
Back to the Altar — Early Will I Seek Thee

DAY 5 — JESUS, THE EARLY RISER

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23).

The Altar Truth

There is an “altar truth” in the life of Jesus that no Christian should miss. During the past few days we have reflected much on altars in Scripture and on the lives of those who built them. The altar is a metaphor for a place and time of worship to the true and living God. One need not possess a physical altar in order to worship God. In fact, if a follower of Jesus lives in consistent, earnest, Bible-bathed communion with God, he or she has already erected an altar as real as the one that Elijah rebuilt on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).

We see such an “altar” in the life of Jesus. Amid a busy life of daily ministry, constant threats, and withering assaults from the devil, Jesus made time for long seasons of prayer and worship. He who was equal with the Father (Philippians 2:6) still thought it important to “be still and know” that God is God (Psalm 46:10). Jesus understood from an early age that His calling required constant connection with His Father. This was the only way to carry the sins of the world to the cross.

Early Seekers Wanted

In Mark 1:35 Jesus rose “a long while before daylight” and found a quiet, solitary place to talk—and listen—to His Father. The previous day had been spent in full-on ministry—healing the sick, casting out demons, and redeeming the lost. When the disciples awoke, they noticed Jesus was gone and went in search of Him. “When they found Him, they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You’” (Mark 1:37). Jesus’ answer is a powerful reminder of the blessing that awaits all who tend their morning and evening altar.

“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth,” Jesus remarked (Mark 1:38). Did you get that? Jesus was faced with a powerful dilemma. Stay in the place where He was—Peter’s home—and continue fruitful ministry there. Or, leave that place for new, untested ministry territories. Few Christians today would give up a fertile ministry moment for an unknown one. Yet, Jesus did exactly that with no hesitation. How did He make the right decision? God the Father had revealed the plans for that day to Jesus during His private devotional time. The Father affirmed Jesus’ purpose as He prayed and waited in His presence.

Friends, when we fail to seek God early in worship and prayer, we miss God’s plans for our day and His affirmation of our purpose. Today let us pray for the commitment to rise early and spend time with God that He might ready us to fulfill His purpose for our day and our lives.

Let’s talk to our God.

Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)**Praying God's Word — John 4:23**

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."

"True Worshipers"

Father, teach us in our everyday activities, in both the important and the mundane aspects of our lives, how to worship You. May we no more compartmentalize our faith, may we no more think of worship as only a Sabbath event, but truly see it as the happiest way of life. May we be continually connected to You and live as true worshipers of the only true God. Amen.

"Worship the Father in Spirit and Truth"

Thank You, God, that we can worship You from wherever we are and whenever we want to. You hear us whether we are at home, at work, at church, or traveling. We give You praise for this 24/7 availability to Your children. Lord, guide us into all truth through Your Holy Spirit so that our worship, yes, our lives, will be in harmony with all truth. Thank You, God, for leading us into a true worship experience. Amen.

"The Father is Seeking Such"

Gracious Father, Your love for us is beyond comprehension. You desire us to be close to You. You actively seek us out and are so eager to become everything to us. Forgive us when we have ignored You and not spent much, or any, daily time with You. We know You don't force Yourself upon us. Thank You for the assurance that if we invite You to commune with us, You will be among us. Amen.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

Our Church: Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

Local Requests: Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond: Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Give Me Jesus (#305); In the Garden (#487); I Will Early Seek the Savior (#539); Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus (#290)

Other Songs: Give Me Oil in My Lamp; He's Able; Into My Heart; Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet