**Sunday, July 12th, 2020**

**Psalm 100**

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

Come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

And his courts with praise;

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

His faithfulness continues through all generations.

The Word of The Lord.          **Thanks be to God**

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If a friend asked you: "What is worship?"

How would you answer?

We tend to think of worship as something we do,

usually on Sundays,

usually in a building we call a Church,

gathered together with a group of people.

We tend to picture worship as: music and hymns, liturgy, and prayers,

Bible readings, sermons, and communion.

All these things are good things.

All of them can be part of our worship.

Yet when we try to explain what worship **is**,

we can get tangled up in our images of worship.

A few months ago, none of us would have believed

we would be worshipping over the phone.

Suppose after you stumbled and struggled to explain to your friend what worship is,

your friend then asked: "Why worship?"

How would you respond?

Why do we worship?

Because God told us to worship.

God commanded us worship him every week.

Why does God command us to worship?

            Because God knows what we humans are like.

            Because God knows what we need.

            Because God invites us to live life abundantly.

            Because God loves us.

The purpose of worship is to change us.

Worship doesn't change God, it changes us.

Worship helps us to lift our eyes from the distractions around us,

and set our hearts and minds on the realities of heaven.

Worship is saying "Thank you" To God and meaning it.

Worship is when we are aware that what we have been given,

is far greater than what we can give.

Worship is a voluntary act of gratitude offered to our Savior, Healer, Deliverer.

We know we feel better when we pause and worship,

When we listen we hear his voice as he declares: "Peace be with you."

It is good to listen when God says: "Be still and know that I am God."

Our worship doesn't change God.

It changes us.

When we seek God, and set our sights on our God,

we focus above the storms in our lives.

Be still and know that God is God.

It does us twice as much good to think about God,

as it does to think about anyone, or anything else.

God invites us to begin and end our prayers thinking of him.

We need to look up more at the mountain peak,

than at the dusty, rocky trail beneath our feet.

When we let our minds focus on the dirt beneath us,

we will grumble about every rock and crevice we have to cross.

The more we focus up there, the more inspired we are down here.

As long as our eyes and hearts and minds are on Him,

life is smoother, more peaceful, more productive, filled with more joy.

Even in the midst of our daily storms, we can be still and set our sights on him.

Worship is not limited to Sundays.

Worship happens wherever we are.

Worship can happen when we are with other people, or when we are all alone.

Worship has the power to change us.

A missionary was stationed in Paraguay.

He enjoyed his work. He loved the people. He made many friends.

He was happy doing God's work in this place.

One morning while the missionary was eating breakfast,

he heard someone on his porch.

When he went out to investigate,

he found Rafael, a native Maka, and a good friend,

sitting in the swing on his porch.

He asked Rafael what he could do for him.

Rafael shook his head no and replied, "Ham, henek, met."

The missionary was puzzled.

He understood what the words meant,

but did not understand what Rafael meant by those words.

Again the Indian replied, "Ham, henek, met."

Which translated to: "I don’t want anything; I have just come near."

Confused, the missionary called a nearby veteran missionary

who was able to explain what Rafael meant.

He said it was Rafael's way of honoring him.

He really didn't want anything from the missionary.

He simply wanted to sit on his porch.

He found satisfaction and pleasure just by being near him.

Perhaps that is a good image of true worship.

What if we just came near to God?

Not because we wanted to ask for something,

but simply because we wanted to be near God.

What if we quietly rested in God's presence?

Not asking for anything, but simply being near God.

Imagine sitting quietly, and resting in God's presence, honoring him.

That is truly worship.

AMEN