

Sermon on the Mount Daily Office
Week of November 8

Morning

Intro

Welcome to the practice of the Daily Office. In this practice we are seeking to ground our lives more deeply in God's presence as we pause each morning, mid-day, and evening for silence, scripture, and prayer. In this season, we are going to ground ourselves in Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. How might our lives be formed if we soak in this important teaching for three months? How might our relationships reflect Jesus' words? How will our work deepen? How might we be equipped to live in the Kingdom and cultivate pockets of the Kingdom in the world?

Will you join us in this journey?

Silence

Let's begin in silence. Silence helps us to settle the internal and external noise and distractions that so often stand in the way of our ability to hear the Lord.

Take a deep breath.

Remember, right now, that God is personally present with you. Psalm 139 says there is no where we can go to escape God's loving presence, and it says that you are so precious to God, that the Lord's thoughts about you outnumber the grains of sand.

Take another deep breath. God is closer than the air we breathe.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Scripture

This morning, let's sit in Jesus's teaching from Matthew 7:7-12

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Notice this passage is an invitation to ask for what is on our hearts. Have you ever considered how incredible it is that the Creator of the universe wants you to ask for whatever is on your mind? Perhaps even more incredible is the teaching in this passage that God *wants* to bless you. While it is important that we understand God's blessing does not guarantee good health, financial security, or the lack of pain. God is neither not holding back on us, nor does God expect us to jump through hoops or meet certain qualifications for blessing.

Consider this truth for a moment, God's desire for you is the greatest good in your life.

What does this truth prompt in you? Do you wonder what is the greatest good in your life? Does your mind go to times of struggle or pain, or are you considering the great joys of your life?

Take a moment now and consider, what is easy for you to believe in the idea that God *wants* to bless you? Keep in mind, Dallas Willard says we believe something when we live as if it is true? Where in your life do you find it easy to believe this truth? How do you find yourself living in this reality? Take a moment and listen. What is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind?

Now consider how God's wants to bless you is hard to believe. Where in your life do you struggle to live as if it is true that God desires your greatest good? Do you find yourself working to earn God's blessing or believing pain is because you didn't do something right? Take a moment and listen. What is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind?

Mid-day

We pause now in mid-day. How have you lived in the teaching of Jesus today? How is it echoing through your day?

Silence

Let's allow the hurry, anxiety, and distractions of the day to settle now as we let go and entrust it all to the one who is with us and loves us more than we can possibly understand.

Take a deep breath. Remember what Paul says, "In God we live and move and have our being."

Take another deep breath.

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer

Will you join me now in this prayer written by Fran Pratt?

God of heaven and earth,
We exalt you.

Some of us have grown tired of asking
for peace, for reconciliation.
Some of us have grown tired of hearing bad news
of evil and pain.

Yet you encourage us
to keep asking,
keep seeking,
keep knocking.

In a long, dark night, full of evil,
we are knocking on your door,
we ask again for your kingdom to come;
we ask again for peace.

Hear the prayers of your people,
Give bread to all,
comfort those who mourn,
allow the weary to rest,
encourage the disheartened,
show us the path to peace.

May we not grow weary of doing good,
and keep on praying shamelessly and boldly.
May our faith grow, and peace reign in our hearts,
even in darkest night.

Amen

Evening

Silence

Tonight, we pause to rest in the peace and strength of Christ as we continue living in the Sermon on the Mount.

Let us first pause in silence, so we might be grounded in the loving presence of God.

Take a deep breath.

Remember Jesus promised to be with us always.

Take another deep breath.

Paul writes, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Take two minutes of silence to rest in the presence of the Lord. In this space, rest in this truth. Jesus did not die to *make* you loveable. He died *because* he loves you.

Prayer

This morning, we wrestled with Jesus's invitation to ask, seek, and knock, and to seek first God's Kingdom. Tonight, let's examine our day. When did we find ourselves seeking God's Kingdom first, and when did we find ourselves seeking another kingdom before God's.

As you look back on your day, when did you find yourself seeking God's Kingdom?

When were you seeking God's glory above your own?

When did you elevate the concerns of the people Jesus called "the least of these," the poor, the oppressed, the wounded and marginalized?

When did you set your desires aside to serve another in love?

As you continue reviewing the day, when were you putting another kingdom first?

How did you seek to your personal glory?

When did you elevate your needs over "the least of these?"

When did you seek the service of others or pass up an opportunity to serve someone?

Now let's choose one moment from today and have a conversation with God. You may choose a moment when you sought God's Kingdom or another kingdom. Speak to the Lord and listen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.