

**Sermon on the Mount Daily Office**  
**Week of November 15**

**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 7:13-23

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The central part of this passage is Jesus teaching that a good tree will bear good fruit, and bad tree bad fruit. It is hard to hear this teaching in the context without asking, "Am I a good tree or a bad tree?" That is a question worthy of reflection, and you may choose to spend time with it today. But we should be careful that our reflection does not lead us to a renewed effort to produce fruit with our effort and strength.

When a tree goes bad, it usually goes bad on the inside well before the effects of its illness show externally. If we explore the whole of Jesus's teaching, we will notice he routinely returns to the importance of internal character. It is what is inside that flows out. Good character produces good fruit, and Jesus-like character is not something we can develop on our own.

Notice the final part of this passage. There are some who will do amazing things for God who Jesus will send away in the end. And why does he send them away? Because he never knew them. Jesus-like character is not developed through effort alone, but through knowing Jesus, living as his apprentice, cultivating a life lived fully in his presence.

This morning, I invite you to offer your day to the Lord's presence. If you use a calendar or some form of schedule, would you take it out and prayerfully examine it now. In this space, will you look at all that is on your schedule and ask Jesus how you can be present with him in the midst of your day? Take two minutes to review your schedule and listen now.

Perhaps Jesus will suggest pausing at certain intervals for prayer. Maybe he'll invite you to pray a simple one sentence prayer throughout the day, or offer a simple prayer before each appointment. How is Jesus inviting you to be present throughout the day? Take two minutes to listen now.

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

### **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 Jan Richardson.

To all that is chaotic in you,  
let there come silence.

Let there be a calming of the clamoring,  
a stilling of the voices that have laid their claim to you,  
that you have made their home in you,

that go with you even to the holy places but will not let you rest,  
will not let you hear your life with wholeness  
or feeling the grace that fashioned you.

Let what distracts you cease.  
Let what divides you cease.  
Let there come an end to what diminishes and demands,  
and let depart all that keeps you in its cage

Let there be an opening into the quiet  
that lies beneath the chaos,  
where you find the peace  
you did not think possible  
and see what shimmers within the storm

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 explored Jesus's invitation to walk the narrow road of cultivating a life in his presence, so that we might bear good fruit. We looked at our day and asked how God was inviting us to live more fully in his presence. How did you do? Did you find yourself dwelling in the presence of Jesus, or did you struggle ahead on your own? Let's spend some time examining our day.

As you look back on your day, when did you find yourself aware of God's presence with you?

When did you know God's love and joy and peace?

How did others represent God's presence to you?

When did you hear the gentle voice of the Lord?

Take two minutes to reflect on these questions now.

As you continue reviewing the day, when did you struggle to live in the presence of Jesus?

When did you experience hurry and stress and anxiety?

When did it seem like you were working on your own.

How did you turn your attention away from Jesus today?

Take two minutes to reflect on these questions now.

Now let's choose one moment from today and have a conversation with God. You may choose a moment when you were aware of Christ's presence or one when you were not. Speak to the Lord and listen.

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