
WORSHIP AT HOME

Do You Love Me More Than These



Call to Worship

Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord. Come and quench this thirsting of my soul. Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more; fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole.

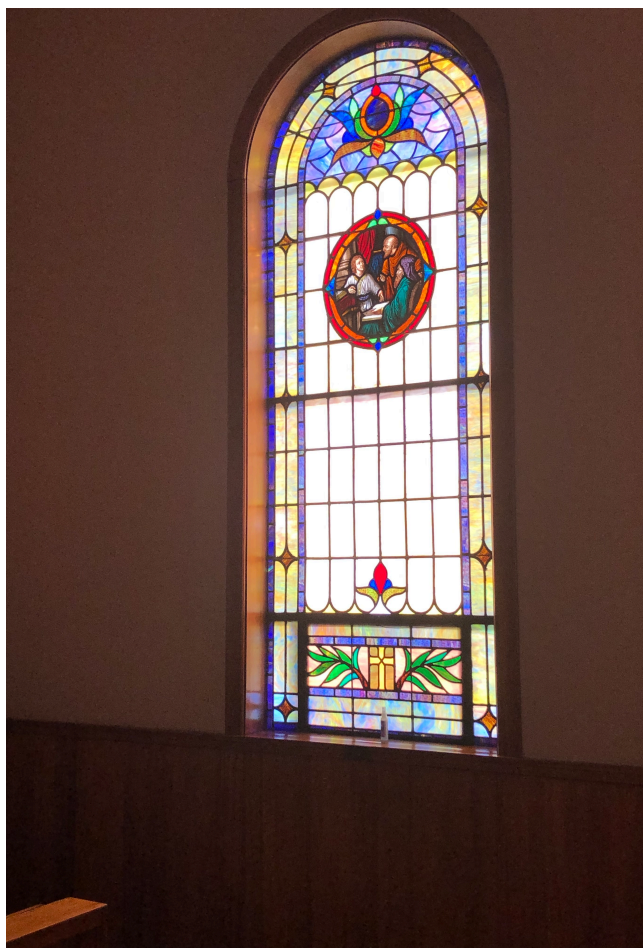
God, "LET" YOUR Spirit be poured into us like water that fills the sea, and light that give us eyes to see.

Glory Be to the Father

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. Amen.

Praise

- The Son Ministry received 30 bags of food from Food City.
- The Son Ministry received a Grant for \$2000 from Holston Foundation.
- The Church received a Loan/Grant from the Government to be used for salaries and utilities for 8 weeks.
- The Back Pack Ministry received a Grant for \$1000 for emergency assistance to provide food boxes.
- Your generous tithes and offerings reflect our giving is about \$5000 greater than spending.
- The Monday Night small group continues to gather on Zoom. The Tuesday Morning Diving Reading Group meets at 11am on Zoom.
- The Spring Class of 2020 Divine Reading met Wednesday April 29. Ten persons attended this meeting. Two more will join next week. The Ministry of Trinity UMC now reaches people from Virginia, Tennessee, and Washington. Friends, do not cease to gather together! God is bring people together in ways I could not imagine prior to this pandemic.



Trinity stained glass reflects the stories of God's Salvation. Person's stained by sin gather together on Zoom to be washed clean in the Light of God's Word.

Concerns

- Social Distancing indeed interferes with our gathering. No amount of physical distancing may separate us from God. God is Spirit. John calls us to worship in Spirit and Truth. Let us not cease to Love one another. Love is patient and kind. Love never insist on its own way. Love offers Hope. Our Hope? God is with us always. Shall we insist on our ways or ask use this time to LET the Holy Spirit led us?
- Several folk have asked that a dropbox for tithes and offerings be installed at the Church. Watch for an announcement about its installation.

Prayer

Father, open our eyes to see that Social Distancing has been a part of our lives from our first breath. Adam and Eve founded social distancing through

their greed for wisdom greater than your Word. Sin continues to divide and separate. Prisons socially distances us according to good and evil. Politics distance us through ideology, opinionated facts, and oppressive prejudice that sees neither race, religion, or family origin. Denominations create social distancing via doctrine.

Your children faced famine. They left your promises to find daily bread in Egypt. Yet, you fed their forefathers for 40 years in the wilderness. Your Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. In the wilderness, Jesus mastered the ways of the Holy Spirit. At our baptism, in water, you poured the fullness of Your Holy Spirit into each person who believes in the Name of Christ Jesus. Through your Son's suffering, death, and resurrection, the power of His Name, we are baptized into Christ death to be raised to new life in the Spirit.

Father, I confess the Name of Jesus. Give us eyes to see this pandemic as the wilderness where you teach us and equip us to be sent as You sent Jesus. Amen

He is Lord

He is Lord, he is Lord! He is risen from the dead and he is Lord! Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Reading of Scripture

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.

The Word of God, for the People of God.

Thanks be to God!

Homily

Lord, you know everything; you know I love you!

I hear today's text begging a question. I also see an invitation to receive God's blessing. The text asks, What are "these" that Peter may love more than Jesus? Jesus blesses Peter with life-purpose and life-direction.

Peter's life-purpose is to tend the young (lambs) and mature (sheep). His life-direction is to feed the mature.

Father, you bless us through your Son. Your Son tells us that just as You sent your Son so You send us! Open our ears to hear "these" things that compete for our love. Give us eyes to see our life-purpose and life-direction. Amen

I contend that the key to unlocking Scripture begins with denying our opinions, questions, and answers. Denying does not mean we lose these things. It means we pause to let the Bible ask the questions and give God's answers.

Immediately following Jesus resurrected the Disciples faced THREE barriers to faith in Christ's resurrected life. I contend that the following passages of Scripture clearly identify "these" barriers.

1. Fear of the Jews. (See John 20: 19-20)
2. Doubt. (See John 20: 24-25)
3. Profession/Power/Wealth. (See John 21:1-3)

What does John mean by "fear of the Jews?"

He is accused of antisemitism. This accusation reveals much about our prejudice than the Gospel. The Jewish people are God's chosen. They were chosen by God to receive the Law through Moses. Read the stories of Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday. These stories tell us that Jesus suffered at the hands of the Religious Leaders. Jesus was judged according to the Law of Moses. Jesus was condemned a sinner. Jesus received the due penalty of Sin. Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried. Moreover, Jesus let this happen to reveal God's true nature. God is Grace, and that is the Truth of John's Gospel. (See John 1: 17)

The Disciples were locked in the Upper Room for fear their religion would judge them, condemn them, and crucify them too. After 26 years of ministry I am familiar with fear of the Religious Institutions. The infighting taking place in mainline denomination stems from one of three positions. Conformity to the Law of Moses. Conformity to the Social Gospel. Inclusive -ism says you must accept me and affirm me a right and good.

Personal Confession: I am guilty of all three means of conformity. I am glad to say that God at work through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. leads me not into "these" temptations. Friends, I can't be delivered from something I can't see, hear, name and deny power and authority.

How does doubt build a barrier that prevents us from being sent as the Father sent the Son?

The Epistles speak about the barrier of doubt. Shall the Follower of Christ keep the Law of Moses? Shall we follow Moses and Jesus? (The Divided House) Paul speaks at length attempting to explain that circumcision is the outward sign of the Old Covenant. Furthermore, he says keeping the Old Covenant makes the New Covenant worthless. The writer of Hebrews contends that Jesus is God incarnate. Furthermore the Old Covenant with its Commands, Sacrifices, and Tithes are mere shadows of Jesus Christ. Christ is the most high priest who is superior in every way. So doubters double down. They believe in Jesus but place their faith in the Law of Moses. By believing in Jesus for our eternal reward while placing our faith in Moses, we justify judging and condemning our neighbor of the smallest violation of the Law. In other words the Doubter loves to receive mercy at the expense of shaping and forming a community of grace. We are saved by Grace through faith in Christ. Ephesians 6:8

How does profession/power/ wealth create a barrier to being sent as the Father sent the Son?

In Matthew Jesus says, you must deny yourself. In John, Jesus says, love one another as I have loved you. Denying self simply means I place my opinions, answers, and judgement aside to listen to Jesus' way of mercy. Mercy builds places of Grace. Places of Grace are seen and experienced as unconditional love.

At their core the Judge and Doubter are self-centered. It is not enough to master a profession. They must be seen and applauded as the best. Best is often recognized as the biggest, most wins, biggest profits... Therefore, the best and biggest must have the most power, control, and prestige. Then it follows that the best and biggest will be the most wealthy. Wealth is a gift but it also buys power and control.

Jesus ask Peter "do you love me more than these." Here too we must be cautious. Salvation is the work of God. Salvation is based on the New Covenant. Disciples are sent as the Father sent the son. God knows it is the Holy Spirit who leads us to confession, repentance, and reconciliation. The third time Peter answers Jesus by denying himself, "Lord you know all things, you know; I love you."

Salvation is not about what I/we know. Salvation is about being known by the Father and led by the Holy Spirit to practice mercy, grace and love the same as Jesus.

Indeed accepting Christ as Savior makes Disciples a new creation. But, oh, how costly the change. Obedience to the Law of Moses is transformed into obedience to Christ and his mercy. The Doubter is transformed from being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine into faith in Christ. Here a radical shift takes place. All are welcomed in the Name of Christ's mercy which creates a place to experience God's Grace. Grace reveals the truth of God's nature. At last the community of Grace is known by its love. Friends, love is to known by the Father. This is why Jesus asked Peter three times "Do you love me."

Saying, Yes, Lord you know I love you is not the same as receiving God's Love as an experience of being unconditionally and fully known. This is an experience of the Peace Christ gives to His Disciples.

Jesus' blessing comes into view once we grasp the background of "these" barriers. Jesus blesses Peter with Life-Purpose: Tend my Lambs and Sheep. Jesus blesses Peter with Life- Direction: Feed my Sheep.

To tending like the Good Shepherd may only be accomplished though Holy Spirit led acts of mercy. Jesus tended people bound by the Law of Moses, their conscience, guilt, shame, or blame with mercy.

1. Tending in Jesus' name means to practice and teach Confession of Jesus' name. To tend disciples face sin, name it, claim it, and own it. Only then are they ready to Confess Jesus' name.
2. Confessing Jesus power and authority over sin teaches the Disciple to place their faith in Christ's mercy, not the broken Law of Moses. Every time a person names their sin and Confesses Christ the Holy Spirit leads the Disciple to Faith.
3. The Disciples' Life-purpose is to tend to mercy that builds a community of Grace.
4. The mature Disciples lives his or her Life - Purpose.
5. The Mature Disciple knows their Life-direction. Mercy creates the place of Grace. Grace is known by God's Love. Disciples feed God Sheep Love. Love praises and worships God, everything else is mere shadows and entertainment.

One. In. Christ,
Robert

Tithes and Offerings

Tithes: Please mail your tithe to the attention of JOYCE: Trinity UMC, 203 E 1st St S, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

Offerings: God desires our heart-soul-mind. God is Spirit. God reveals through Jesus Christ his perfect will is to live in you and I the same way he celebrated life in Jesus Christ. In the name of Christ, I invite you to offer yourself as a Holy and Living Offering!

Benediction

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! There's just something about that Name. Master, Savior, Jesus! Like the fragrance after the rain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! LET all heaven and earth Proclaim: Kings and kingdoms will all pass away, but there is something about that Name!

Every Confession Proclaims the Name above every name! Friends, Grace is the Power of His Name. Name your sins but Confess and Proclaim Christ!