

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

### Streams of Living Water

#### Matthew 6:5-8 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, **go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.** Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

#### NOTES:

“The contemplative life is the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us.”-Richard Foster

Disciples desire for Prayer

**“Lord, teach us to pray.”-Luke 11:1**

In Matthew 6, Jesus begins to teach. Not with a rulebook. But with a heart-level invitation. Go to your secret place. Don’t make it a show. Keep your words simple.

This isn’t about formulas. It’s about focus. Jesus is naming both the heart of prayer and the kinds of things that can distort it.

“If Prayer is Right, then everything is right”-Theophan the Recluse.

John 1:47-48

<sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”<sup>48</sup> “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

How do you know if you are there?

#### Love & Fire

“Through time and experience we sense a delicate but deepening love for God that feels more like a gift than achievement”-Richard Foster

- Out of that Love will flow a fire/a passion for the things of God, and a desire to be purified of anything that causes separation from God.

#### NOTES:

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at [solanabeach.church](http://solanabeach.church) for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Start your time in conversation with one another: Pascal wrote of an encounter with God that he simply described as "Fire." Have you ever experienced a moment of deep connection with God that shaped you in a lasting way?

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (Use one of the below practices or choose one from a previous week.)

- **Breath Prayer:** Breath Prayer is an ancient practice that invites us to slow down and awaken ourselves—even our breath—to the presence of God. It is an invitation to remember that God is closer to us than even our own breath! *This week you are invited to use the phrase "Come, Holy Spirit." As you focus on breathing in and out, allow the words to flow out from inward breath to outward breath:*
  1. **Inhale:** "Come"
  2. **Exhale:** "Holy Spirit"
  3. Continue on for a few minutes at a slowed pace, making space for a growing awareness of God's Holy Spirit.
- **Centering Prayer:** In this practice we quiet our minds, cease striving and make room for God's deep work in us. We invite the Holy Spirit to work unhindered by our distractions and efforts, giving consent to God's healing and inspiring work in our innermost selves. We trust that God knows us better than we know ourselves and can be at work in the unconscious and unknown parts of us, bringing healing and transformation.
  - Take a moment to breathe, slow down and be attentive. Choose a sacred focus for your prayer time. This could be a name for God or simply "Lord, I am Yours." Or you can choose an image to hold in your mind's eye like Jesus' loving look or Jesus calming the sea. Or you can focus with your breath, paying attention to your inhalations and exhalations. Using your sacred focus, quiet your mind. When your mind wanders, return to your sacred focus, trusting that the Holy Spirit is at work in you.
  - After the allotted time, thank the Holy Spirit for working in you and ask that this work be sealed and protected.

## CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Pray Together and then Read Matthew 6:5-8

- Alone: Reflect/journal on one or more of the following prompts:
  - Jesus says, "Go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen." What might your "secret place" of prayer look like in this season of life? Do you have one?
  - Where does your mind go as you read this passage? What emotions, images, memories, or thoughts are you encountering as you read?
- In pairs: Share your personal reflections from the prompts above. Encourage one another to engage curiosity, confusion, or bigger questions.

## CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- How would you summarize the "Contemplative" Tradition?
- How does the contemplative tradition help you to understand prayer?
- Read the larger passage (Matthew 6:1-18). How does reading the whole passage shift or enhance how you understand Matthew 6:5-8?
- What do you think the "reward" is in verse 6?
- What are some examples of how people might pray to be seen by others?
- How do we cultivate a sincere prayer-filled life?
- What 's hard for you about the contemplative tradition?
- What questions do you still have about the message or scripture passage?

## ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: Reflect on the below quote and consider this question for further conversation: Which aspects of the contemplative tradition speak most deeply to you?

*"The contemplative life is the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us."*  
-Richard Foster

## PRAYER

Begin your prayer time in stillness. Slowly, enter into prayer with one another. Ask for love, attention, and imagination to encounter these six streams over this message series. Pray with gratitude for the ways each of these streams—or faith traditions—have contributed to how we love and worship God. Ask God to help you encounter and receive the gift of diverse expressions of faith.