking to believers. We often think these words are for somebody else. Listen to what Jesus says.

*<sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)*

What place do the spiritual disciplines have for those who are saved by grace through faith? They help us see our guide more clearly. They help us maintain focus on the goal. They help us see Jesus and hear his voice. He wants to come eat with us. He wants to share his abundance.

If you are willing, take time this week to meditate on the words of Jesus from this message. We've heard from John 10 and Revelation 3. I invite you to meditate on these. We'll talk more about meditation and the other inward disciplines next week. Consider your meditation this week as preparation for that.

Jesus provides the music. We can learn to listen in new ways. If it's hard to do, maybe it will change us... but that's OK. After all, that's exactly what Jesus intends. Amen.

### Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

*Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Offering Prayer

*If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.*

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own.

## **Blessing** *(Numbers 6:24-26)*

Reader 1: The Lord bless you and keep you.

Reader 2: The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Reader 1: The Lord look upon you with favor...

Reader 2: And give you peace.

Together: Amen.

## **Notes on Meditation**

At the close of the message you were invited to meditate this week. Many forms of Eastern meditation focus on emptying the mind. This is not the goal of Christian meditation. We certainly desire to remove distractions, and this will require clearing our thoughts (and our schedules if we're honest). However, Christian meditation centers on scripture, an attribute of God, or a promise given by God. Our meditation seeks to bring Jesus into focus as the guide and goal of our faith.

There are many ways to approach Christian meditation. One well-attested form follows the pattern of Lectio Divina. If you took part in our 6x2x2 Prayer last fall you may recognize this form from that experience. Make use of Lectio Divina or another form of Christian meditation this week. In one sitting, center your thoughts on John 1:1-10. At another time, focus on Revelation 3:15-20. (Feel free to shorten either of these to a single verse or phrase. Sometimes this can help with focus.)

## **Lectio Divina**

Lectio Divina began in the 3rd Century, led by early church leader Origen. He believed that through a practice of reading the Bible thoughtfully and prayerfully you could discover what he called the "higher wisdom hidden in the Word of God."

Origen's idea was that Jesus himself was the way by which we can understand the meaning of the Bible and that, if we asked, Jesus would reveal its meaning to us.

The practice is about digesting the meaning of the word of God and taking time to think about it.

How To Practice Lectio Divina:

1. *READ*: Choose a passage of scripture (anything from one to 15 verses). Read it through slowly several times. If possible, read it out loud.

2. *MEDITATE*: Reflect upon the words being read. Listen carefully. Is there one word or phrase which stands out to you? Focus on the words. Repeat them. Allow God to speak to you.

3. *PRAY*: Respond to God. Tell Him what you think about what you've read. Tell Him how it makes you feel. Tell Him what comforts you and what challenges you. Ask for His help to live out the truths you've uncovered.

4. *CONTEMPLATE*: Stop. Be still. Stop talking, stop asking and rest. Spend some time in silence sitting with God. Invite the Holy Spirit and allow Him to transform you from within.

*As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org). We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.*

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Lectio Divina explanation is from [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com).