

Week 2 Devotions: Worshiping Jesus as the Way to the Father

Psalm 100:4 tells us how to enter the tabernacle of fellowship with God. *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise.”* Spend a moment thanking God for his provision, protection, and goodness to you. Then enter his courtroom with praise for all Jesus has done for you.

There in the courtroom – the outer court of the tabernacle – take a look at the Accuser sitting at the table to your right, holding a list of all the things you’ve done to break God’s good and perfect laws. Sitting nearby are all the witnesses for the prosecution, all the people who have claims against you.

Now look to the left at the Counselor for the defense, the Holy Spirit, and take a seat next to him. As the charges against you are read, he asks how you plead and you say, “Guilty.” You confess your sins. The Holy Spirit then calls his only witness for the defense who is sitting right behind you: Jesus, your Advocate in God’s court.

Jesus walks past you to address the Judge directly. He goes to the altar of sacrifice in front of you and lifts up a golden bowl filled with the blood he shed on the cross. The word “LIFE” is written on the bowl because the perfect life is in his blood. He offers the Judge his perfect life in exchange for yours. The Judge receives the sacrifice with a smile and says, “Not guilty. This child is innocent.”

Then Jesus walks over to the Accuser and snatches from his hands the record of charges against you. He nails it to a cross as a reminder to the devil that he has no authority to accuse you anymore. He also collects the debt collection bills from the people to whom you owed something and writes, “PAID IN FULL,” cancelling your debts.

Finally, Jesus walks back to you and asks you to empty your pockets of any debt collection bills you have toward others. With a smile full of love, he asks, “Will you let me pay their debts, too?” You can choose to forgive the debts of others and release them to Jesus so you can leave the courtroom right now to go into the tabernacle to fellowship with the Father. Or you can stay and go sit behind the Accuser, handing him your testimony so he can accuse someone else. If you stay in the courtroom, holding onto unforgiveness, you’re missing out on the celebration that the Father is holding in the tabernacle for children who come home to him.

Where do you want to be?

You glance at the Accuser who is tempting you to come sit by him, telling you how good it feels to complain and how justified you are in holding onto those debts. But then you look at the scars in Jesus’ hands and the love on his face toward you and the people who owe you a debt. You see how much he longs to set them free and remember how relieved you were to see him cancel your debts. You turn to the Counselor and ask him to help you empty your pockets. You keep searching for any debts that need to be forgiven until finally your pockets are empty. *(Take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to search you and show you who you need to forgive.)*

As you release every debt, you suddenly realize how heavy those debts were in your pockets because you feel so much lighter! You feel like you could float away because the joy of the Lord is filling you. Off in the distance you hear the heavenly chorus of angels celebrating and feel drawn into the celebration.

Prayer prompt: At the altar, worship Jesus for all he’s done to set you free. Journal whatever God says.

Day 2: The Fountain of Living Water

As you leave the courtroom with all your debts paid, you approach the door to the tabernacle of fellowship. Between you and the door is a basin of water. Suddenly, you're aware of how dirty your clothes are and desire to feel clean and refreshed before going in to the celebration. As you begin to remove your clothes, you see written on each article words like "shame, striving, fear, oppression, curses, infirmity, weakness, pain." As you slowly remove each article, you notice that Jesus is there, taking each one and throwing it into a fire. The fire seems to originate in his eyes that burn with fiery love and passion for you to feel clean and whole in his presence. Though you're naked in his presence, there is only love in his eyes as he looks on you with joy that you have come to him to be made clean.

You notice a hole in his side where water is pouring out into the basin. He hears the question in your mind and answers, "I am the fountain of living water. I am the rock in the desert that Moses struck, providing water to all who are thirsty. I was pierced for your transgressions so you could be made clean by the living water that flows from me. Everything the living water touches is made clean and whole. Life is in the water of the Holy Spirit that has been provided for you."

As you step in the water it feels like a luxurious, warm bath. You look at your dirty hands and suddenly realize they are not only clean, but the hands of a baby. You go down under the water to wash your head and feel every negative thought associated with your former clothing washed off of you. When you come up out of the water, your vision is clearer. You not only see the open door to the tabernacle ahead, you see and hear angels worshipping all around you. Some of them are holding letters addressed to you regarding your future. Some of them hold a tray of tools you will need for your life ahead. There's a big bag of gifts waiting just inside the door to the tabernacle, beckoning you to enter.

You take one foot out of the water and hear a loud thud as you step out in authority. You look down at your hand and discover that Jesus has put a ring of authority on your finger. You're not sure when he did it, but it's there, nonetheless. You put your other foot down and suddenly see demons fleeing in all directions. Reading your thoughts again, Jesus says, "Child, you do not yet understand the authority you have been given." Then, winking, he adds, "But you will as you learn to walk in my authority."

Jesus puts a beautifully adorned robe on you. You feel so unworthy of something so majestic, but you are thankful to no longer feel naked and ashamed. He says, "This is my robe of righteousness. You didn't earn it, but I place it on you so that you can go in to fellowship with the Father as my bride. You are my beloved, a new creation. Forget about your old, filthy rags. You are mine now."

You realize that while you still have the memories associated with your past, they are now filtered through your new vision: the lens of love. As you walk through the door into the Holy Place that Jesus has opened for you, you start to remember your life differently. You see how Jesus was loving you in every moment of pain. You see his joy in every moment you resisted the devil and believed in God's goodness. You see the enemy trying to snatch you from the Father's hand and being completely unable to come between you and the love of the Father. You see the Holy Spirit whispering truth and encouragement into your mind before you ever knew who he was. You see every moment of your life completely covered in a red tint that somehow makes it all beautiful. Puzzled, you look to Jesus who smiles. "It's my blood, little one, that covers you in my love. It makes you perfect in the Father's sight."

Prayer prompt: At the fountain, worship Jesus for making you clean and clothing you. Journal insights.

Day 3: The Bread of the Presence

When you walk into the Holy Place of the tabernacle, Jesus welcomes you to sit down at a table to your right that has twelve loaves of bread on it. Each loaf is symbolic of God's presence with the twelve tribes of Israel and his abiding presence with us. Just as the bread Jesus blessed was broken and distributed to a multitude with twelve baskets leftover, there is always enough provision in God's presence. Jesus breaks a piece of bread, blesses it, and says, "This is my body." He hands it to you to receive.

As you put the bread in your mouth, it tastes familiar but somehow different from any bread you've taken in communion. It has a faint taste of honey. You look up and see that there is no roof over the room and bread is falling from heaven. You begin to worship Jesus as manna, the bread from heaven.

As you meditate on Jesus as the bread from heaven, scriptures begin to flood your thoughts. "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48). "The very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8).

As you look at Jesus, you hear the old children's song play in your mind, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." The story of scripture begins to weave its way in and out of your life story, pulling together loose threads and tying them together in a tapestry with the words "God So Loved" in the center. Every scripture you ever heard or memorized is somehow connected to that central picture in the center of your own tapestry. Jesus hangs it on the wall of the tabernacle as a reminder of his love for you demonstrated on the pages of the Bible.

You look down at the table and suddenly notice a Bible is sitting in the middle of the bread. Jesus opens it and takes out a page, handing it to you to eat. You take the Word and put it in your mouth. It also tastes sweet, like honey, and satisfying like bread. As you digest it you notice a feeling of simultaneous satisfaction and hunger for more. You ask Jesus what it was that you ate. He says...

(Pause and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind the words of Jesus he wants you to feast on today.)

As you meditate on scripture, the Holy Spirit begins to turn it over and show you other facets you've never seen before. As you look down in your hand, you no longer see a page from a Bible or piece of bread, but a sword that the Spirit has given you. Jesus, himself, folds his translucent presence around you like shining armor. With the Word all around you, in you, and as a sword in your hand, the Holy Spirit gives you instructions for how to use the sword to tear down the arguments of the devil. You slash down cobwebs that have darkened your mind and with every victory, you become hungry for more of the Word.

In peace, you return to the table to simply abide with Jesus there, lingering over the bread. There's no rush to move on. The smell of bread fills your nose and smells like home. There's a banner overhead that simply says, "Love." You're home.

Prayer and journal prompt: Worship Jesus as the bread from heaven who fills you and satisfies you as God's Word of life. Journal any scripture insights the Holy Spirit gives you. Thank him and ask him for more!

Day 4: The Light of the Seven-branched Lampstand

As you remain in Jesus' presence and his words remain in you in the Holy Place of the tabernacle, you suddenly become aware of the gentle light shining in the room. You look to your left and see the seven-branched lampstand or menorah which represents the sevenfold Spirit from Isaiah 11 that rests upon Jesus. The center branch has beautiful writing upon it that says, "Spirit of God." The other six branches that curve upward and outward from the center branch each have another description written on them:

- Spirit of wisdom
- Spirit of understanding
- Spirit of counsel
- Spirit of might
- Spirit of knowledge
- Spirit of the fear of the Lord

The light of the menorah illuminates Jesus, shining through him. Beams of light flow out from Jesus in brilliant colors, like light shining through a prism. Each color seems to contain a picture from your life. Some pictures are past events that Jesus wants to illuminate by giving you understanding. Some are current events for which you need wisdom or counsel. Some are future events that will require you to receive knowledge or might from the Lord. Some are mysteries to be unraveled, and some mysteries simply draw you further into awe of the Lord. While more questions than answers seem to flood your mind, there is a peace in Jesus' presence that allows you to rest in the knowledge that everything you need is present in the Light.

Jesus refills the oil in the lamps and asks you if you would like some oil. You hold out your hands to receive, then feel him pour the oil over your head. It slowly runs down your head, filling you with the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control that comes from the Holy Spirit's abiding presence in you. Any roughness in your skin is softened by the oil.

Jesus then pours oil into your hands. Pictures form in the oil of you doing various activities with Jesus. Puzzled, you look at him and he smiles. "This oil isn't for you; it's for them." Suddenly, a beam of light from the heart of Jesus pierces your heart and you feel his simultaneous love for every person and anguish over the pain present in humanity. His compassion for the lost becomes your compassion for the lost. His passion for his bride to be made beautiful becomes your passion. His love for the Father becomes your love for the Father. As the oil of the Spirit penetrates your hands a wellspring of life rises up within you, filling you with a boldness to share the good news like you've never had before. It doesn't come from a place of guilt or duty, but from the love Jesus has for you and the world. The world must know this love!

Overwhelmed by the love of God and filled with confidence in God's provision by the Spirit, you sit down to bask in the light and let it wash over you. The thought pops into your mind, "It's time to dream again." You open your mind to the Holy Spirit and invite him to give you pictures and impressions of God's dreams for your life. Like opening presents on Christmas morning, you invite the Spirit to give you the gifts he's been holding onto just for you. It's time.

Prayer and journal prompt: Worship Jesus as the Light and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with every good gift the Father has for you. Write down whatever he shows you. Thank him and ask for more!

Day 5: The Incense Altar Before God's Throne

As you continue to abide in the presence of Jesus, filled with his love for you and the world around you, you boldly approach the incense altar that stands in front of the ark of the covenant, God's mercy seat. You notice the curtain that has been torn from top to bottom that used to stand between the incense altar and the ark. You worship Jesus, the embodiment of the torn curtain, who enabled you to come unhindered to the Father. Worthy is the Lamb! Holy is he!

The sweet smell of incense fills your nose. You notice that each of the coals on the incense altar has the name of Jesus on it. Jesus explains that the coals had to come from the altar of sacrifice. The incense mixes with prayers to ascend to the Father, and since Jesus was the final sacrifice, every prayer we pray in Jesus' name is empowered by his sacrifice.

You kneel down to pray back to the Father all the scriptures that the Holy Spirit has brought to your mind and ask for grace to walk in the good plans he has for you. In a spirit of intercession, you recall the love Jesus has for the lost and broken people you know. Jesus' intercession becomes your intercession. As the Spirit brings names and situations to your mind, you remember the ring of authority Jesus put on your finger and begin to pray bold prayers for salvation, healing, deliverance, and life for your friends, family, and community.

(Pause and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with the intercession of Jesus for those you know and any other situations he brings to mind.)

As you ask for the Father to bring what is in heaven down to the earth, a holy hush falls over the room. Almighty God, who dwells above the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant, comes down...to you. He takes you by the hand and leads you deep into the Most Holy Place. In one direction, you see a lovely garden with a stream running through it. In another direction, you see stars and distant galaxies, the vastness of the heavens. You also see a library full of books and shelves of boxes containing mysteries to be opened someday.

You feel anticipation that whatever the Father has planned for you today will be good. In the warmth of his presence, you sense the longing in his heart, like he has been waiting for this moment with you your whole life. You suddenly realize that this was the purpose for which he created you, to be here with him. You ask him, "Father, what would you like me to know today? Where should we explore together?" With a twinkle in his eye, he says...

Prayer and journal prompt: Beloved, the Father is present in this moment to answer this question. Close your eyes, open the eyes of your heart, and let him whisper his love and goodness to you. End your listening time with worship and journal whatever he showed you in the Most Holy Place. Go out with joy!

The next time you pray: You can use this mental model of progressing through the tabernacle as a way of abiding in Christ. There's no need to go back to the courtroom! Worship Jesus at the altar and thank him for his blood and your rebirth by the Spirit that gives you access to the Holy Place of abiding. Go right in to receive his light, teaching, and anointing. Pray from the place of intimacy and connection, then simply ask the Father, "What do you want me know?" Wait for a picture to form in your mind's eye and listen. Journal any revelation he gives you. The more you practice, the easier it becomes to go right in and receive anytime.