-Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

Worship, Reflection, Wrestling – Week 21

Where is this all going anyway?

Day 140: Daily Worship

From the Book of Common Prayer, here is the layout for Daily Prayer:

Order	Morning Prayer Purpose	Morning Prayer Item	Evening Prayer Purpose	Evening Prayer Item
1	Reconciliation	Confession and Absolution	Reconciliation	Confession and Absolution
2	Commitment	The Lord's Prayer	Commitment	The Lord's Prayer
3	Praise	Venite	Learning	Scripture Readings
4	Learning	Scripture Readings	Praise	The Magnificat
5	Praise	Te Deum Laudamus	Learning	Scripture Readings
4	Learning	Scripture Readings	Thankfulness	Nunc Dimittis
5	Reminder of our hope	Benedictus	Renewal of commitment / belief	Apostles' Creed
6	Renewal of commitment / belief	Apostles' Creed	Commitment	The Lord's Prayer
7	Commitment	The Lord's Prayer	Supplication – requesting aid from God	Versicles and Responses; Collects
8	Supplication – requesting aid from God	Versicles and Responses; Collects	*Application of scripture to our daily life*	*Optional Sermon*
9	*Application of scripture to our daily life*	*Optional Sermon*	*Offering ourselves and what we have been gifted with*	*If sermon given at this point, The Offertory*
10	*Offering ourselves and what we have been gifted with*	*If sermon given at this point, The Offertory*	Blessed	The Prayer of St. Chrysostom and the Grace
11	Requesting aid and giving thanks	Prayers	*Application of scripture to our daily life*	*Optional Sermon*
12	Blessed	The Prayer of St. Chrysostom and the Grace	*Offering ourselves and what we have been gifted with*	*If sermon given at this point, The Offertory*
13	*Application of scripture to our daily life*	*Optional Sermon*		

14	*Offering ourselves and what we have been gifted with*	*If sermon given at this point, The Offertory*		

If the Daily Prayers (knowns as “the daily office”) are prayed in community, a sermon is usually preached in one of two places. If the daily office is done individually, the sermon and offertory may be skipped or replaced by a time of quiet meditation.

What is your reaction to, every day, approaching God for reconciling, re-committing, learning, praising, requesting aid, and being blessed?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 141: Daily Worship Part 2

From the Book of Alternative Services:

Order	Morning Prayer Purpose	Morning Prayer Item	Evening Prayer Purpose	Evening Prayer Item
1	*Reconciliation*	*The Penitential Rite of Confession and Absolution (optional)*	*Reconciliation*	*The Penitential Rite of Confession and Absolution (optional)*
2	Supplication – requesting aid from God	Versicles and Responses	*Praise, Thanksgiving*	*The Service of Light (optional)*
3	Invitation to worship	Venite or Jubilate or another psalm	Supplication – requesting aid from God	Versicles and Responses
4	*Application of scripture to our daily life*	*Optional Sermon*	Invitation to worship	The Invitatory (if Service of Light was not done)
5	*Offering ourselves and what we have been gifted with*	*If sermon given at this point, The Offertory*	Learning	Scripture Readings
4	Renewal of commitment / belief	Apostles' Creed or Hear, O Israel	*Application of scripture to our daily life*	*Optional Sermon*
5	Requesting aid and giving thanks	Prayers	*Offering ourselves and what we have been gifted with*	*If sermon given at this point, The Offertory*
6	Summary prayer of the day	Collect	Renewal of commitment / belief	Apostles' Creed or Hear, O Israel
7	Commitment	The Lord's Prayer	Requesting aid and giving thanks	Prayers
8	Dismissal	Dismissal and blessing	Summary prayer of the day	Collect
9			Commitment	The Lord's Prayer
10			Dismissal	Dismissal and blessing

The idea of having a worship service to start and another to end is that they bookend your day – "life" occurs cradled in worship. Just as bookends help stop books from falling off the shelf, worship helps stop life from falling off the path of God. While the daily office from the Book of Alternative Services is simpler than the daily office from the Book of Common Prayer, the same elements are present: reconciling, re-committing, learning, praising, requesting aid, and being blessed. The ongoing repetition of every day saying the same prayers to God has been called

boring and rote (the word "tedium" owes its origin to "Te Deum"), and perhaps that's part of the point: no matter our emotions, what is happening in our lives, how we feel or what we are thinking, it is important to come to God and be re-reconciled, re-commit, re-learn, re-praise, re-request, and be re-blessed. The Anglican model is one of steadfastness, continuity, purposefulness, ongoing faithfulness. The emotions, the desire, mountain-top and deep-valley experiences – are all secondary. "Had a great day? Wonderful! Let's pray to our Lord." "Had a terrible day? We are sorry. Let's pray to our Lord." The key is to continue, no matter what.

Would you be able to put in a daily practice of prayer (communication with God), making sure that key items are always performed, morning and night? What's preventing you?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 142: Reflection

There is one more service which is widely loved in the Anglican world: Compline (which comes from the Latin word for Completion). It is a short service which is used to end the day with. Its theme can be summed up by its opening prayer, *"The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Amen"* and its ending prayer, *"The Almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless and preserve us. Amen."*

In this course, over the past 21 weeks you've been introduced (or re-introduced as the case may be) to the idea that God created us, that there are paths of harm and a path of health, that Jesus demonstrated the path of health in His actions and words, that He left His thoughts and guidelines for us, He sacrificed Himself so we could be united with God, and how trying to follow the path of health, Jesus' Way, can lead to difficult choices. We've also shared the importance of the bible to Christians, and now the importance of worshiping together.

Yes.

What are your thoughts?

It's rather interesting. Definitely a worldview different from mine.

It will remain only a way of looking at reality unless one fundamental change occurs in you.

What's that?

To take God seriously. For you to decide that it is true. Or at least, that you think it is true. It is normal that Christians have times of doubt and questioning as well as times of sureness, that is part of being human. Knowing that something is true and real doesn't mean that you may not question it or even challenge it. In fact, that's often the path towards growth and revelation. We're explorers, remember.

Ok…

It's fundamental though, for you to understand that you are a creature which was created in love, is sustained in love, and welcomed in love. Love is the bedrock foundation of God's relationship with you. Love is the bedrock of your very existence. All the rules and guidelines come down to love. Christ did all that He did for love for you.

Ok…

And that Christ, though He died, did rise again to life, and really does want a living, ongoing relationship with you. You have worth, you have meaning, you have purpose, you are important, just because God loves you.

Ok…

And in Christ, you have the opportunity to live forever with Him in a life of love, joy, shalom.

In Christ, you have the opportunity to change the world for the better.

In Christ, your life on this world is an opportunity for you to practice your eternal life with God.

How may love be the bedrock of your very existence? How does this indicate where you came from, how you are to live, and where you are going?

Share your answers with others whom you trust

Day 143: Ramifications

And without Christ?

We frankly don't know. Christ talked about separating those who love from those who don't (Matthew 25:31-46), with those who don't love going away "to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." The "wheat" (those who love) will be gathered into His barn, while the "weeds" (those who don't) will be burnt (discarded) (Matthew 13:24-30). He said that there will be judgement: "The good person brings good things out of his good treasury, and the evil person brings evil things out of his evil treasury. I tell you that on the day of judgment, people will give an account for every worthless word they speak. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:35-37). Another parable He gave: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea that caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, they pulled it ashore, sat down, and put the good fish into containers and threw the bad away. It will be this way at the end of the age. Angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:47-50)

The basic teaching is that if you live in the love of God, all will be well – but if you do evil, you will reap what you sow. We believe that God doesn't want people to be separated from Him, but if they insist, He will let them reap what they have sowed. While we don't truly know the consequences, separation from the source of all life sounds very dire. We grieve and mourn over those who reject living the love of God.

What do you feel the ultimate end is of those who live lives of love, and those who don't? Why?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 144: Relationship.

So what if I live in love, but don't have a relationship with Christ?

I think you'll fail – for three reasons:

a.) As shown to us through the stories right at the beginning of the bible, all humans (as individuals and communities) are susceptible to pursuing their own selfish desires instead of the healthy path of life which Christ showed us. We can't do this on our own.

b.) It is through Christ that we find forgiveness. Christians know that no matter how much we strive to live in love, we fail – sometimes in small ways, sometimes in big ones. Only through Christ are we able to truly be forgiven of the eternal consequences of our actions, forgive those who have hurt us, and forgive ourselves. Only when we come back to Him and say, "I'm sorry" and truly mean it can we then strive to walk again in love.

c.) If you are truly walking in love, you aren't doing it on your own, because you are incapable of it (see points a. and b.). Therefore, you have, somehow, stumbled upon Christ (even without recognizing Him) and are being led by the Holy Spirit of God. For love originates from God. So, you have failed to not have a relationship with Christ, because in loving, you've struck up a relationship with Christ.

The first letter of John states the above three points in a different way: *"Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been fathered by God and knows God. The person who does not love does not know God because God is love. By this the love of God is revealed in us: that God has sent his one and only Son into the world so that we may live through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins."* (1 John 4:7-10)

And, as we've previously covered, Jesus Himself said, *"I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35)

Please describe the necessity of a relationship with Christ to living a life of love. Do you agree that it's impossible to live a loving life without Christ?

Share your thoughts with others whom you trust.

Day 145: Wrestling

So I should do this as a "get out of jail free" card for eternity? Isn't that selfish?

That does drive many people, but that doesn't work either. There is no 'get out of jail free' card.

Why should I listen to you?

Because God loves you. Because I love you. You should live in love in response to the fact, the unalterable, undeniable, unchangeable fact, that you are loved.

But maybe I'm not worthy to be loved.

Worth doesn't come into it. God didn't say "I shall only love My Images who show themselves worthy."

But maybe you're wrong, and there is no God, and love is something biological or evolutionary or even made up.

Maybe. That doesn't jive with my sense of reality. Nor does it offer any argument for existence, or conscience, or morality, or against injustice, evil, and death. It is a very limited worldview – and a very prideful one, in which we assume that we have the ability to eventually figure everything out, despite our admitted limitations. If it helps, you can review where we've discussed this before.

As stated before, Christ really does want a living, ongoing relationship with you. You have worth, you have meaning, you have purpose, you are important, just because God loves you.

But if I decide you're right, that changes everything in my life.

If you truly decide that, yes, it does.

Is Christianity true? Why or why not?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 146: Rest

We come again to the seventh day, so today we rest. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you've learned, what you've struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.

Know that God loves you.