

Nurture 365

April

A Daily Devotional

By Robbie Pruitt



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A Prayer for Christ to Be Formed in Us:

“Lord Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth, on the Cross through wood and nails you wrought our full salvation: Wield well your tools in this, your workshop, that we who come to you rough-hewn may be fashioned into a truer beauty by your hand; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, world without end. Amen.”
(#71., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

About Nurture 365

Nurture 365 is a daily devotional compiled from devotional posts I have posted on Facebook and Instagram over the last few years. In 2021, I also started posting these in the Blog section of my website, www.robbypruitt.com.

My hope and prayer for these posts and this compilation of devotionals is that they help others to nurture their relationship with Jesus daily.

Each devotional has a title, questions to consider, an idea or two, a passage of scripture, an application of some kind, and a prayer from the 2019 Book of Common Prayer, published by The Anglican Church in North America, <https://bcp2019.anglican church.net>.

The basic flow for most of these devotionals is the acrostic S.O.A.P., scripture, observation, application, and prayer—an easy, consistent, simple, and predictable format.

These devotionals are designed to be basic and easy to read. They are not intended to be overly comprehensive or complete in the subjects they cover. Like salt, hopefully these brief offerings will enhance the flavor of your faith and make you thirst for more.

If you have questions, would like to talk, to know more about any of these devotional thoughts, if you would like to have a deeper conversation, or if you would like to pray, you can always reach out to me through text, my cell phone number is 571-346-9583.

In the end, the best devotional for you is the one you use. If this one does not work for you, please find one that does and use it daily. Reach out to me if you would like other suggestions.

As you begin your daily time with God, I suggest quieting yourself, and prayer—asking God to reveal himself to you, to help you see something you have not seen before, or to teach you something you did not know about him, his kingdom, yourself, or this world.

A great model for prayer is the acrostic A.C.T.S.: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Take time to express your love for God. Confess to God where you have fallen short of loving him and others the way you should. Spend time in thanksgiving, expressing your gratitude to God for who he is and all he has done. Finally, ask God to supply what you need. (For a short article on this method read: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/simple-acrostic-prayer>).

I am praying with you and for you as you use this resource to draw near to Jesus and to nurture your faith.

In Christ alone,

Robbie Pruitt

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Find more at www.robbypruitt.com.

Day 1

Loving Your Neighbor

When was the last time you spoke with your neighbor? Do you remember your neighbors names? How have you recently expressed your love for your neighbors through your words and your actions towards them?

Jesus summed up all the law and the prophets into two things: love God and love your neighbor.

In Mark's Gospel Jesus taught, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' and 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Jesus said, "There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31, ESV).

Jesus put loving our neighbor right beside loving God. Jesus expressed the essential importance of loving our neighbor in this way.

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Corinthian church with this same truth when he wrote, "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." (1 Corinthians 10:24, ESV).

We cannot truly love our neighbor while only seeking our own good. We must look outside of ourselves and our own concerns if we are going to love our neighbor well.

The Apostle Peter gave us some very practical insights into how we can love our neighbor. Peter writes, "All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind." (1 Peter 3:8, ESV).

Peter describes how we can love our neighbor well by doing the following:

If we are to love our neighbor well, we must:

1. See our human connection with our brothers and sisters and have unity with them.
2. Be sympathetic towards our neighbor, have empathy for them, and show compassion for them.
3. Have love for our neighbor and be loving towards our neighbor in what we say and in what we do.
4. Be soft hearted—tender hearted towards our neighbor.
5. Have humility towards our neighbor and consider our neighbor's needs as being as important, or even more important than our own needs.

We cannot love our neighbor well if we do not know our neighbor. We should reach out to our neighbor and get to know them in love, care, and concern. And as we come to know our neighbor, we can do as Jesus said and 'love our neighbor as ourselves.'

May we love our neighbor well, as we are called by God to love our neighbor. As Jesus' beloved disciple, John, exclaimed, "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." (1 John 3:11, ESV).

A Prayer in Times of Social Conflict or Unrest: "Increase, O God, the spirit of neighborliness among us, that in peril we may uphold one another, in suffering tend to one another, and in homelessness, loneliness, or exile befriend one another. Grant us brave and enduring hearts that we may strengthen one another, until the disciplines and testing of these days are ended, and you again give peace in our time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#44, Book Of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 2

Fatherly Compassion

How does God care for his people? To what extent does God show us his compassion?

God cares for his people as a loving father cares for his children. God shows compassion towards his children who revere him, as a father shows his loving compassion to his own beloved children.

The Psalmist writes, “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.” (Psalm 103:13, ESV).

God is our loving and compassionate father in whom we can fear, respect, and trust.

May we revere our compassionate Heavenly Father as we receive his love and compassionate care for us.

A Prayer for Christian Fathers: “Heavenly Father, you entrusted your Son Jesus, the child of Mary, to the care of Joseph, an earthly father. Bless all fathers as they care for their families. Give them strength and wisdom, tenderness and patience; support them in the work they have to do, protecting those who look to them, as we look to you for love and salvation, through Jesus Christ our rock and defender. Amen.” (Author Unknown).

Day 3

Worshipping All Day

How often do you take the time to worship God? How often do you give thanks to the LORD and give God praise?

There is never a bad time to give thanks and to worship God. We cannot give thanks to God too much. We cannot overdo praising God. There is never a bad time to give thanks to God and to praise his name.

Concerning when to give praise to God, the Psalmist writes, “From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!” (Psalm 113:3, ESV).

The Psalmist understands that God’s name is to be praised from the time the day begins until the time the day ends—from the rising of the sun to its setting.

May we worship God and give praise to his name all day long, because God is always worthy of our praise, thanksgiving, and worship.

A Collect the First Sunday after Trinity (Proper 7): “Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 4**Vigilance of Heart**

How vigilant are you over your life? How vigilant are you over your heart? Are you keeping watch over your heart with vigilance? Are you overflowing with life?

We must be watchful over our lives. We must be watchful over our heart. It is from our heart that our lives flow. To be vigilant of our heart is to have a wellspring of life.

The wisdom of the Proverbs tells us, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23, ESV).

May we have springs of life flowing from us as we keep our heart with vigilance.

A Collect for Aid Against Perils: “Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 5

Fearing God

Who do you respect the most? What is your level of fear, or reverence, for those you respect the most? Does your fear of God exceed the reverence you have for everyone else in your life?

Revering God is the beginning of insight, knowledge, and wisdom. To fear God is to respect God for who he is.

The wisdom of the Proverbs tells us, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” (Proverbs 9:10, ESV).

Fearing God above everyone else is a good thing. To fear God is to show God deep respect and admiration.

Fearing God has benefits beyond our imagining. To fear God is to have the wisdom of God and insight as we grow in the knowledge of the Holy One.

May we experience the wisdom of God and insight as we fear God and grow in the knowledge of him.

A Collect for the Third Sunday after Pentecost, (Proper 8): “O God, your never-failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and on earth: Put away from us all hurtful things, and give us those things that are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 6

Asking and Receiving

What do you receive from God? What are you asking from God?

Prayer is asking God for what we need and hope to receive. Prayer is seeking God and finding him. Prayer is knocking on doors that we hope will be opened to us.

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus said this about prayer, “For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” (Matthew 7:8, ESV).

Prayer is about asking and receiving. Prayer is about asking, seeking, and knocking so that God will respond, and we can experience intimate relationship and provision in our lives.

May we be people of prayer as we ask, seek, and knock and experience intimate relationship with God as he provides for us.

A Prayer of St. John Chrysostom: “Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplications to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will grant their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 7**God's Goodness, Love, and Faithfulness**

How good is God? What is the extent of God's love for us? Is there a limit to God's faithfulness?

The very nature of God is goodness. God is good. God's love for us is steady and firm. God's love for us has no end. God's love endures. God is faithful. God's faithfulness continues from generation to generation.

The Psalmist writes of God's goodness, love, and faithfulness, saying, "For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 100:5, ESV).

May we experience the goodness of God, the love of God, and the faithfulness of God as we trust in him and follow him with our lives.

A Collect for the Eve of Worship: "O God, the source of eternal light: Shed forth your unending day upon us who watch for you, that our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our worship give you glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 8

Care for Anxieties

How do you find the care you need in the face of all your anxieties?

We live in anxious times. At baseline, life is filled with anxieties that can cause us deep distress and can bring out the worst in us.

When we are crippled by anxieties, we need a place to offload our troubles. We need to be able to place our anxieties at the feet of the one who cares deeply for us.

In his first letter, the Apostle Peter encouraged suffering believers, saying, “casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7, ESV).

Jesus cares for us and is strong enough to shoulder our anxieties. We can cast our anxieties onto him because he cares for us.

May we find the care we need in the face of our anxieties as we cast our cares onto Jesus, because he cares for us.

A Collect for Sabbath Rest: “Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures: Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary, and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 9

Whose Life

Whose life are you living? Are you living your life, are you living someone else's life, or are you living Jesus' life for you?

We can live life according to our own standard and design. We can live life according to other people's standards and design. Or we can live life according to God's standard and design.

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Galatia, saying, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20, ESV).

When we die to our own selves and live to Jesus, we receive his life for us. Jesus lives in us and through us when we sacrifice our lives for the life God has for us.

When we die to self and live for God, "the life we now live in the flesh we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us."

May we live the life of Jesus as we die to ourselves and live to Christ who lives in us.

A Collect for Resurrection Hope: "Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise you in that City of which he is the light, and where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 10**Help in the Face of Fear**

When you are afraid, where do you find the help that you need to have the courage to continue?

We all need help and courage in the face of our fear.

God spoke through the Prophet Isaiah, encouraging people in the face of fear, saying, “For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I am the one who helps you.’” (Isaiah 41:13, ESV).

God is the one who helps us in the face of our fear. God is with us, holding our hand through fearful times.

May we trust in God to help us in times of fear, to hold our hand, and to walk us through.

A Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity (Proper 8): “O God, your never-failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and on earth: Put away from us all hurtful things, and give us those things that are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 11

God's Children

How is it that we are children of God? What is the process of God making us his children? What are the benefits of being God's children?

As followers of Jesus who have received Jesus and believe in his name, we are children of God, with all the rights and privileges.

The Apostle John wrote this about becoming children of God through Jesus, saying, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12, ESV).

We are God's children through his son Jesus. When we receive Jesus and believe in his name, we are children of God. We have the right to be God's children because of Jesus.

May we be secure in our belonging as children of God through receiving Jesus and believing in his name, and may we experience our identity and inheritance in the family of God.

A Collect for Mission III: "O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 12

Missional Prayer

Is your life filled with God's mission? Are you seeing the work that needs to be done? Are you actively praying for the work that needs to be done and for workers to do the work?

The gospel of Luke tells us the Lord Jesus appointed seventy-two and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he was about to go. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:1-3, ESV).

God's work is plentiful. We are called into the mission of God, to prepare his way, and to make him known. We are called to pray into the mission of God. We are called to pray for laborers to do the work of God—to reap a harvest of fruitful kingdom growth.

Jesus went out to every town and village to share the good news of God's love and redemption. Jesus prepared the way for this good news, and for his coming presence, by sending his followers ahead of him as faithful workers to prepare the people to receive him and his message.

May we bring the good news everywhere we go and prepare all the people around us to receive the good news of Jesus, and to receive his presence. May we pray for many laborers for the harvest field, because "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

A Collect for Mission III: "O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 13

God's Strength

Are you more reliant on your own strength or are you most reliant on God's strength?

Our strength and ability are limited, but God's strength knows no limits. Our strength is finite, but God's strength is infinite.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress." (Psalm 59:16, ESV).

We can count on God's strength and give thanks to God for his strength in our lives. God is strong when we are weak. And in his strength, God shows us his faithful love and provides security and shelter for us in our times of trouble.

May we rest secure in the strength of God and his love and trust in God's security and shelter in our times of weakness and distress.

A Collect for Sabbath Rest: "Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures: Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary, and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 14

Responsibility of Freedom

What are the responsibilities that we have because of our freedoms? How should we use our privileges, freedoms, and independence?

With great gifts comes great responsibility. We should never take our privileges, freedoms, and independence for granted. Freedom is never free; it was bought with a price. The liberties we have were fought for and hard-won. Therefore, we should never use our privileges, freedoms, and independence for our own selfish gain, or keep the benefits of these blessings to ourselves.

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Galatia and instructed them concerning their gospel freedom, saying, “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13, ESV).

We have been given so much. We are blessed, privileged, and free. However, we should never keep these blessings to ourselves without concern for passing them on to our neighbor. We should never use our privileges, freedoms, and independence to indulge our sinful nature.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the church not to use its freedoms as an opportunity for sinful indulgence. On the contrary, our freedoms are to be exercised in love and in loving selfless service to others.

May we never take our privileges, freedoms, and independence for granted, but outdo one another in expressing love and in lovingly serving one another as God’s free people.

A Collect for Independence Day (United States): “Lord God, by your providence our founders won their liberties of old: Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to exercise these liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 15

Untouchable?

What makes someone untouchable?

Is it their personal hygiene that makes them untouchable? Is it their social status? Is it their religious observation or lack thereof?

When we think of the untouchable, we may think of someone with a communicable disease. We may think of how we just spent years trying not to touch one another due to a global pandemic. We may even consider someone untouchable because of something they did.

In the first century, leprosy was the number one condition that made someone untouchable. There were other issues that rendered someone ritually impure, but leprosy was one of the worst, because the diagnosis would often be a death sentence. This is why when Jesus reached out his hand and touched a man with leprosy, it shocked those who witnessed it.

The gospel of Luke tells us, "While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.' And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately the leprosy left him." (Luke 5:12-13, ESV)

In his book "Making Disciples Jesus Way," Doug Greenwold wrote, "In seemingly always being 'unclean' by those He either associated with or touched, Jesus was also pointing forward toward the Cross. As He repeatedly became unclean by interacting with and touching these outcasts, He left them healed, clean, and restored. In doing so, the purpose of the Cross is foreshadowed as Jesus became 'impure' on our behalf so that we might be presented 'clean' to His Father. What a remarkable rabbi! So different from all the others. No wonder the crowds began to seek Him out." (Making Disciples Jesus Way. P. 28 and 29., © Douglas J. Greenwold 2005, 2007, 2012)

May we receive God's loving touch through his Son Jesus Christ.

A Prayer in Time of Great Sickness and Mortality: "O Most mighty and merciful God, in this time of grievous sickness, we flee to you for comfort. Deliver us, we beseech you, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; prosper the means made use of for their cure; and grant that, perceiving how frail and uncertain our life is, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 1928, U.S.)

Day 16**Children of Peace—Children of God**

How can we be people of peace? What does being a peacemaker bring about in our lives?

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be people of peace. We are to be peacemakers.

When we are people of peace we are blessed and the people around us are blessed, and God considers us his children.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus proclaimed, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9, ESV).

May we be blessed children of God as we live out the peace of God as his peacemakers in this turbulent world.

A Collect for Peace: "O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 17**Scarcity or Abundance**

Do you think there is enough and there will be more, or do you believe that there is little, and even what you have will be taken away or will run out? Do you have a scarcity mindset or an abundance mindset?

When we see that we have been given plenty and have plenty to give and to share, we will find that there is always more to give and to share. When we think that we have little and we do not give or share, we will soon find that we have nothing left for ourselves and we have nothing to give or to share.

The wisdom of the Proverbs tells us, “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.” (Proverbs 11:24, ESV).

A scarcity mindset produces more scarcity. An abundance mindset produces more resources to give and to share and to enjoy. There is always plenty and plenty to give and to share.

May we enjoy the blessings and wealth of resources and gifts that we have been given by freely giving and sharing with others and find that there is an abundance for us all.

A Collect for Guidance: “Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 18

Loving Our Enemies

How do we treat our enemies? In what ways does our treatment of others reflect our knowledge and love of God?

It is easy to love those who love us. It is infinitely more difficult to love those who are opposed to us or who do not have our best interest in mind.

It has been said that the true test of Christianity is not loving Jesus, but loving Judas.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love our enemies and to do good to those who could never reciprocate, or who would not care enough to desire to repay our good will.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in Luke's Gospel account, Jesus said, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil." (Luke 6:35, ESV).

We are called to love our enemies because this is how God has loved us. God is even kind to the ungrateful and evil people of this world. Even though we fall short of God's standards and do not always love him, God continues to love us.

When we love our enemies and do good to those around us, expecting nothing in return, God gives us his blessings and provision and calls us his children. When we love and do good, we reflect this love of God for us.

As beloved children of God, may we love our enemies and do good in the world as God loves us and does good for us.

A Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity (Proper 9): "Grant us, O Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who can do no good thing apart from you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 19**Keeping it on the Level**

How do you stay balanced in your life? How do you discern God's good will and God's clear pathway for your life? What keeps you steady, stable, and sure footed?

It can be challenging to navigate the complexities of this life. As followers of Jesus, we seek the will of God and his direction and blessing in all that we set out to do. We need God's leadership, direction, and design for our lives. We need God's Spirit to lead us and to direct our paths and footing on solid, smooth, and sure ground.

The Psalmist writes of this wisdom of the will of God, saying, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!" (Psalm 143:10, ESV).

We can count on God's faithfulness to teach us and to direct us in his good will. God is faithful to instruct us in his ways and to give us his good Spirit to lead us on a level plain.

May we keep our steps on the level as we trust in our God to teach us his will, and to give us his good Spirit to lead our way through this life on level ground.

A Prayer for Trustfulness in Times of Worry and Anxiety: "Most loving Father, you will us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on the One who cares for us. Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested unto us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (#80, Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 20

Being a Good Samaritan

Where do you find your justification? Do you seek to justify yourself, or do you find your justification from outside of yourself?

We cannot be justified apart from God's help. There is not enough good that we can do to outweigh our brokenness and the things that we have thought, said, or done to sin against our holy God and against our neighbor.

In Luke's gospel account a lawyer stood up to test Jesus, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus asked him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" The lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

And Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." In response, the lawyer, desiring to justify himself, as one who was keeping the law, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-29, ESV).

This lawyer was not looking to obey God or to honor God by loving his neighbor. He wanted to justify himself by making the case that it was okay to overlook loving people he did not consider his neighbor. The lawyer was looking for a loophole to justify his disobedience.

Secular marketing and business guru Seth Godin says that we have a relationship with others, for others, and to others. Godin writes, "With/for/to—Most of our interactions fall into one of these categories." (Seth Godin).

As someone who knew the law of God, the lawyer was relinquishing his responsibility with the people of God by looking for a loophole in the law. The lawyer was abdicating his responsibility for keeping the law and his responsibility for loving God and his neighbor. The lawyer was relinquishing his responsibility to his neighbor, to God, and to his faith.

This is the case in the Parable of the Good Samaritan as well. The Priest and the Levite had a responsibility with their religious order to keep their Jewish faith. They had responsibility for keeping the law of God. The Priest and the Levite also had a responsibility to the man beaten beside the road, to care for the beaten man who was their neighbor.

Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan to show the lawyer who his neighbor was and what his responsibilities were with, for, and to his neighbor. Jesus wanted to illustrate the futility of the lawyer's attempt to justify himself.

May we love God and love our neighbor, recognizing that we cannot justify ourselves or our callous and self-serving disregard of our responsibility with, for, and to our neighbor.

A Collect for the Human Family: “O God, you made us in your own image, and you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 21

God's Will—Your Purpose

What is God's will for your life? What is your purpose? How do you discern God's will and purpose for your life?

We are all here for a reason. We all have responsibility to God and meaningful work to do in this life.

The wise preacher and author of the Old Testament wisdom book of Ecclesiastes wrote, "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13, ESV).

The wisest and wealthiest person who ever lived, most likely King Solomon, who experienced everything and had everything, explained God's will and purpose as "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and understanding concerning God's will and our life's purpose. Our whole duty is to revere God and obey his design.

May we know God's will and purpose for our life as we reverence God and obey God's good rules and perfect design.

A Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 10): "Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and, that we may receive what we ask, teach us by your Holy Spirit to ask only those things that are pleasing to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the same Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 22**Maturity in Jesus**

Are you still growing in your knowledge of Jesus and in your relationship with him? Would you consider yourself fully mature in your relationship with Jesus?

As followers of Jesus, we are students of God and his word. We are always growing in our knowledge of him and in our relationship with him. We are to immerse ourselves in the wisdom of God, and in the knowledge of God, to become fully mature in Him.

The Apostle Paul wrote the church in Colossae, saying, “God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” (Colossians 1:27-29, ESV).

It was the high calling and the ultimate goal of the Apostle Paul to proclaim Jesus, to teach, and to impart the wisdom of God to everyone—to present everyone fully mature in Jesus. Paul worked tirelessly with all his might to help others to grow and to become mature in their relationship with Jesus.

May we follow God’s design for us to become fully mature in our relationship with Jesus.

The Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, or the Fifth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 11):

“O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 23**Satisfaction in God**

If you were completely satisfied, what else would you desire, need, or want? Is your life filled with contentment or striving? Are you satisfied in God?

The psalmist writes of his satisfaction in God, saying, “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.” (Psalm 16:5, ESV).

The psalmist is exclaiming his contentment and trust in God and his provision.

A later Psalm asserts the Psalmist’s trust in the provision of God, and his satisfaction in God, saying, “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:26, ESV).

While we may fail ourselves, God will never fail us. God is enough and will always be enough.

The Psalmist speaks of his contentment in God, saying, “I cry to you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’” (Psalm 142:5, ESV).

May we be satisfied in God and in his presence and in his provision for our lives as we enjoy our portion in the land of the living.

A Prayer for Satisfaction in Christ, by Julian of Norwich: “O God, of your goodness, give me yourself, for you are enough for me. I can ask for nothing less that is completely to your honor, and if I do ask anything less, I shall always be in want. Only in you I have all. Amen.” (#92., Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 24

Seeking God

Are you seeking God and his strength and presence in your life?

It has been said that we often find what we are looking for. If this is true, then we must be careful about what we are seeking.

As followers of Jesus, we should be seeking God and his strength and presence.

The chronicler wrote, “Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!” (1 Chronicles 16:11, ESV).

Our seeking after God and God’s strength and presence should be a continual endeavor. We should seek God every opportunity we have to receive God, his strength, and his presence.

May we seek God always and experience his presence and strength in our lives.

A Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 11): “O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 25

Sitting at Jesus Feet

Who are you learning from? What and who is shaping your life as you submit yourself, your attention, and your time?

To learn from someone and to be a disciple in the first century, in the time of Jesus, you would sit at your teacher's feet. You would sit at your rabbi's feet as his disciple.

In sharing his testimony of his own growth and development in the Jewish faith, the Apostle Paul wrote, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day." (Acts 22:3, ESV).

Paul described himself as submissive and receptive to his rabbi, saying he was "educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law."

We see this same posture of discipleship in the submissive reception of the demoniac man after Jesus healed him. Luke tells us, "Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid." (Luke 8:35, ESV).

Nowhere is someone sitting at the feet of Jesus more radical and pronounced than Mary sitting at Jesus' feet in Luke chapter ten. Women were not taught in the schools of the rabbis and would not take the position of sitting at a rabbi's feet in this culture.

However, Luke tells us Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching" while her older sister Martha took on the more traditional role of serving. Mary was accepted by Jesus as student, a disciple of Jesus, by taking this posture, and she was praised by Jesus for choosing the better thing (Luke 10:38-42, ESV).

May we choose to take the humble posture as students of Jesus and sit at his feet and learn from him as his disciples.

A Collect for the Renewal of Life: "O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 26

Worry, Anxiety, and Listening

What are you worried and anxious over? Is it easier or more difficult to hear God when you are worried or anxious?

When we are overly busy, worried, or anxious, it can be difficult to hear from God or to be present with Jesus.

In chapter ten of Luke's gospel account, Jesus' friends Martha and Mary offered hospitality to Jesus while he was traveling.

Luke tells us "Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching." (Luke 10:38-39, ESV).

In the first century Jewish culture, hospitality was important. It was an honor to have a rabbi, a teacher, to enter under your roof and to provide for them and to hear their teaching. It was common for men to sit at the rabbi's feet and to listen to them as the women and servants prepared and served.

Luke tells us "Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to [Jesus] and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 10:40-42, ESV).

Like Martha, our serving Jesus can interfere with our being with Jesus and listening to his word. We can become frustrated when we are overly busy and distracted, and we can experience loneliness and isolation from God and others. We can be unfocused because of many good things that keep us from sitting at our rabbi Jesus' feet and hearing his word.

Our busyness, anxieties, and troubles over so many things, can cause fear, anger, and resentment within us, which can take away our joy and peace in serving and our opportunity to receive from Jesus.

While many teachers, and the patriarchal culture of Jesus' day, would have insisted on traditional roles of women serving and men sitting at the feet of their rabbi, Jesus welcomed Mary to sit at his feet and to hear his word as his disciple. Mary chose this one important and eternal posture of sitting, listening, and learning from Jesus. She saw Jesus as her rabbi.

May we abandon our busyness, our frenetic worries, our anxieties, and our troubles, and choose to sit at Jesus' feet and be present as we listen and learn from him.

A Prayer for Trustworthiness in Times of Worry and Anxiety: “Most loving Father, you will us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on the One who cares for us. Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested unto us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (#80, Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 27**Reason for Belief**

What is your reasoning behind what you believe? How do you rationally understand your faith, and explain and reason your faith, to those who enquire?

We all have reasons behind our beliefs. Each of us have a story of our encounter with God. We also have evidence and historical background for the faith we hold.

The Apostle Peter wrote in his first letter encouraging believers, saying, “in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15, ESV).

As followers of Jesus, we are called to honor God in our hearts and in our minds and to be ready to give an accounting of what we believe when others inquire. We are to be willing and able to give a reason for the hope we have in Jesus, and we are to share with others with the utmost graciousness and respect.

May we reason out our faith so that we are able to give an account for what we believe.

A Collect for Grace: “O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day: Defend us by your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin nor run into any danger; and that, guided by your Spirit, we may do what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 28

Teach Us to Pray

Have you been taught to pray? Do you know that you can be taught how to pray?

We can learn how to pray. Jesus prayed. Jesus also taught his disciples how to pray.

In his gospel account, Luke shows us that Jesus prayed, and Jesus' disciples desired to learn how to pray. Luke tells us, "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.'" (Luke 11:1, ESV).

Jesus modeled his prayer life for his disciples. Jesus often withdrew to pray, he prayed for people, and he taught his followers how to pray. Jesus' patterns of prayer and teachings on prayer are especially abundant in Luke's gospel account. Luke's gospel says more about prayer than any other account of Jesus' life, teachings, and ministry.

It was not uncommon in Jesus' day, in the first century, for rabbis to teach their disciples how to pray in specific and in unique ways to that rabbi. It is no wonder why when Jesus' disciples witnessed him praying that they requested for Jesus to teach them how he prayed, just as John the Baptist taught his followers how he prayed.

How a rabbi prayed illustrated what that rabbi believed about God, how they read and understood their Torah, and what their relationship with God was like.

We can learn a lot about prayer, and we can learn a lot about who God is, from Jesus and his example in his prayer life and through his teachings on prayer, especially from the gospel of Luke.

May we seek to be taught how to pray from Jesus' own words and example, and may we seek Jesus in prayer as we practice an intimate and consistent prayer life.

A Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 12): "Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 29

Restored

What is your response to being provided for, healed, or restored by Jesus?

Our provision, healing, and restoration should provoke a loving response from us of worship towards Jesus. This was the case with Mary Magdalene whom Jesus had delivered from seven demons. When Mary was restored, she followed Jesus along with other women who provided for Jesus and his disciples as they followed him.

Luke's gospel account tells us, "Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means." (Luke 8:1-3, ESV).

Like these women who were impacted by Jesus and forever changed, we are to give ourselves over to following Jesus and to the work of God out of our own gratitude for our provision, healing, and restoration.

Like Mary Magdalene, may we follow Jesus and devote our lives and resources to him as worship and gratitude as his disciples.

The Collect of the Day: Mary Magdalene: "Almighty God, whose blessed Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and of mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that, by your grace, we may be healed from all our infirmities and know you in the power of his unending life; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

Day 30**Waiting on You**

How slow is God in responding to us? Another way to ask it is, how patient is God in waiting on us to show us his faithfulness?

God is not slow in fulfilling his commitments to us. God is infinitely patient in waiting on everyone to come to know him. God keeps his promises in his perfect time.

The Apostle Peter wrote, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9, ESV).

God is waiting on us to turn to him so that he may fulfill his perfect will and keep his promises to us for an abundant life according to God’s good design and purposes.

What are we waiting for? Because God is waiting for us.

May we turn away from our will and our ways, and turn to God’s will and God’s ways, and may we find that God is waiting on us with open arms.

A Collect for Strength to Await Christ’s Return: “O God our King, by the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, you conquered sin, put death to flight, and gave us the hope of everlasting life: Redeem all our days by this victory; forgive our sins, banish our fears, make us bold to praise you and to do your will; and steel us to wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great Day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, 2019).

A Thanksgiving Prayer

“Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us at tasks that demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments that satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he conquered death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.”

(#117., Book of Common Prayer, 2019)

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About Robbie



Pastor Robbie is from Columbia, SC and moved to Northern Virginia with his wife, Irene, in 2004, to continue his calling of pastoral ministry. He and his family live in Ashburn, Virginia, where Robbie is the Rector (Pastor) at an Anglican Church in Fairfax, Virginia. He and his family have also lived in Alexandria, Virginia, where Robbie was the Director of Youth Ministry and Pastoral Associate for four years, and in Port-au-Prince, Haiti for five years, where Robbie was the High School Bible Teacher at a Christian school. Robbie has his Master of Arts in Theology from Columbia International University, a Diploma in Christian Ministry from Trinity School for Ministry, and a B.S. in Bible, with an emphasis on youth ministry, also from CIU. Robbie and Irene have four children, Grace, Hannah, Simeon, and Jacob. Robbie enjoys spending time with his family, mountain biking, hiking, concert going, studying the Bible and Biblical context, writing poetry, and writing about theology, leadership, and discipleship.

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