

---

# WORSHIP AT HOME

---

## Prelude

Lord, prepare me to be a Synagogue Leader!



## Lighting the Candles

## Announcements

## Lighting the Soul-Candle

Lord, what do you require to make me a Synagogue Leader?

Lord Jesus says, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."

Lord, I look for mercy in the Law and Prophets. **I see people sacrificed in the**

The Sanctuary on earth reflects the sanctuary in Heaven. Jesus shows us the Way.

---

**name of justice. I hear their cries for mercy! Lord, why is there so little mercy in our world?**

Jesus answers. **In the same way I called Matthew to follow me, I call you.**

Jesus, light of mercy, you bless my soul.

## Welcome

“Welcome to the sanctuary!”

The Cross is where our Lord was sacrificed. It sits on God’s Communion Table. Welcome to the sanctuary where the Jesus the sacrificed hungers and thirsts for mercy.

These candles stand on either side of the Cross where Jesus died. Welcome to the sanctuary where the Light of God’s Mercy and Love shines on the Sacrificed!

Welcome to the Sanctuary of Grace. Here the risen Lord calls sinners and tax collectors to follow him.

## Special Music

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary  
Pure and holy, tried and true  
With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living  
Sanctuary for You

---

**“Sud accumsan  
libero pretium  
pharetra quis.  
Nunc elit lorem  
magna vitae.”**

*-DIAM NOBIS*

It is you, Lord  
Who came to save  
The heart and soul  
Of every man  
It is you Lord  
Who knows my weakness  
Who gives me strength,  
With thine own hand.

## Prayer of Confession

**Lord of Mercy, I need rest. My mind continually plays the game of right and wrong.**



**Lord of Mercy, I need rest. My heart plagues me with feelings of shame and guilt. The joy of blame is like a flower that soon fades and dies.**

**Lord of Mercy, I need rest. I remember coming into the House of the Lord and hearing about rest for my soul. I know the way of my mind and heart. Lord, lead me in the way of my soul you saved from sin and death.**

## Prayer of Intercession

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you for mercy that frees the “poor in spirit”.

Spirit of Mercy, your presence alone makes me Holy as God is Holy.

Spirit of Grace, your Holy Presence makes me “Meek” like Christ Jesus.

Spirit of Love, feed me till I desire to offer mercy that frees the “poor in spirit.”

Spirit of Mercy, Grace, and Love thank you for leading us not into temptation but delivering us to be One in Christ. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

## Reading Scripture: Matthew 9:18-26

**18** While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.” **19** Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

**20** Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. **21** She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.”

**22** Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment.

**23** When Jesus entered the synagogue leader’s house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, **24** he said, “Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him. **25** After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. **26** News of this spread through all that region.

## Response to the Word

## Special Music

Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary  
Pure and Holy, tried and true  
With thanksgiving I'll be a living  
Sanctuary for you

Lead Me on Lord  
From temptation  
Purify me  
From within  
Fill my heart with  
Your holy spirit  
Take away all my sin

Lord prepare me to be sanctuary  
Pure and holy, tried and true  
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living  
Sanctuary for You

## Message

The Synagogue Leader sought Jesus to come and touch his deceased daughter.

I am initially captivated by two words. Synagogue means house of prayer. The second word is Leader. Leaders have followers. Teachers have disciples. Judges have Laws. Surely we hear the Synagogue Leader echo Jesus' plea, "My Father's house is to be a house of prayer." The economy of grace operates on the currency of mercy, not sacrifice. Matthew 9:13.

Thoughts of Our Father's House stir images of Trinity's Sanctuary. Blessed is the one who enters Trinity's Sanctuary in the name of the Lord. All we do in the name of the Lord reflects what our Father is doing in the sanctuary above. Isn't this exactly what it means to reflect God's image. Didn't God send his Son to show us the way and truth and life that reflects God above? Faith in Jesus means we follow him while trusting that he knows the way human eyes cannot see and human ears cannot hear. To show you my faith, I must let you see my blindness!

Let me pause here to clarify. Jesus' teaching and actions show us how to enter the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Nations, Kindred, and Daddy's House teach us the way of the World. In John 3:17-18 Jesus says the world is already condemned. All it knows is judgement and sacrifice. Caesar demands sacrifice. Jesus reveals God's desire for mercy. Jesus offers mercy to those willing to receive it. Now, back to the story.

Across Biblical History the Sanctuary has taken many forms. In the places Jacob encountered visions and revelations of God with him, he built stone altars, sacrificed an animal, and sat down to dine with God. Do I dare call this Communion with the Holy One?

For years the barbecue grill on our deck served as a stone altar. Andrea and I often enjoy the meat and vegetables prepared on the altar while imagining God savoring the pleasant aroma lifted into the heavens. Then one day everything changed. The pleasant aroma lifted to God had far more to do with songs of thanksgiving rising from my heart and mind than my pit - master skills. As Jesus told His disciples in another place, "I have food to eat you know nothing about." Friends, mercy is God's appetizer. Grace is the main course. Love is dessert. The finest of wine accompanies each course.

Moses imagined the Tent of Meeting they built on earth as a model of Heaven's sanctuary. Jesus, in various ways, shares such imagery. "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." In another place Jesus says, "why do you ask me to show you the Father. Do you not know that I only speak what I hear my Father say? I only do what I see my Father doing." Jesus reflects the image of God.

How do I break this Good News! The Kingdom of Heaven announced by Jesus belongs to the "Poor in Spirit." The Blessed is Jesus. He gives witness on earth to what He sees and hears the Father saying and doing in heaven. Now to the Good News. Jesus is the Leader of the Synagogue. This is why Jesus eats with sinners and tax collectors. This is why Jesus says, "follow me!" His Sanctuary is made of hearts-souls-and minds. As Jesus says through Micah, "Seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." The Meek are the merciful who walk humbly with God. This is Kingdom of Heaven justice. The World will never receive it.

The Synagogue Leader was charged with teaching people to pray! I clearly remember Rick and Pat Chester. They taught the Sunday school class Andrea and I attended at Keith Memorial UMC in Athens, Tennessee. At Rick's funeral I was blessed to sit in the alcove where I got to watch Pat. In the sanctuary below I witnessed Pat reflect the image of God in the sanctuary above. Like the Sanctuary Leader who asked Jesus to touch his daughter I witnessed Pat humbly walk with God as she savored mercy that fulfills justice made of God's righteousness. Her mourning received comfort. Her tears were gathered by the Holy Spirit even as she became "meek" and shined with the glory above. That memory sticks with me like I am made of velcro.

Teachers of the Law seek justice through Sacrifice. The Pharisees seek justice by sacrificing neighbors on the altars of morals and ethics. These works-righteous actions makes the world bearable. We enter the Kingdom of Heaven not by works but by grace through faith. Faith in Jesus Christ leads to acts of mercy. The World calls such a person weak and fool.

I am blessed to have served as a Teacher of the Law. There comes time when the ones who sacrifice their neighbors ends up crying for mercy. I am blessed to have served as a Pharisee of Pharisees. There comes a time when the person whose righteousness flows from the altars of right and good ends up being the sacrifice who cries for mercy. By the Grace of God I was called at 40 years of age to be a Synagogue Leader. I am slowly learning to Follow Jesus, not the Teachers of the Law, Pharisees, or Disciples of John the Baptist. How about you?

## Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;\* the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth (sits) at the right hand of the Father Almighty. From thence ( there) he shall come again to judge the quick ( living) and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\*\* Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **Tithes and Offerings**

Our tithes support the physical church building and staff salaries. The currency of Grace is mercy and love. These spiritual offering bring heaven to earth, as willed by God through Jesus Christ.

## **Postlude**