



An Order of Worship for the Home

January 17, 2021

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 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 1

¹ Blessed is the man

 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

² but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.

³ He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴ The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

⁶ for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

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.

Acts 13:1-3

¹ Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

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.

Proverbs 1:1-9

¹ The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:
² To know wisdom and instruction,
to understand words of insight,
³ to receive instruction in wise dealing,
in righteousness, justice, and equity;
⁴ to give prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the youth—
⁵ Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain guidance,
⁶ to understand a proverb and a saying,
the words of the wise and their riddles.
⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

⁸ Hear, my son, your father's instruction,
and forsake not your mother's teaching,
⁹ for they are a graceful garland for your head
and pendants for your neck.

Message (includes today's gospel from Matthew 6:1-8, 16-21)

Inward Disciplines

Last week we began a series about spiritual disciplines, Rhythm and Melody. If you missed last week, you can find the full message at www.calvaryslz.org. As we get started today, let me give you a quick recap.

First, Jesus is both our guide and our goal. Spiritual disciplines are neither. If these practices of faith which we call spiritual disciplines do any good, they will help us follow Jesus as our guide and focus on him as our goal.

Our graphic for the series draws on a music analogy. If the abundant life we have in Christ is like music, spiritual disciplines are different ways to listen. Some spiritual disciplines are like headphones used for personal listening. Some spiritual disciplines are more like speakers which fill your home with sound. Finally, there are spiritual disciplines which relate best to a concert; we receive the music from Jesus and respond along with others.

This week we'll spend time looking more closely at the inward disciplines. These are the practices which are like listening with headphones.

Meditation is one of the inward disciplines, along with prayer, fasting, and study. At the close of last week's message you were invited to practice meditation. I hope you took the time to do that. What was it like for you? How much time did you spend? Was it enjoyable? If so, my encouragement is that you do it again. Was it awkward? If so, would you expect to be good at something new the first time you try it? My encouragement is that you do it again. Most of us need to practice new things before we're able to see benefits.

Today, I'd like us to define the inward disciplines, then we'll look at part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount which gives guidance concerning these practices. First, let's briefly define the inward disciplines; meditation, prayer, fasting, and study.

One way to think about meditation is soaking. Glancing at a Bible verse is not meditation. Christian meditation involves taking time, and allowing that Word of God to soak into our lives.

Prayer is conversation with God. This involves both talking and listening. There are a variety of ways to pray, but all prayer involves speaking to God and hearing his voice.

Fasting is abstaining from food. This is done as an act of repentance and humility before God. Fasting helps us wrestle with needs and wants, habitual choices, and privileges. Fasting also helps us disconnect from a culture which pursues comfort and ease as its highest goals. (Comfort and ease are not bad experiences, but they are terrible goals. Our goal is Jesus.)

Study is the fourth of the inward disciplines. As a practice, study can be more confusing simply because of its use outside of the spiritual life. When is study a spiritual discipline? Without becoming legalistic, I believe the answer comes from the content and intention of our study. Remember, Jesus is our guide and goal. If our study helps us see, follow, and focus on Jesus, then that study fits our conversation about spiritual disciplines.

As we practice these disciplines, we find guidance from Jesus. He mentions two of these disciplines in the middle part of his Sermon on the Mount. As we listen for the common threads between his teaching about prayer and fasting, we can gain insights for engaging all of these inward disciplines.

Let me set this up. In Matthew 5, Jesus just taught through a series of topics about interactions between people. He's taught about how you deal with anger; controlling lust and desire; questions about divorce; making promises and being true to your word; how to react when someone takes advantage of you. He finishes that section with a call to love your enemies, and concludes with these words:

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

That statement, along with the next sentence will mark a transition from teaching about relationships to teaching about the inner life. Jesus calls his followers to be perfect, and then he says this:

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 6:1)

Be perfect in how you relate to others, but not for the sake of showing off. Be perfect in how you relate to others, and be perfect in your relationship with God too. In language we’ve been using, this is a reminder to keep Jesus as guide and goal.

Then, Jesus begins a new line of teaching. He starts with a practice which serves as a bridge between topics. Giving to the needy includes interaction with others. Yet, when giving is practiced in healthy ways, it is also part of the inner life of the believer. It’s a spiritual discipline, as much as any of the others we’re talking about.

² “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:2-4)

“Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” This refrain will appear three times in this part of Jesus’ teaching. Jesus is pointing us to inward disciplines and reminding us that they shape us from the inside out. We don’t practice these disciplines so others can know about them. Our Father will know.

And what about that reward? What's that pointing to? This is the abundant life we have in Christ. It's what we talked about last week. The life of Christ brings provision, belonging, and character. His life changes our measure of these things and prepares us to receive them in full. As Jesus is our guide and goal, he brings his gifts into our lives.

Jesus started with giving to the needy, which has a connection to other people. That flows from his previous set of teachings. Next, he will teach about prayer which is more readily recognized as an inward discipline.

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:5-6)

Don't do this to be seen by others. Again, if we put this in the language of our series, “Keep Jesus as your goal!” Recognition from others and acknowledgement of your piety is not the goal. Jesus is your goal in prayer.

If the previous verses on prayer help us focus on the goal, the next verses remind us to know our guide. Do not allow the world around you to be your guide. Jesus is your guide.

⁷ “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

It's interesting that Jesus first calls out hypocrites in the Jewish community and tells his followers to avoid their patterns. Then he tells them not to follow the lead of the Gentiles, whose prayers would have been offered to other gods. Maybe this is why Jesus takes time to give a positive example of prayer here. Jesus teaches the

Lord's Prayer in the next verses, but we're going to jump past that section. I want to do this for two reasons. First, during this coming Lent we will spend 6 weeks with the Lord's Prayer. Second, I want us to better see the continuity throughout Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6.

Jesus taught about giving, and then prayer. After this, he brings up the spiritual discipline of fasting.

*¹⁶ "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,
¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18)*

Again, Jesus calls attention to the mistakes we make. Our outward appearance becomes our guide. Impressing others becomes our goal. Remember, Jesus is our guide. Jesus is our goal. When fasting is done correctly, it is a tool which helps us see Jesus more clearly and focus on his presence more readily.

I believe Jesus could have gone on to teach about meditation, study, and other disciplines as well. Along with prayer and fasting, these are already attested in the Old Testament scriptures. He could have called out sinful tendencies which make these disciplines about other things, and called us back to our true guide and goal. He could have concluded each teaching with the refrain, "And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Instead, he allows these to serve as examples. He's not limiting our practices of faith, but he's using these examples to guide all our practices. In that context, listen to these words of Jesus which bring the section we've read to a close.

¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth

nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Jesus talks about spiritual disciplines and then closes with these words about treasure. He's introducing the next part of his teaching where he will deal with money and possessions, but he's also concluding the section we've just read.

What you treasure will reveal your guide and your goal. What you treasure will shape what you chase, and how you chase it. Your treasure will define your end, and it will define the means you use to reach that end.

This is where we fall short. Remember the call which Jesus used to move into this section of teaching? "You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) You and I chase after many treasures, and most often we chase after things we consider good. We treasure health and safety. We treasure financial stability. We treasure personal freedoms and democracy. These can be good, but not when they become our guide or our goal.

As a church we do this too. We treasure our buildings. We treasure our history. We treasure routines and comfortable patterns. These are not our treasure. These are not our guide. These are not our goal. Yet, we allow lesser treasures to become both guide and goal. We don't realize our mistake until it's called out clearly.

We constantly need correction. We regularly need forgiveness. We need the abundant life of Christ.

Thankfully, where we fall short, Jesus did not. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Jesus showed us where his treasure was. He gave his life for his treasure. You and I were dead in our trespasses and sins. (Ephesians 2:1) Our rightful place was that tomb. Yet, Jesus' heart chased his treasure to that place of death. His treasure died, so his heart went to that treasure. Jesus died for you. On Easter morning, his heart began to beat again. It's the same heart, and it beats for the same treasure. The new life in Jesus' heart is the new life he gives to you!

This gift is his abundant life! It's the reward from your heavenly Father who sees in secret.

Allow your heart to desire that treasure. Make use of the spiritual disciplines which help you keep Jesus as guide and goal of faith.

This week I invite you to engage with one of the outward disciplines. Pray a simple prayer each morning. "Lord Jesus, as it would please you bring me someone today whom I can serve." Each evening, record any answers to prayer you experience throughout your day. In a journal answer these three questions: Who did I serve today? Who served me today? Who might I serve tomorrow? Then, read Philippians 2:1-11 as a final word for your day.

You can find instructions for this exercise at www.calvaryslz.org. Go to the worship section and look for the printed worship for today. At the end of that document, you'll find this exercise written out in full. This is a chance to practice service, one of the outward disciplines. We'll learn about those next week.

This exercise is not *the* way to practice service. It's simply a way to attune ourselves to the place of service in our lives. It is neither guide nor goal of our lives, but I believe it can help us better recognize Jesus as our guide and focus on him as our goal.

If you choose to pray, journal, and serve in the coming week it will be another opportunity to hear the music of Jesus' abundant life. He provides music for your soul. 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.

Focus on Service

You are invited to focus on service this week. Service is one of the outward disciplines. We'll talk about those in next week's message. In preparation, take time to do this over the coming week.

Each Morning

Pray this prayer as you start your day: "Lord Jesus, as it would please you bring me someone today whom I can serve."*

Each Evening

Use a journal to record your answers to each of these questions. (If you do not have a journal, staple sheets of paper together and make your own journal for the week.)

- 1) Who did I serve today?
- 2) Who served me today?
- 3) Who might I serve tomorrow?

After journaling, close your day by reading Philippians 2:1-11.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1-11)

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

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* Prayer for someone to serve is from *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster.