

WORSHIP AT HOME

Prelude: Ask Me What Great Thing I Know

This his that great thing I know, that delights and stirs me so" faith in him who died to save, him who



triumphed o'er the grave: Jesus Christ, the crucified.

Jesus served Mercy.

Lighting the Candles

Jesus says, "You are the Light of the World."

Jesus served Grace.

Jesus shined Kingdom of Heaven Light on the Leper, the Centurion, and Peter's mother in law. This Light makes straight the way of the Lord.

Jesus served Love.

The Light of Love cast out the darkness of fear. **Father, let the light of Love be in me!**

The Children of God serve as Jesus served.

The Light of Mercy comforts and heals the human soul. **Jesus, let the light of**

mercy be in me!

The Light of Grace makes peace with God, neighbor, and self. **Holy Spirit, let the light of grace be in me**

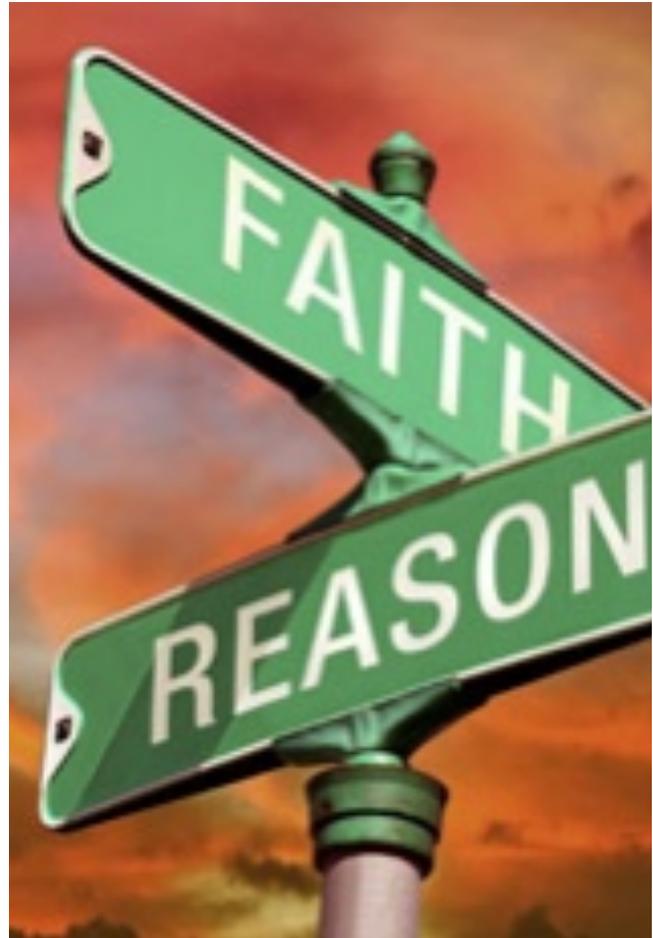
Welcome

Jesus showed Peter’s Mother- in- Law our Father’s Love overflows with mercy. Mercy transforms the curse of sin and death into a blessing. Through his touch she experienced Grace. Grace is God bearing the very infirmities and diseases we thought separated us from God.

Peter’s Mother - in - Law rose to serve the Lord. Ministry serves mercy and grace. By these we experience God’s Love.

To worship God in spirit with truth we serve the Lord by offering one another mercy, grace, and love.

Everything else is shadows or works righteousness.



Prayer of Confession

Lord, you assure us that You are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Through Jesus’ mercy and grace we experienced your Love yesterday, we welcome _____ You today, and have hope for tomorrow.

The reason Jesus came to earth was that we might have faith in His mercy, grace and love. All other reasons are distractions.

**Love reflects God, the Father.
Mercy reflects Jesus Christ.
Grace reflects the Holy Spirit.**

Robert

Beneath the surface of our 21st century technology, science, politics, and religions we experience the 1st century world where Jesus suffered, died, and rose again.

Lord of yesterday, we seek you today. Give us eyes to see the 21st Century through Christ’s 1st Century eyes. Lord, have mercy!

Give us ears to hear 21st century cries through Jesus’ 1st Century ears. Lord, have mercy! Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to touch the untouchable. Lord Jesus, thank you for bearing our infirmities and diseases.

Holy Spirit, thank you for leading us not into temptation but delivering us into our Father's Presence.
Father of Love, touch us.
Lord of mercy, bear with us.
Holy Spirit deliver us from our temptation to curse those who curse us.
Now Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Bless us to bless those who curse us.
Amen

Special Music

Take time to listen to your favorite hymn or song. Notice how music changes your focus. Music gets me out of my head. Music transports me into my heart. I see an order in the Great Commandment. Love God with heart, soul, and mind.

The heart hungers and thirst for comfort.
The soul hungers and thirst for God.
The mind hungers and thirst for facts.

Most of us eat three meals a day to sustain our body. Try feeding your heart before breakfast. It will prepare you to feed your soul after lunch. After a long day of work, take time to let your mind feed on your heart and soul. Soon you will experience the difference between being "right and good" and "hungering and thirsting for righteousness". (See Matthew 5: 6)

Reading of Scripture: Matthew 8:14-17

14 When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. **15** He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

16 When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. **17** This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"He took up our infirmities
and bore our diseases."^[b]

Sermon

In the Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches us how He fulfills the Law of Moses and everything the Prophets said about Him. The Beatitudes teach us how to Bless those who curse us. The Sermon on the Mount fulfills the Ten Commandments. Jesus Blesses those who come to him poor in spirit. In the weeks to come we shall see that abuse of the Law of Moses curses people which causes them to be poor in spirit.

When Jesus comes off the mountain he encounters three very different people. The Leper, the Centurion, and Peter's Mother-in-Law. They each suffer being "poor in spirit." Through Jesus interaction with them we discover that the "Kingdom of Heaven" belongs to them. Do you see Jesus' attitude regarding sin, the curse, or poor in spirit? Do you hear and see the change Jesus's shows us?

The Leper, Centurion, and Peter's Mother -in -Law knew right from wrong. The Leper was Hebrew. He knew the Law of Moses. He was well acquainted with sacrifice and the authority of the Priest. He was also well acquainted with his neighbors tradition of usurping the Priest authority. The Priest had authority to judge, not the people. The Centurion freely confesses that he is a man under authority and has authority. Some how life taught him the boundaries of his authority. Knowing the boundaries of authority is what it means to be "Meek"! In Jesus he saw a man with authority to accomplish what he could never do. Of the three, Peter's Mother-in Law rose to serve Jesus. As Jesus says, to the one who has little much will be given. In another place, Jesus says we must become like little child to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Children and women were possessions. They did not have authority over anyone. They had the least and therefore the most to gain. Hopefully you hear my rant as an attempt to describe how and why the "meek inherit the earth." Only the "meek" have eyes to see how the Kingdom of Heaven comes to earth! See Matthew 5:3-5

Most of us do not need a lot of imagination to have empathy for the "poor in spirit." Like the Leper we have experienced some disease or affliction. Many among us knows how it feels to be judged and condemned by a religious community. Like the Centurion we have experience of being shunned by virtue of the nation, or part of the nation, where we were born, our race, or gender. Like Peter's mother-in-law many of us have experienced being treated as a servant, possession.

Sin separates us from God's mercy, grace, and love. Selfishness treats neighbors as servants. The systems of this World bless the worthy and curse everyone else. Jesus' Kingdom of Heaven blesses cursed servants to live in this world as agents of Peace. Jesus' Be-attitudes change our hearts and minds. As Children of God we make Peace with Sin, Selfishness, and the World.

I over heard my dad's friends whisper, "We best not visit again. We might catch his cancer." I remember Shelia's shame and fear of the Church discovering that her husband had given her AIDS. She did not know he was sharing dirty needles with his friends. I do not have time nor space to tell you the ways my female clergy friends have experienced being cursed by church people.

Let me confess my prejudice and bias. Up until this reading of Jesus' encounter with Peter's Mother -in Law I was blind to what it means for her to get up and serve Jesus. Friends, she may have prepared Jesus a meal, or even a place to sleep. She likely played the role she was handed by the world. In this world of darkness she rose to serve the Lord the way He served her! She served him as she experienced Him. She served him by making straight the way of the Lord. Mercy always makes straight the way for people to get to Jesus. Mercy comforts those who mourn. The "meek" are merciful. The meek inherit the earth, not this world order of judgement, condemnation, and self-righteous violence!

His touch is merciful! The moment Jesus touched her, the Centurion, or the Leper he fulfilled the passage from Isaiah. He suffered their afflictions and diseases. Did he get sick? No! Did he become "poor in spirit"? Absolutely not! So how did Jesus bear their diseases and afflictions? By virtue of his association with the ceremonially unclean, Gentiles, and women.

He ate with sinners, tax collectors, and prostitutes! When will we learn that the only true change is to serve the Lord the way Jesus served the Father. When shall we experience being the Blessed Beatitudes. They fulfill the Law of Moses by opening our hearts and minds to the Soul - Attitudes of Jesus.

If we desire change. Let us Be Like Jesus. If we desire change, let us Be merciful with the Lepers, Centurions, and the Servants we meet.

All my life I have accepted the statement that "one bad apple spoils an entire barrel." How do I tell you this? You are not an apple. The Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was not and never has been an apple! Eve did not give Adam an apple! The forbidden fruit is judgement.

Hear God's Judgement! Mercy serves the Lord. Grace serves the Lord. Love serves the Lord. Amen

Benediction

Lord, bless me that I may rise to serve as Jesus served.
 Give me eyes to see that Mercy makes straight the way for people to kneel at Jesus' feet.
 Give me a hunger and thirst Your righteousness experienced in Grace alone.
 Give me a clean heart to see You and die to sin, selfishness, and this world. Amen