

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

March 12, 2023

WORDS OF WELCOME

INTROIT: “As We Gather”

CCLI Song # 35469 Mike Fay | Tom Coomes © 1981 CCCM Music (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) Coomesietunes (Admin. by The Copyright Company) For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com CCLI License # 11251098

CALL TO WORSHIP: ☪*

L: God of sea and sky, you keep the earth flourishing.

*C: Some of us are weary; some of us are rejoicing; some of us find ourselves somewhere in-between.
Yet, we all come before you just as we are in spirit and in truth.*

L: Holy One, you give water that sustains body and spirit.

C: You hydrate us when we need, how we need.

L: Miracle Worker, you caused a rock to crack and bring forth water.

C: Crack our hearts open and let your love flow from them like a spring.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION: ☪*

L: Holy One, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,

we are thankful for who you are and all that you are. Your presence is desired here.

All: We take joy in knowing that you are as close to us as our next breath. We thirst for you.

May we be filled to overflowing with your love. Amen

HYMN: #293 “Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

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PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE: ☪*

L: Enduring Presence,

All: we confess that sometimes we question if you are among us or not. Sometimes we quarrel with you when we are tested and don't understand what is happening in our lives and in the world.

L: These are the moments when our outlook needs transformation.

God is gracious in looking beyond our faults to see our needs and meet them.

All: Almighty God, Good Shepherd of our lives, thank you for your immeasurable grace. Amen.

*Moment of Silent Confession, Listening to God
& Reflection on God's Forgiveness, Redemption and Restoration*

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE: ☪*

L: The creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of our lives offers new mercies daily and every day we have an opportunity to be changed forever and for good.

All: We are thankful for God's mercy and grace freely offered.

We welcome God's healing, transformation and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit we will rise up into new life offered to us by God. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE: “Thy Word”

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SCRIPTURE:

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Psalm 95:1-7a

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

²Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.

⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

⁶O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE ROCK OF OUR SALVATION: HYMN #419 v.v. 1 & 3

(Public Domain)

“Now Thank We All Our God”

**1. Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices,
Who from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.**

**3. All praise and thanks to God our Maker now be given;
To Christ and Spirit too our help in highest heaven;
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.**

John 4:5-42

NARRATOR: So Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her,

JESUS: “Give me a drink.”

NARRATOR: (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him,

SAMARITAN WOMAN: “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?”

NARRATOR: (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her,

JESUS: “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

SAMARITAN WOMAN: “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?”

JESUS: “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

SAMARITAN WOMAN: “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

JESUS: “Go, call your husband, and come back.”

SAMARITAN WOMAN: “I have no husband.”

JESUS: “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband.

SAMARITAN WOMAN: What you have said is true!” “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.”

JESUS: “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

SAMARITAN WOMAN: “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”

JESUS: “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

NARRATOR: Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

SAMARITAN WOMAN: “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

NARRATOR: They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him,

DISCIPLES: “*Rabbi, eat something.*”

NARRATOR: But he said to them,

JESUS: “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”

NARRATOR: So the disciples said to one another,

DISCIPLES: “*Surely no one has brought him something to eat?*”

JESUS: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

NARRATOR: Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman,

SAMARITANS: “*It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.*”

A TIME OF REFLECTION: “*God’s Love for Us*”

NRSVUE Jn. 4:21 Jesus declared, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ... But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.”

What does it mean to worship in Spirit and in truth? Mike Fay and Tom Cooms wrote and composed “*As We Gather*” which was our Introit today. The line in the song, “*Knowing well that as our hearts begin to worship, we’ll be blessed because we came.*” could be misunderstood in that some might believe that one earns a reward from God for worshiping in the proper manner and that the true focus of worship is on what we receive from worship. That is not it at all. Rather, worship in spirit and in truth opens our hearts to the presence of God’s Holy Spirit and allows that presence to guide our praise, our listening, our hearing, our understanding, and ultimately our living; helping us to keep our focus on God, rather than what is in this for me. By

worshiping in spirit and in truth we open our hearts to be a vessel that is willing to receive the “Living Water” Christ is speaking of with the nameless Samaritan woman. It is not a reward. As we dedicate our lives, surrendering them to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and willingly choosing to follow that guidance, even our daily living becomes a time of worship. Worship of God in spirit and truth is not confined to any given place or set format that needs to be followed.

Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, describes true worship in this manner *"...the time is coming," Jesus says, "it has, in fact, come--when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people God is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before God in their worship. God is sheer being itself--Spirit. Those who worship God must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration."*

When we worship in spirit and truth, we cannot help but notice God's love for us. Let us take one more look at our Psalm we read today.

"O come, let us sing to the Lord;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² *Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;*

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ *For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.*

⁴ *In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.*

⁵ *The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.*

⁶ *O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!*

Why? Simply because *"he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand."*

Though there are specific things we are encouraged to do to worship God, the actions are not important, rather that we just worship God in praise, adoration, and thanksgiving. As our focus of worship becomes God centered rather than self-centered, it opens us to a relationship with a God who created us, knows us completely, and cares for us even when we repeatedly turn from God and doubt God, who is our salvation and has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. As we worship in spirit and truth we cannot help but offer praise and thanksgiving to God who loves us so much that he sent his only son to save not condemn the world. When we worship in spirit and in truth, we cannot help but stand in awe of God who breaks down barriers in order to build up relationships and restore people to wholeness and community.

The Samaritan woman when she encountered Jesus, it was on her daily trip to the well. Jesus did the unimaginable as a Jewish man and not only spoke to this Samaritan woman whose reputation preceded her, asked her for a drink of water in order to lead her into a conversation about the life-giving water he had to offer. Jesus knew her completely. Though Jesus exposed her sinful past, Jesus did not tell her to “Go and sin no more” and then I’ll give you this living water, rather the living water was being freely offered to her, flaws and all, and all who drank of this water will have a spring of water gushing up to eternal life. She was so overwhelmed with her encounter with the Savior, though she had not yet fully accepted that he was the Messiah, who knew her completely, ... she no longer let the stigma of who she was prevent her from testifying to her encounter with Christ. The life-giving water Christ offered was already at work in her and through her and could not be contained. Many came to believe in Christ as the Messiah first because of her testimony, and then because of their own encounter with the Savior.

When we worship in spirit and truth, we like the Samaritan woman encounter the Savior not only in the sanctuary, but in our daily lives. When we worship in spirit and truth, Jesus, just like with the Samaritan woman invites us into conversation, even if others or we ourselves deem us unworthy to have that conversation. When we worship in spirit and truth, Jesus, just like with the Samaritan woman, knows us completely, understands our trials and tribulations and exposes those areas in our lives that build walls instead of relationships that suck the life out of another or creation through our words, actions, or attitudes of self-righteousness. Mother Teresa has said; *"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."* When we

worship in spirit and in truth, putting our focus on who God is, seeking the truths God has to reveal to us about God, creation, humanity, and ourselves, we, like the woman at the well, encounter the God who knows us completely, reveals to us who we really are, yet loves us just as we are in such a way that by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's life-giving water gushes up within us and flows forth from us and cannot be contained. We too will be compelled to testify to our encounter with the Savior in our words and actions. Because of this, others will come to worship the Savior first because of our testimony and then because of their own encounter with the risen Christ as they too worship in spirit and truth. Again, this is not why we worship God in spirit and truth, but as we witnessed in the life of this Samaritan woman, it is a result of worshiping God in spirit and truth.

God of all Creation, we thank you and praise you that you are our God. We thank you that you continue to seek us when we are stiff necked and wander from the fold. We are grateful that you desire restoration, not condemnation; that you seek to build relationships, not walls and barriers. Help us to worship you in spirit and truth all the days of our lives no matter where we are simply because you are our God and we are the sheep of your pasture whom you love, tend and care for. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

SINGING THE FAITH: HYMN REQUEST

A TIME OF PRAYER – LIFTING UP PRAYER REQUESTS – THE LORD'S PRAYER:

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY: *

L: God gives of Godself freely, so let us give freely and joyfully to God.

Let us bring gifts that sustain the life of the kin-dom. May these resources be more than enough.

Let each one give as the Spirit guides.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: *

L: Fount of Blessing, receive our gifts in the joy that we give them. Be it time, tithe, or talent, all that we have and all that we offer comes from you.

Thank you for blessing us to be a blessing to you and each other.

All: Pour out your blessings upon these offerings, multiply them and guide their use so that they may be life giving waters to parched bodies, minds and souls in a world in need of your healing balm. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

SUMM-IT UP:


SENDING HYMN: #503 “O Savior, Let Me Walk with You” (Public Domain)

- 1. O Savior, let me walk with you in earthly paths of service true;
Tell me your secret, help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.**
- 2. Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear, winning word of love.
Teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.**
- 3. Teach me your patience; let me be in closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.**
- 4. In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way,
In peace that only you can give, with you, O Savior, let me live.**

CHARGE & BENEDICTION:

May God bless and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May God look upon you kindly and grant you the peace God alone can give.

POSTLUDE:

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