

DAILY LITURGY DEVOTIONAL

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DEVOTIONAL

*40 Days of Worship
and Prayer*

DOUGLAS SEAN
O'DONNELL

 CROSSWAY®
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Daily Liturgy Devotional: 40 Days of Worship and Prayer

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To my parents,
Winifred and Patrick O'Donnell,
with love and appreciation for teaching me to pray.

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me.

FROM "ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE"

Contents

Introduction	xiii
--------------------	------

THE GOSPEL

DAY 1	1
DAY 2	7
DAY 3	13
DAY 4	19
DAY 5	25

FAITH

DAY 6	31
DAY 7	37
DAY 8	43
DAY 9	49
DAY 10	55

LOVE

DAY 11	61
DAY 12	67
DAY 13	73

DAY 14	79
DAY 15	85

HOPE

DAY 16	91
DAY 17	97
DAY 18	103
DAY 19	109
DAY 20	115

WISDOM

DAY 21	121
DAY 22	127
DAY 23	133
DAY 24	139
DAY 25	145

HOLINESS

DAY 26	151
DAY 27	157
DAY 28	163
DAY 29	171
DAY 30	177

PERSEVERANCE

DAY 31	185
DAY 32	191

DAY 33	197
DAY 34	203
DAY 35	211

WITNESS

DAY 36	217
DAY 37	223
DAY 38	229
DAY 39	235
DAY 40	241

Notes	249
For Further Reading	253

Introduction to the

Daily Liturgy Devotional

40 Days of Worship and Prayer

One day, after Jesus finished praying, a disciple asked him, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). Jesus responded with the Lord’s Prayer (or the Disciples’ Prayer!), a short and simple prayer that offers the perfect substance of and model for Christian prayer. The Daily Liturgy Devotional—with its prayers and patterns, Scriptures and songs—is designed to offer further help. If you struggle to pray, read God’s word, or meditate upon what you have read, then this devotional will guide you; if you already practice good devotional habits, then this can serve as an additional resource to support you. The Greek word *leitourgia*, from which we get the word *liturgy*, is found a few times in the New Testament and can be translated as “service,” “ministry,” or “worship.” So think of this Daily Liturgy Devotional, with its various set prayers and forms, not as boring or mechanical but as exciting and life-giving, a book that will *serve* you so that you might better worship God and minister to others.

The plan of this devotional is straightforward. For forty days you will reflect on eight themes, with each theme covering five days. Each theme is explored and reinforced in various ways each day: a Scripture reading, concise commentary on the passage, a memory verse, a classic hymn, and space for you to journal or write out personal prayers. Through these biblical and ancient Christian prayers you can offer your adoration and gratitude

to God, confess your sins, and ask for help to read God's word and live the Christian life. If it helps, pray aloud and with physical gestures, such as raising your hands (1 Tim. 2:8) when you praise God's holy name or kneeling (Dan. 6:10) or lying prostrate (Luke 5:8) when you confess your sins. Using different postures to pray can engage your body and mind in new ways! "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting" (Neh. 9:5). The devotional will remind you throughout of the important relationship between physical posture and spiritual disciplines.

The start of each day will follow a similar pattern. On the first day of the topic three traditional Christian prayers will lead you as you pray: the *Gloria Patri* (Latin for "Glory be to the Father"), the *Agnus Dei* (Latin for "Lamb of God"), and the Lord's Prayer (*Pater Noster* in Latin, if you are curious!). Then, for the other four days, the structure will follow the traditional pattern of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication, with each day featuring different prayers from the Old Testament and New Testament, along with old and new prayers. Prayers have all been adapted and edited for consistency of use within this volume, and I have included a page in the back that points to helpful primary and secondary resources, for those who would like to read more.

The *Daily Liturgy Devotional* allows for flexibility if you want to use the devotional for forty days straight or if you prefer to move at a slower pace. It is also designed to be your prayer guide for life, if desired. Use it over and over, day after day and year after year. Whether you use it for forty days or for forty years, I hope that much of the rich content—especially the memory verses, ancient prayers, and classic hymns—will be learned by heart and carried deep within your heart.

This book is dedicated to my mom (Winifred, or Winnie) and dad (Padraic, or Patrick), with love and appreciation for teaching me to pray. I specifically want to thank them for taking me

to church each Sunday, where I learned to pray; enrolling me in school, where I learned many classic prayers of the church; and praying with me and my siblings at home (Padraic, Matthew, Julie, and Mary) before meals and bed. I fondly remember kneeling around a bed, holding hands, and together praying prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and the Gloria Patri. Thank you for that solid foundation! I am eternally grateful.

I would also like to thank the wonderful team I work with at Crossway, notably Don Jones, Erika Allen, Elliott Pinegar, Davis Wetherell, Josh McQuaid, Amy Warren, Leah Jolly, Jared Hughes, Jordan Singer, and Gerard Cruz. Thank you for your prayers, encouragements, and labors—designing, editing, typesetting, proofreading—for this project.

DOUGLAS SEAN O'DONNELL

Advent 2023

The Gospel

Part 1 of 5

Through these biblical and ancient Christian prayers offer your adoration and gratitude to God, confess your sins, and ask for help to read his word and live the Christian life. If it helps, pray aloud and with physical gestures, such as raising your hands (1 Tim. 2:8) when you praise God's holy name or kneeling (Dan. 6:10) or lying prostrate (Luke 5:8) when you confess your sins. Using different postures to pray can engage your body and mind in new ways! "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting" (Neh. 9:5).

Gloria Patri

Pray the Gloria Patri. Then take time to praise and thank God for specific blessings in your life.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.

Amen.

Agnus Dei

Pray the Agnus Dei. Then take time to ask God through Jesus to forgive specific sins. Also offer prayers of lament. Pray that God would deal with sufferings and injustices both now and when Christ returns. Cry out, "O Sovereign

Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10), or “Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!” (Ps. 130:1–2).

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Pray each line slowly. As you think about each petition, add your own specific requests.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:9–13

Prayer of Illumination

Ask God's Spirit to bring to light the meaning and application of God's word.

Thus says the LORD:

“Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool;

what is the house that you would build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
All these things my hand has made,
and so all these things came to be,
declares the LORD.
But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word.” *Isaiah 66:1–2*

Lord, as I now commit to reading and learning from your word
with the desire to live under your authority and to build my life
on your truth, I ask that you would give me a humble and con-
trite spirit that trembles at your word. Amen.

• • •

Scripture Reading

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart
for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through
his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was
descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to
be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by
his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through
whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the
obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,
including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be
saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ. *Romans 1:1–7*

Concise Commentary

Our memory verse for the first five days is 1 Corinthians 15:3–4,
where Paul writes about the gospel that he preached, stating,

“I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” If the gospel is of first importance, then we should know it! So, if someone asked, “What is the gospel?” what would we say? We might be accustomed to focusing on (1) *who Jesus is* (the Son of God whom the Father sent into the world), (2) *what Jesus did* (he lived, died, and rose again), and (3) *what we receive* if we believe in Jesus (the forgiveness of sins and eternal life). And indeed, when Paul writes about the gospel in Romans 1, he mentions these three things: *who Jesus is* (“the Son of God” and “our Lord”), *what he has done* (“resurrection from the dead”), and *what we receive* if we believe (“salvation,” Rom. 1:16). But he also adds two other components. First, he says that God’s gospel was “promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (1:2). It is good news, but it is not new news! Second, he writes of the recipients of the gospel, namely, people from “all the nations” (1:5)—that is, “everyone who believes” (1:16). So, no matter what tongue, tribe, or people you are from, you can come to Jesus, recognize your need for him, call out in faith for the forgiveness of your sins, and receive God’s mercy.

Prayer Prompt

Take time today to thank God the Father that the good news about Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection is for you and, by God’s grace, has come to you and has spread to all nations. Pray for help to hold fast to the word you have received. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind people you know who need to come to Jesus, to recognize their need for him, to call out in faith for forgiveness, and to receive God’s mercy. Pray for them and pray for the courage to bear witness to them about who Christ is and what he has done.

Memory Verse

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

◆ ◆ ◆

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

Isaac Watts • 1707



When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

The Gospel

Part 2 of 5

Adoration

Pray the prayer below. Then pause to praise God for who he is and what he has done.

I confess that great indeed is the mystery of godliness (revealed in Jesus!)—that “he was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16). I praise you, Lord Jesus, for your life, death, resurrection, and ascension and that the gospel has been—and continues to be—proclaimed throughout the world. Amen.

Confession

Pray the prayer below. Then take time to ask God through Jesus to forgive specific sins.

O Lord, you who are all merciful, take away my sins from me and kindle within me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh and blood, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, a heart that always desires to please you and live for you, for the sake of Christ’s glory. Amen. *Ambrose*

Thanksgiving

Thank God for the truth that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9), then pray the prayer below. Finally, take time to thank God for specific blessings in your life. Also feel free to offer Psalm 118:1 (“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!”) as a repeated refrain as you list off (and lift up!) to God people, events, gifts, and circumstances for which you are thankful.

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

Psalm 95:1–2

Supplication

After you pray the prayer below, feel free to add your own specific requests.

Lord, help me walk in a manner worthy of the gospel. So, help me not to be self-willing or self-glorying, a drunkard, argumentative, fond of sordid gain or a lover of money, but to be above reproach, faithful in my relationships, hospitable (giving time, thought, and prayer to those in need within my church and community), loving of what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, steadfast in the truth of the gospel. Amen.

Based on 1 Timothy 3:3–7; Titus 1:6–9

Prayer of Illumination

Almighty God and most merciful Father, I humbly submit myself to you and fall down before your Majesty, asking you from the bottom of my heart that this seed of your word that I am about to read may take such deep root that neither the burning heat of persecution cause it to wither, nor the thorny cares of this life choke it. But that, as seed sown in good ground, it may bring

forth thirty, sixty, or even a hundredfold, as your heavenly wisdom has appointed it. Amen. Middleburg Liturgy (1586)

• • •

Scripture Reading

As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. Acts 10:36–43

Concise Commentary

The gospel message outlined in Peter's sermon includes the lordship of Jesus; the ministry of John the Baptist; the life of Jesus in Galilee; Jesus's power, miracles, healings, and exorcisms; the death of Jesus by crucifixion; his resurrection; his appearances to the believers in full bodily form after his death; the command to preach forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ; and the assertion that the Old Testament prophecies pointed to all these things. What is interesting is that Peter's outline exemplifies the essence of the gospel as preached throughout Acts: God's offer of salvation; the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and the call

to faith in light of coming judgment (see Acts 2:14–36; 3:17–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32; 7:2–53; 10:34–43; 13:16–41; 17:22–31; 20:18–35; 22:1–21; 24:10–21; 26:2–23; 28:25–28). Moreover, his outline surely reflects the outline of the four Gospels, most notably of Mark.

Acts 10	Mark
“good news” (10:36)	“the beginning of the gospel” (1:1)
“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit” (10:38)	The coming of the Spirit on Jesus (1:10)
“beginning from Galilee” (10:37)	The Galilean ministry (1:16—8:26)
“He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil” (10:38)	Jesus’s ministry focuses on healings and exorcisms (e.g., 1:32–34)
“we are witnesses of all that he did . . . in Jerusalem” (10:39)	Ministry in Jerusalem (Mark 11–14)
“They put him to death by hanging him on a tree” (10:39)	Focus on the death of Christ (Mark 15)
“God raised him on the third day” (10:40)	The resurrection (Mark 16): “He has risen; he is not here.” (16:6)

Prayer Prompt

Take time today to thank God that he has provided clear passages in his word to teach us the gospel. Also thank the Father, Son, and Spirit for giving you faith. Ask for God’s help both to live out faithfully and to share God’s offer of salvation. Pray specifically (feel free to write out names) for family, friends, and coworkers who need to hear the good news that, in Jesus, God is making all things new. Pray for prayerfulness (that you would pray for them often!) and courage (that you would regularly bear witness—in word and deed).

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

◆ ◆ ◆

Attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux | trans. James W. Alexander • 1829



O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered
was all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
look on me with Thy favor,
vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
to thank Thee, dearest Friend,

for this, Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever!
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love for Thee.

The Gospel

Part 3 of 5

Adoration

Pray the prayer below. Then pause to praise God for who he is and for what he has done.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise him all creatures here below;
 Praise him above ye heav'nly host;
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Confession

Pray the prayer below. Then take time to ask God through Jesus to forgive specific sins.

Merciful Father, I have strayed from your ways like a lost sheep. I have followed too much the schemes and desires of my own heart and have broken your holy laws. I have left undone what I ought to have done, and I have done what I ought not to have done. Yet, good Lord, have mercy on me. I repent! Restore me now according to the promises declared to me through your Son, Jesus Christ. And grant, merciful Father, for his sake, that from now on I may live a godly and obedient life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen. *Book of Common Prayer (1662)*

Thanksgiving

Thank God for the truth that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9), then pray the prayer below. Finally, take time to thank God for specific blessings in your life. Also feel free to offer Psalm 118:1 (“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!”) as a repeated refrain as you list off (and lift up!) to God people, events, gifts, and circumstances for which you are thankful.

Father, I thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man. I thank you for his perpetual cleansing blood, for your constant forgiveness through him. I thank you for the gospel—the good news of salvation through Christ. And I thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit in my heart, mind, and will to embrace this glorious message of salvation. Amen.

Supplication

After you pray the prayer below, feel free to add your own specific requests.

Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Psalm 19:13–14

Prayer of Illumination

O make your word a swift word, passing from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the lip and conversation; that, as the rain returns not empty, so neither may your word, but accomplish that for which it is given. Amen. George Herbert

Scripture Reading

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. *Colossians 1:15–23*

Concise Commentary

This beautifully poetic passage can be divided nicely into two parts. The first part focuses on Christ; the second on Christians. The first part refers to Jesus with the pronouns “he,” “his,” “him,” and “himself” thirteen times. We can label these verses *He Is*: “He is the image of the invisible God”; “he is before all things”; “he is the head of the body, the church”; and “he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” The second part still speaks about Jesus—what his death accomplishes—but the focus falls on the church’s response to the person and work of Jesus. We can call these verses *And You*. Verse 21 begins, “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind”; verse 22 uses the phrase “to present you holy and blameless,” and verse 23 says

“if indeed you continue in the faith.” Put these together—*He Is* and *And You*—and we see the point Paul is making: Jesus Christ, who is supreme over creation (1:15–17) and in the church, the new creation (1:18), is our sufficient Savior. Through his death Jesus has made “peace [with God] by the blood of his cross,” and “he has now reconciled [you all] in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him” (1:22). What good news! God, through his supreme-over-creation and sufficient-for-salvation Son, “has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (1:13).

Prayer Prompt

Take time to “thank God, the Father” of our “Lord Jesus Christ” that you believe “the word of truth, the gospel.” Beyond the gift of faith (“your faith in Christ Jesus”), thank him for the gifts of love (that “you have [love] for all the saints”) and hope (“the hope laid up for you in heaven”). Ask God, as Paul prayed for the church, that “you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.” Pray that “as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, so [you would] walk in him.” Based on Colossians 1:3–5, 9–11; 2:6

Memory Verse

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3–4

• • •

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

trans. Joseph Seiss • 1873



Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O thou of God and man the Son;
thee will I cherish, thee will I honor,
thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
robed in the blooming garb of spring:
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
who makes the woeful heart to sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,
and all the twinkling, starry host:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer,
than all the angels heaven can boast.

Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
now and forevermore be thine.

The Gospel

Part 4 of 5

Adoration

Pray the prayer below. Then pause to praise God for who he is and for what he has done.

Great and amazing are your deeds,

 O Lord God the Almighty!

Just and true are your ways,

 O King of the nations!

Who will not fear, O Lord,

 and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.

 All nations will come

 and worship you,

for your righteous acts have been revealed. Revelation 15:3–4

Confession

Pray the prayer below. Then take time to ask God through Jesus to forgive specific sins.

O Lord, my great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments, I acknowledge that I have sinned and done wrong and turned aside from your commandments. Forgive me, God

of mercy, for all the times I have rebelled against you and have not obeyed your voice. God, please listen to my pleas for mercy, and for your own sake make your face to shine upon me. For I present my pleas before you not because of my righteousness but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. Amen. Based on Daniel 9:3–18

Thanksgiving

Thank God for the truth that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9), then pray the prayer below. Finally, take time to thank God for specific blessings in your life. Also feel free to offer Psalm 118:1 (“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!”) as a repeated refrain as you list off (and lift up!) to God people, events, gifts, and circumstances for which you are thankful.

[Along with your church, I] give thanks to you, Lord God
Almighty,
who is and who was,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.
The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth. Revelation 11:17–18

Supplication

After you pray the prayer below, feel free to add your own specific requests.

God of all comfort, I pray for the brokenhearted, that you would mend them; for the sick, that you would heal them;

for the proud, that you would humble them; for the weak, that you would strengthen them; and for the apathetic, that you would enliven them. I also pray, Lord, that I would find my rest and comfort in you and, in turn, offer your rest and comfort to others—for their good and to the glory of your name. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

Spirit of God, who breathed life into all creation, fill me afresh with your grace and wisdom and power as I read your breathed-out word. Amen.

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Scripture Reading

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people
for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped. *Revelation 5:1–14*

Concise Commentary

The reason the Lamb is worthy to open the scroll is because he is the rightful king (“the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and “the root of David,” 5:5) who has conquered through the cross. Four times throughout Revelation Jesus is depicted as a slain lamb (5:6; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8). This repetition shows that, for John, the cross is central to his proclamation of the gospel. Jesus’s blood both ransoms people from all the nations (“by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people

and nation,” 5:9) and makes those who were once unworthy (see 5:3–4) now holy (into “a kingdom and priests to our God” who “shall reign on the earth,” 5:10). The only proper response to the sacrifice of the Lion-Lamb is to worship him, to fall down before him and join the million-tongued chorus of heaven “saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’” (5:12).

Prayer Prompt

Take time to focus on Christ and him crucified. Thank God that through Jesus’s sacrifice you have been ransomed from your sin, called into his eternal kingdom, and granted every heavenly blessing. Pray for his help to witness faithfully to the power and mercy of Christ today.

Memory Verse

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3–4

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“Nothing But the Blood of Jesus”

Robert Lowry • 1876



What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

REFRAIN

O precious is the flow
that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

REFRAIN

Nothing can for sin atone:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Naught of good that I have done:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

REFRAIN

This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

REFRAIN

The Gospel

Part 5 of 5

Adoration

Pray the prayer below. Then pause to praise God for who he is and for what he has done.

Lord Jesus, after your resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven God the Father highly exalted you and gave you a name that is above every name, so that at your return and the judgment every knee will bow in heaven (the knee of every angel and archangel and the saints above), and every knee will bow on earth (the knee of every believer and nonbeliever alike), and every knee will bow under the earth (the knee of every demon and Satan himself) and confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Today I confess (and rejoice!) that you are Jesus (the incarnate Son of God), that you are the Christ (the Messiah, the yes to every promise of God), and that you are the Lord, the God of both covenants. Amen. *Based on Philippians 2:1–11*

Confession

Pray the prayer below. Then take time to ask God through Jesus to forgive specific sins.

Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51:9–10

Thanksgiving

Thank God for the truth that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9), then pray the prayer below. Finally, take time to thank God for specific blessings in your life. Also feel free to offer Psalm 118:1 (“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!”) as a repeated refrain as you list off (and lift up!) to God people, events, gifts, and circumstances for which you are thankful.

O Lord, God Almighty, you are the creator and governor of the world. I thank you that, while we are born to trouble and you have appointed the grave to be the end of all living, you have not left us without hope in that world that is to come. Today I thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ your Son, by whose gospel life and immortality are brought to light. I thank you for the pardon of sin through faith in a redeemer; for the guidance of your providence; and for the consolations of your Spirit. I thank you for giving us weekly rest (the Sabbath); for your written word; and for all the other means of grace. Thank you! Amen.
Henry Thornton

Supplication

After you pray the prayer below, feel free to add your own specific requests.

Heavenly Father, I worship you as the creator and sustainer of the universe. Lord Jesus, I worship you, Savior and Lord of the world. Holy Spirit, I worship you, sanctifier of the people of God. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father, I pray that I may live this day in your presence and please you more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you. Holy Spirit, I pray that

this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God, have mercy upon me. Amen. John Stott

Prayer of Illumination

Spirit of God, you have breathed life into your holy word. I ask that you would fill me afresh now with your presence and power so that I might rightly understand and apply your sacred truth to my life. Amen.

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Scripture Reading

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her. But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.” Mark 14:3–9

Concise Commentary

In the scene Mark sets between the Passover plot (Mark 14:1–2) and Judas’s scheme to betray Jesus (14:10–11) he records a love story, one of the greatest love stories in the Greatest Love Story

ever told. It is a short story (told in one verse), but also a spectacular one: “And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head” (14:3). Mark’s description of this woman’s identity and motives is sparse. However, his description of what she did and how both the disciples and Jesus reacted is quite detailed. She came into the house, approached Jesus with a “very costly” perfume (made of “pure nard”) contained in an ornate bottle (“an alabaster flask”), and then “broke” the seal and poured all the ointment over Jesus’s head (14:3). Some of the men around the dinner table were so upset that “they scolded her” (14:5). But Jesus was well pleased. After he rebuked those who rebuked her (“Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her?”) and labeled *beautiful* what they called *wasteful* (14:6), he announced this commendation/prophecy: “Truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her” (14:9). Whether the term “the gospel” refers to the Gospel of Mark (as it is read or recited aloud) or to the passion narrative, her sweet perfume that filled this leper’s house now fills the four corners and seven continents of the world.¹

Prayer Prompt

Take time to ask God, through his Spirit, to renew your love for Jesus—to help you acknowledge that Jesus deserves your highest outpouring of love. He deserves your strangely extravagant and shockingly costly love.

Memory Verse

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:3–4

