

WORSHIP AT HOME

Hearing | Trusting | Abiding

Belief comes from Hearing.

Do you believe Jesus is the "mouth of God"? Belief comes from hearing. Jesus calls us repentance, new thinking. In the Sermon on the Mount He says, "You have heard that it was said to those in ancient times...But I say to you."

Adam said this. Abraham said that. Moses said. King David, teachers, politicians, preachers, parents...say things we believe. Hearing Jesus is not the same as hearing our neighbors.

Faith comes from Trusting.

Belief becomes faith the moment we choose to hear and act upon the voice we trust. Do you trust Jesus' word above all others? Trust has nothing to prove or defend.

Love comes from Abiding

Abiding in Jesus' word creates a personal witness of God. Such love is never selfish.



Prelude to Belief: Hearing

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear; things I would ask Him to tell me if He were here: sconces by the way-side, tales of the sea, stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

Meditation

What is your favorite Jesus story? Describe how this story is your story. Describe the the way-side you see in this story. As you recount the story, what words come from Jesus' mouth?

Today's Words from Jesus' Mouth: Matthew 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the



New Class Forming

Embracing the Love of God by James Bryan Smith

In today's world, many people fail to experience the powerful freedom and healing of God's grace. Even Christians too often experience judgment rather than the love that is the vital essence of Christian life. This visionary guide calls believers back to the basics: understanding the promise of God's love to transform our most important relationships and fulfill our deepest spiritual needs. The moving insights found within illuminate the gentle nature of God's love and teach readers how to continue on the path of love by embracing it day by day.

Begins Monday January 18th at 6 pm. Class meets at the Parsonage. Please see Robert for more information.

mouth of God.'[b]"

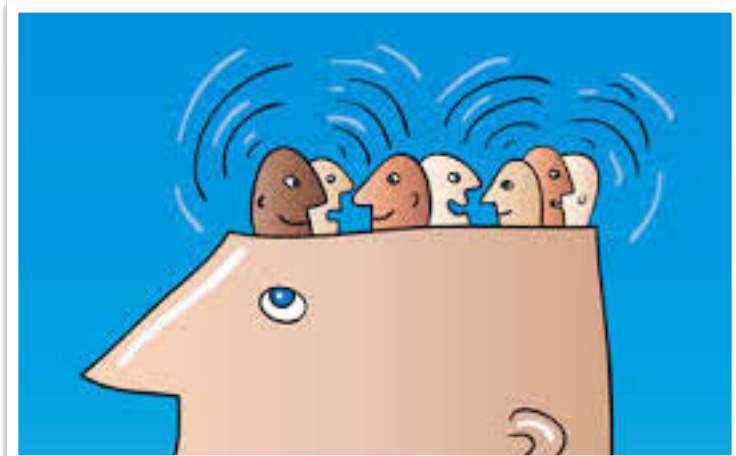
Prayer:

"Prayer doesn't change things. Prayer changes people. People change things." John Ed Mathison, Treasures of the Transformed Life.

Prayer of Petition: Name one things you desire to see change!

Prayer of Confession: Does God tell us to change our neighbor or to love our neighbor as self? Describe how the thing you want to change makes you feel and think about your neighbor, and self. Notice that what you want to change is in your heart and mind. Learning to Love God with all our heart and mind means we give God our desire to change others. Describe how this prayer shifts away from selfish desires to be personally present in God's Grace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: Thank God for what you see and hear in your heart and mind. Ask God to show you Jesus' way. Look at the suffering surrounding this desire for change. Give thanks that Jesus Suffered all sin, especially this one. Give thanks



that Jesus suffered all sin to offer us mercy. How would receiving God's mercy change your heart and mind. How does receiving mercy give you eyes to see your neighbor through Jesus' eyes? How does it change the way you see your self?

Prayer of Faith: Ask the Father to show you how to be the

change you desire.

Come , Divine Interpreter

Come, divine Interpreter, bring me eyes thy book to read, ears the mystic words to hear, words which did from thee proceed, words that endless bliss impart, kept in an obedient heart.

All who read, or hear, are blessed, if thy plain commands we do; of thy kingdom here possessed, thee we shall in glory view when thou comest on earth to abide, reign triumphant at thy side.

Charles Wesley, 1762

Scripture Lessons

Do we believe: Jesus is “the mouth of God”?

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” **4** Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from **the mouth of God.**’[b]”

Belief comes from Hearing Jesus’ Word

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come **near.**” (Or at hand)

Faith comes from Trusting Jesus’ Word above all others.

Matthew 5:21-24 **21** “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, [a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ **22** **But I tell you** that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister[b][c] will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’[d] is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, **24** leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and **be reconciled to them;** then come and offer your gift.

Message

Someone once said, “We don’t appreciate what we have until it is taken away.” Social Distancing has taken things away that we once took of granted.

- Offering our right-hand was once a sign of fellowship. Now it reminds us that people are infectious.
- Once upon a time we warned one another to “stay away from negative people.” Now signs warn Positive People not to enter.
- I wouldn’t touch that person with a six foot pole is a national standard.
- Labels like IZOD and Polo have taken a back seat to the peer pressure of dressing like bandits.
- Singing is hazardous to our health.
- Crowds known by any label are suspected to be Super Spreaders.

You get the point. We don’t appreciate what we have until it is taken away. The Gospel Speaks about something far worse. Temptation. Temptation blinds us from seeing the way to receive the hand of the King of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. **Satan tempts us to prove what we believe.** As I listen to Matthew 4:1-4 I believe Jesus is “the mouth of God.” Jesus is God in a body like ours. He is like two magnets bound together as one. Opposites attract. God is Holy. Humanity is sinful. Mercy is like a positive charge that attracts negatively charged sinners. This is why Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors. Such Belief comes from Hearing Jesus, not Satan, Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, Matthew, James, or Paul.
 1. Jesus says, Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. He says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Who are the poor in Spirit? They are the Tempted. They are the negatively charged magnet seeking to bind with the Positive Charge.
 2. But watch and listen to our negatively charged ways. We are tempted to believe, follow, and trust Abraham, Moses, King David... We are tempted to believe that keeping the Law of Moses and the Levitical Rituals of sacrifice, pious works righteousness, feast, festivals, and Temple projects make us Holy as God is Holy.
 3. We cannot hear God’s voice or see God’s way. We are obsessed with proving our negatively charged ways. Blind and deafened by temptation we are selfish. Individually we are selfish. We gather together bound by doctrines, moral codes, and religious practices. We practice institutional selfishness. We soon divide because we are all negatively charged sinners. Sin is like the negative charged magnet. It repels its own charge.

4. Repent means that negative magnets seek the positive charge. All of the upheaval taking place in the world, religions, and our nation is like a negative charged magnet seeking a positive charged magnet. Jesus is that magnet. He draws all people unto himself. The hand of the King of the Kingdom of Heaven is that positive charge. It attracts us with mercy. It binds us by Grace. It sustains the bond by Love.
2. **Satan tempts us to defend our faith.** Faith comes from trusting Jesus, not politicians, preachers, presidents, or institutions. Oh, they have their place. They run the World, Institutions, Businesses, and Recreation. They are not the author nor perfecter of faith that binds the heart, soul, and mind of humanity with God.
 1. In Matthew 5:21-24 I hear Jesus say that merciful reconciliation is more important than the Law of Moses and the Levitical Code with its sacrifices, rituals, feast and pious self-righteousness. These ways are the negative charge that repels other negative charges. We desire Mercy, not sacrifice. We hungry for grace, not self-righteous institutions led by blind guides who insist their way is the right way to please God.
 2. He gives me eyes to see that merciful reconciliation is more important than all the tithes and offerings we present at the altar. Temptation blinds me from seeing Jesus, the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, with his hand stretched out to all of humanity.
 3. The Good News is that the Holy Spirit leads us to recognize temptation, receive the out stretched hand of God, and enter the promised Kingdom of Heaven. The Holy Spirit does not repel. The Holy Spirit leads us to be reconciled by mercy, in Grace, through unconditional love.
3. **Satan tempts us to choose sides.** At the root of every side-ways division we find people like us lured by power, control, and wealth.
 1. Jesus lived in the world. He suffered. He died at the hands of people lured by power, control, and wealth. He rose again. Love is the positive force that draws sinner to its self. "Love your neighbor as your self." It binds opposites with mercy. It maintains Peace with God, self, and neighbor.

Someone once said, "We don't appreciate what we have until it is taken away." This pandemic has opened by eyes to appreciate the things that have been taken away. I appreciate the Institutional Church. It offers me a wilderness within the World where the Holy Spirit leads me to face Satan's temptations. I am learning that my temptations are like the negative charged magnet. Negatively Charged magnets naturally practice Social Distancing! They are constantly seeking to bind with the positively charged magnet. Such is the imagery of Holy God. Jesus, fully human and fully divine. As Paul says, "He who knew no sin, became sin." Opposites attract! Satan tempts us to call it in question.

One in Christ,

Robert

Benediction

Believe Jesus's Word. Trust Jesus' Word. Love as Jesus Loves.