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# WORSHIP AT HOME

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## Update on In Person Worship

The Holston Conference Covid-19 Task Force approved outdoor worship. When our Church Council meet a few months ago to set Trinity's Protocols for worship, outdoor worship was quickly discarded.

I continue to be open to the idea. Tradition has a mind of its own! First, I must hear from you. If you were attending our Social

What Fuels your  
heart-soul-mind?

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Distancing Sanctuary Worship Services would you regularly attend an outdoor service? An equal number of our congregation chose other means of worship such as TV, Facebook Live, etc. If you are one of those persons, would you regularly attend an outdoor worship service? Please call, or text me at 423-863-7622, or “reply” to this email.

I find it amazing that High School and College Football leaders are “moving” their season for Covid-19. Fans sit in rain, sleet, snow, and blazing hot sun to watch their team. Blessed are they who receive overtime! Will Believers conditioned to build sanctuaries sit in rain, sleet, snow, and blazing hot sun for a service of worship?

How many of you listen to music recorded on 45 rpm vinyl? 8 Track cassette? How about Am or FM radio? CDs, iPods, and Satellite radio. The deliver system may change but not the sound of music! Neither does the Worship Delivery System change the sound of worship to God’s ear!!!



**The over flow of worshipping in Spirit and Truth!**

**When the Church is a gathering of two or more people, worship is an experience of believing and receiving Christ’s power and authority.**

The Bible tells us that humanity has a long history of changing our Worship Delivery Systems. Abraham, Issac, and Jacob stacked rocks, built a fire on the rock altar, made sacrifice, and cooked a meal. This they believed was our Father’s preferred Worship Delivery System. Moses ushered in sweeping change. He built a portable - traveling tabernacle. A Tent God filled with Smoke, Wind, and Fire! Priest suddenly became the middle men of sacrifice and worship. King Solomon also changed the Delivery System. Out with the Tent, in with

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the Stone Temple, partitioned like the tabernacle. When the Temple was destroyed the people built Synagogues. These were schools of prayer and study. Many were tents! Think about Tradition's power.

Fast forward to Jesus. The religious leaders thought Jesus was a nut. Yes, Jesus went to Temple. Mary and Joseph were righteous according to the Law. Jesus kept their Tradition. At the same time he took worship practices back to the days of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. Jesus went up the mountain to pray, not to synagogue. Jesus made great sacrifices along the dusty roads, in bars, and restaurants. He cast out evil, healed the sick, cured lepers, blind, deaf, and beggars. Huh, could Jesus be showing us the way to Worship in Spirit and Truth. (See John 4:21-23)

When Jesus' earthly walk turned him toward the Cross, He told Peter that He would build his Church on the rock. Jesus builds His Church on he rock, not with rock!!!

We live on the 3rd Rock from the Sun. Let all of heaven and the 3rd Rock from the Sun worship God in Spirit and Truth. Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us not into temptation but to the Truth.

The earth is the Rock God created through Jesus Christ. We live on the 3rd rock from the sun because God predestined it to be the place to raise God's children. God sent His Son to live on the 3rd Rock from the Sun. He came from Heaven to the Third Rock from the Sun to build God's Holy Temple on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus builds His Church out of sin hardened hearts, blind souls, and minds filled with judgment and evil!

Many religious leaders still think Jesus is a nut. On the 3rd Rock from the Sun Jesus still builds His Church with his hands, not human hands laying rock with mortar! He builds his Church on the 3rd Rock from the Sun out of broken hearts, blind souls, and judgmental, evil, minds.

We begin 2020 with hope for 20/20 vision. 20/20 vision looks back. Look back. Read this again. Pray. Read I Peter 2:4-10. Pray! Then, please share with me what God reveals to your heart-soul-mind about Jesus' Worship Deliver System.

One in Christ,  
Robert

## Welcome to Worship

Do you get the impression that the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing? Friends, in Hebrew culture the left hand is reserved for potty practices! The right hand is reserved for fellowship. In the same way Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father. Hear the Good News: Jesus made Peace with our left-handed practices. Grace means now is the time our lives are hidden in Christ Jesus, in heaven. Everyone who believes in the power of His Name and receives His Authority is sent to bring Peace, Love, and Joy to his “lost sheep.”

In one hand the Church becomes a building where worship must take place. In the other hand the Church becomes a gathering of two or more people who believe in Jesus, receives His authority, and offer peace, love, and joy to “lost sheep.”

The tempter would have us pick one hand or the other. Jesus says, His Father’s house is a house of prayer. His house is built of hearts, souls, and minds. Now is the time to fold our left hand and right hand together and cleanse the sanctuary of our souls with prayer.

## Confession: James 4

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.

***Look back across your week. Where and with whom have you fought and quarreled? Remember what you felt! Remember what you thought about your feeling! What spirit fueled your action?***

*You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.4 You adulterous people,[a] don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

***Confession recognizes and names what is., reality! No one can change what has happened. Confession lets our earthly nature be. It prepares us to repent. Repentance is the desire to be led through suffering and trials with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.***

5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us[b]? 6 But he gives us more grace.

***The Holy Spirit leads us to confess our temptation. This is why we pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Friends, on one hand we want free-will. On the other hand we pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” We practice Cheap Grace when we cling to our will while demanding our neighbors do God’s will.***

## **Prayer: Psalm 4**

***Answer me when I call, O God of my right! (Confession)***

***You gave me room when I was in distress. (The Right hand of Mercy takes hold of the Left Hand!)***

***Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. (Grace is an experience of being in Christ and ushered into God’s Holy, Healing, Presence.)***

***How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? (Call to repentance, to think and feel like Christ.)***

***How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? Selah (The Spirit of the World.)***

***3 But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. (Faith, trust the Lord’s mercy, grace, and love.)***

***4 When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent. Selah (Instructions on letting the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.)***

***5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord. (The sacrifice of thanksgiving, praise, and worship reflects out trust — faith — in the power and authority of the Lord, Jesus Christ.)***

*Note: The meaning of the word Selah has been long lost. In the context of the Psalmist’s prayer I hear it as an invitation to be still, in the midst of trials and suffering, and hear God’s voice delivering, forgiving, healing, and restoring our souls to reflect God’s image.*

*Prayer doesn’t change God. Prayer changes the spirit that fuels our thoughts, feelings, and actions.*

## **Hymn of Sacrifice**

We bring the sacrifice of praise  
Into the house of the Lord.  
We bring the sacrifice of praise  
Into the house of the Lord.

And we offer up to You  
The sacrifices of thanksgiving;  
And we offer up to You  
The sacrifices of joy

## **Affirmation of Faith: Matthew 10**

Let us affirm our faith in Christ by experiencing the authority, power, calling, and mission that was first received by the Apostles.

Then Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. **2** These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; **3** Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;<sup>[b]</sup> **4** Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

**Lord Jesus, is now the time You are summoning me/us to believe and receive your authority over unclean spirits? Lord, by your mercy do you know me as Disciple? How may I be a witness of what I have not seen, confessed, repented, and trusted?**

**5** These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,

**Lord, in Your mercy, lead me to experience your authority over the unclean spirits who seek control of my heart and mind.**

**6** but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **7** As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’<sup>[c]</sup> **8** Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers,<sup>[d]</sup> cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

**Lord of Mercy, here I am, send me to the lost sheep of Your congregation.**

**9** Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, **10** no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food.

**Lord, teach me Your way of meeting physical needs with physical blessings and Spiritual needs with Spiritual blessings.**

11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

**Lord of Grace, send me with sacrifices of Peace, Love, and Joy. Open my eyes to recognize the peace seeking lost sheep around me. Teach me to humbly dust my feet of those who have their hearts and minds set on the Way of the World and or hunger and thirst for evil.**

## Scripture Lesson: Ephesians 4

21 For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. 22 You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

### Rules for the New Life

25 So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. 26 **Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not make room for the devil.** 28 Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. 29 Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, [b] as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. 31 Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, 32 and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. [c]

## Homily

For years I have suffered a spirit of anger. Paul says be angry but do not sin. Sin separates me from God, neighbor, and the image I was created to reflect with my life. I have listened to the Law of Moses and tried to keep it. The more I worked to change, the more I became familiar with long-suffering. Long nights of anguish were filled with tossing and turning about in my bed while I prayed that I could change my behavior. During these months and years of anguish I read James 4, prayed the scripture, and pleaded with God to teach me how to make peace with the battle raging in my heart and mind. How did I miss the truth? God made Peace with me through Jesus' mercy, grace, and love. I believed in Jesus but

did not know I was summoned to receive the authority and power of a Disciple. (See John 1:12-13)

Allow me to share a parable of my experience. The engine that powers my car burns gasoline. Wisdom teaches that I must be aware of the various fuels available at the Shell Station. One pump dispenses three grades of gasoline. Another pump dispenses diesel fuel. There is yet another pump that dispenses kerosene. The fuel I pump into the car's tank bears predetermined consequences. My Subaru performs very well on "regular" unleaded gasoline. Our Can Am Spyder demands "premium." Yes, it will run on the other grades but the performance of the engine suffers dramatically.

I recall what happened when an employee pumped gasoline into a diesel tractor.. It was a costly mistake. The flash point of gasoline is so low that the explosion destroyed the diesel engine beyond repair. I recall my dad telling me about running a gas engine of diesel. When the gas in the fuel line is gone and the engine tries to ignite the diesel, it fails and the engine stops. Kerosene makes matters even worse. It covers moving parts with carbon, making those parts worthless.

Our hear-soul-mind requires fuel for life. Like the Shell Station, God dispenses three grade of fuel. The Spirit of Mercy. The Spirit of Grace. The Spirit of Love. Each fuel burns hotter, brighter, and reveals more of God's image!

The World offers fuel for our hear-soul-mind. The heart and mind that runs on the fuel of values, ethics, and morals reflects the way of the World. Just as a diesel engine will run on kerosene so the heart-soul-mind runs on the fuel of the World. It runs, but performance suffers. It may reflect right and good, but never makes us Holy. Judgement is our reaction to the poor performance. Eventually this fuel creates human suffering.

Satan also offers us fuel. When we switch from the fuel the world dispense to the fuel of evil our hear-soul-mind implodes. We were not created to be fueled by Anger, wrath, malice, dissension... This flash point glorifies Satan, not God. This is why my anger leaves me thinking something is killing me!!!

Our choice to choose what fuel to run our heart-soil-mind is what Theologians call free will. God's will is revealed through Jesus as he summons the Apostles. Pray! Listen! You are being summoned!

The following is what my many nights of anguish taught me. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit uses something herein that would help you become aware of the power and



authority of the fuel God offers out of His great Love for the World. (John 3:16) Believing in Jesus Christ prepares us to Receive Holy Fuel that makes Satan flee. Well, at least until he has another opportunity to lead us into the temptation of evil.

The beliefs echoed in our Praise Songs, Traditional Hymns, Creeds, Statements of Faith, Liturgies, and Holidays are like the components of the engine in our cars. Our beliefs prepares our heart-soul-mind to receive the fuel of worship. Worship of God is Spirit Led. The Holy Spirit fuels the heart-soul-mind in experiences of Peace, Love, and Joy.

Unfortunately the past 500 or so years has convinced us that the Church is a building, and that worship is a service that only takes place in that building space. Jesus reveals that the Church is two or more people gathering to believe and receive power and authority to cast out evil, heal disease and sickness, and cleanse lepers who choose to wear human made divisive labels.

A Lesson on Awareness of Spirits that fuel our heart-soul-mind.

- The Holy Spirit is revealed through mercy, peace, and love as described and experienced in I Corinthians 13. In all things Jesus' power and authority leads us to be living-sacrifices of thanksgiving, and joy. Each moment of being the living -sacrifice is authentic worship in Spirit and Truth. Worship reflects Christ, not some hand made human delivery system.
- The spirit of the world is revealed through human values, ethics, morals, and judgement. This is the love reflected by the spirit of the world.
- The spirit of Satan is revealed through anger, wrath, malice, bitterness, and arguments that divide. This is love of evil.
- Advice! Change the spirit that fuels your life. All attempts to change the nature of the the three spirits is foolishness.

A Lesson in how to be angry but not sin.

- We all experience anger. (See James 4) Confess the reality of what is. Only a fool seeks repentance without first confessing and humbly receiving Christ's mercy.
- When anger begins to rise, stop! Take a breath. (Selah)
- Ask, "Am I in mortal danger? If this threat has the power to kill your mortal body, anger may save your mortal life. The flight, freeze, fight response is in our hearts and minds to save our mortal life, not our eternal souls!
- Resting in your breath, think about what you are feeling. Imagine how you will feel about what you are thinking about doing.
- Experiencing someone attack our values, ethics, morals, opinion, or preferred label can and will cause anger to rise up with us. But notice, this fear does not lead to mortal death! It may spell death of our ego, flesh, and selfish ways but remember what Jesus said,

“Those who seek to save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life, for my sake, will find it. Freewill also means we get to choose if we will let the anger in our heart-mind become an evil action. Notice the wisdom in Psalm 4. Take it to your bed and wrestle with it. Be silent. Asks God to lead you not into temptation but to deliver you from evil.

- The cause of most of my bouts of anger are clearly spelled out in James 4. The fool always wants to prove their selfish way is right and good.
- My nights of wrangling turned out to be like the story Jacob wrestling with God. He didn't stop wrestling until he receiving God's blessing. Wow, Jacob played right into God's plan. God meets us in our anger and uses it to teach us God's way of mercy that leads to Grace, and Grace that leads to a life of Peace, Love and Joy. Hopeful you catch that God's blessings overflow with Peace, Love, and Joy.
- Blame, guilt and shame blind us from the truth. My anger is in me, not my neighbor. Awareness that the anger is in me shows me what to confess. Confession frees me from shame, guilt, or blame! Such awareness also reveals another truth. What I experience as anger is not in my neighbor. Now that is humbling, delivering, freeing, and full of healing. Therefore, the desire to change the spirit that fuels my heart-mind is a clear sign of repentance. Change the fuel that powers your heart and mind and your actions will reflect the spirit that fuels your life.
- I still experience anger. When I am physically, emotionally, or spiritual tired or hungry I tend to perceive even the smallest nonlethal threat as a mortal danger. It takes a lot of awareness to tell the difference between an opposing opinion and a gun held to my head. It is humbling to discover that neurologically speaking, our heart-mind does not recognize the difference between mortal - threat and a non-mortal threat. See, we really do have choice, free will!

What about Jesus' saying “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”?

- Most of the time we can humbly offer mercy to the people who harm us. Offering peace does not mean we surrender or peace to be someone's whipping post. Jesus also says, “do not cast your pearls before swine.” Offering our pearls of Peace, unconditional love, and joy to a person set on destroying us is foolishness. Jesus clearly tells his Disciples to keep their peace, walk away, and dust the spirit of the World and Evil from their feet. Let them be. Let the anger go! Let Jesus in.
- A wise person somewhere said, “You can't fix stupid.” Wisdom also teaches that we cannot fix the world's self-righteous judgment or people fueled by a spirit of evil.

## Tithes and Offerings

Tithes: Can we accept that we have built a building and hired people to lead our worship services and programs. Your tithes support our Tradition.

Offerings: Let us become Living-Sacrifices who overflow with thanksgiving and praise. Let us give thanks and praise that God is pleased to build the Church of Jesus Christ on the 3rd rock from the Sun. Fueled by the Spirit of Mercy hard hearts and wounded feelings are healed. Fueled by the Spirit of Grace blind souls are opened to see Christ in self and neighbor. Fueled by the Spirit of Love we think about our self and neighbor with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

## **Benediction**

Deliver Systems change. God remains the same. Jesus builds His Church on the rock, the 3rd Rock from the Sun. He builds it on the rock, not with rocks. Jesus builds his Church with hard hearts, blind souls, and minds filled with judgment and evil. What the world curses and profanes, God makes Holy. So be it. Amen