



THE CHAPEL OF CYPRESS COVE

INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP SERVICE & SERMON

OCTOBER 10, 2021

Good Morning! Here we are gathering for another virtual worship service and I was thinking about my introduction for this service. I began to reflect on what I've done during this week since we last worshiped together. I have to be honest and upfront that this was a good exercise for me because I quickly realized how little time, I spent on my religious interaction with Almighty God...and I'm a pastor. Things like reading scripture, talking with God...or just some chit-chat with him. Yes, I did all those things but I really don't think I did enough. Did I reflect on spiritual "thinking" or discerning or rational interaction with God/Christ/Holy Spirit? As a pastor, most people presume that we need to consume almost the greater portion of our life with only spiritual things. But the reality is that I, and all God's ministers, need to lead a relatively good upstanding life doing God's work on earth but yet still live in this world with all it's ups and downs. So, I made another commitment with God to continually not only reflect on all my weeks activities (both spiritual and secular) but to help others also make a commitment to do the same thing. The world around us is complex and often distracts us from God's world and his desire for a better life while we live in this world. So, by taking an hour out of each week to personally reflect back upon what you did during that week and see if you feel like you have spiritually interacted in those weekly activities is my desire for us all. As I said a few moments ago, I made a personal commitment with Almighty God to do this each week and I'm asking you to do the same. I know we'll have a better understanding of what God wants for each of us and he will be there to help us live a better life.

So, now let us go to Almighty God and worship him with praise and glory.

Title: Who Do We let in! Rev. Ted Althouse

Texts: Mark 2:1-12 October 10, 2021

Think about those words a few moments: "Who Do We Let In"? That's a really broad statement that can be answered in many ways. From the beginning of time, after Almighty God created the heavens and earth and all that is in it, he created humankind and let Adam and Eve into his creation. The term "let in" simply means to involve oneself to engage in something.

This morning I'm thinking about engaging in far-reaching organizations, establishments, institutions of all types. You're probably aware of "secret" organizations, establishments or institutions! These are gatherings of people who have subscribed to belonging to that organization by virtue of agreeing to abide by and retain certain secrets, confidences and/or pledges. Some of these organizations are beneficial and then there are

some that are detrimental to society. But they all have requirements and rules or codes which must be adhered to before one is allowed to be let in as a part of that organization.

Some individuals have even indicated that the organized Christian church is one of these secret organizations...to which I quickly counter those statements as being untrue and false. I base my response mainly based on the truth that there is nothing secret about the Christian church or Christianity at all. The Bible based, Christ centered Christian church that is made up of true scriptural believers, does not have any secret requirements or codes to fulfill before becoming a member. Every person who wants the fellowship of Jesus Christ and like-minded individuals can join any church or religious organization of their choice. However, there are some religious organizations which do have special procedures and rituals that are secret such as the Church of Scientology, Church of the Latter-Day Saints, and others. These spiritual institutions, as well as others, may not have the full and total understanding and belief principle of being one with Jesus Christ through His Holy Spirit.

Now, let's go back to my sermon title: "Who Do We Let In" and I need to place emphasis on the "we". "We" becomes the element of importance in almost everything that is done in a collective manner. We make the choices...we work...we allow...we eat...we live...we die...we have power. Most organizations are built primarily upon the "we's". There are very few organizations that are based only on the "me" principle. However, it is you (meaning singular), you have the right to choose to belong to a gathering of people of any kind...like a Bible based church.

Before we go any farther, let's look at our scripture text for today for additional understanding of this question of "Who Do We Let In?" This scripture contains Jesus's feelings about this interesting subject. Listen: *"a few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered so that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them."* (v1,2) Jesus had just returned to the city of Capernaum from the other side of the sea where he was ministering to the people in that location. There he had just cast out demons from a man who was possessed by evil spirits. He had just healed Simon Peter's wife's mother, as well as, many other miracles along the way. Also, please recall that Peter, the beloved apostle of Jesus was the person who, following Jesus death and resurrection, went on to further the foundation of the Christian church. Remember Jesus said to Peter: *"Upon this rock I will build my church"*. (Matthew 16:18) FYI: Both Peter and his wife were killed by the Romans approximately 64 years after Jesus was crucified for their proselyting.

Now returning to Jesus return to the city of Capernaum. Capernaum was a very busy city and a primary port on the Sea of Galilee. It was a center of commerce (buying/selling) and approximately 1500 people lived, worked and visited this busy city. So, it was here that Jesus continued to return from the countryside.... because he knew he could reach out to many more people at one time. It was also just outside this city of Capernaum that Jesus previously fed the multitude (five thousand people) with only two fish and five loaves of bread. So, Capernaum and the surrounding area was an important and significant place in the life and ministry of Jesus. It even had a large Jewish temple where Jesus would often worship and teach. Today you can see the remnants of the temple, Peter's mothers house and other artifacts of Capernaum.

Scripture tells us that when Jesus returned to the city, he went to Peter's mothers house. (Her name was Joanna and this is where Jesus often stayed while in Capernaum because, remember, Jesus never had a home of his own anywhere during his ministry and Peter's mothers large home was always available to him.) On this particular day, it was in Peter's mother's house that he began preaching and teaching those who were

gathering to hear him. The crowd began to get so large there was no room inside or even outside the house where anyone could see or hear Jesus teaching.

Listen to more of today's scripture; *Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and after digging through it., lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.*" (v4) This act is great determination and faith in action. It was this action of some men to bring their friend to see this man called Jesus...who they knew was performing miracles in the name of Almighty God. It was their strong faith in Jesus, that they wanted their friend to come into the presence of Almighty God through the human Jesus Christ.

Friends, this in its self is a beautiful lesson for us to grasp and use. This message is telling us that we must have determination and faith, not only for our self, but to take this determination and faith into the world to help others to come into the presence of Almighty God through Jesus Christ...and...find the comfort and healing which is needed in our own life and of those we love and care about. Nothing must stand in the way of our determination and faith when it comes to entering into the presence of Almighty God through Christ. And I don't need to tell you of all the obstacles that are placed in our pathway by the evil influences of Satan especially in the present-day world.

We see in today's lesson that the crowds surrounding Jesus were so large that this paralytic man could not get to see or hear him. The friends of this paralytic man proved to us, that there is always a way to come into the presence of Christ. These dedicated men cut a hole in the roof of the house and lowered their friend down in front of Jesus. A side note: I strongly do not recommend doing this in this day and age as I'm quite sure the owner of any house would get very angry. But in those days, the roof of most homes (especially Peter's mother's house) was made of compressed straw and easily replaced, sometimes frequently. Now I don't want anyone to become obsessed with the semantics of this event. What is important to learn is that has been documented in scripture and these men had determination and faith of the strongest degree. How many of us would go that far to take a friend and bring him/her into the presence of Christ's Holy Spirit? This example is showing us that no obstacle should be allowed to come into our life that will keep us from the presence of Almighty God through Jesus Christ...and share our own experience with others. Our determination and faith must....and will...allow us to be in God's presence always...if we choose to be. It is always our choice, just as it was the choice of those dedicated friends of the paralytic man, to be in Christ's presence...and so must we do the same.

Let's examine some more of this proactive scripture: *"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven".* (v4) Jesus saw the faith of all these men and he responded? Incidentally, faith is defined as confidence, trust, conviction, belief. Jesus saw all of this in these men. He wasn't so concerned about the situation or the illness. No, what caught his attention was the faith these people demonstrated in their love for him and the dedication for this paralyzed man to see Jesus. And all that Jesus had to do was to say; *"your sins are forgiven"*. Can you see what just happened there...what took place? Jesus was not a part of any secret organization that kept people out because they didn't know a secret code, ritual, color or race. No, not at all! The organization which Jesus was and is a part of is the kingdom of Almighty God...an organization that is free to those who believe and have...Faith. Remember what I said a few minutes ago that faith is: confidence, trust, conviction, belief?

The situation that was encountered there was that the crowd hindered the paralytic and his friends from becoming available to be in the presence of Jesus Christ. But when Jesus saw the determination of their efforts

to come into his presence...he simply said the words; *"your sins are forgiven"*. At that moment Jesus left them to come into His presence and provide forgiving healing to the paralytic man. Today we don't have the physical person of Christ to see and hear to let us into his presence. But we do have the presence of Christ through his Holy Spirit...and it is by faith that the Divine Entity of God is in our presence always...if we want him to be. Now listen closely please: it doesn't matter how or who you are to come into the presence of Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter that you may feel unworthy and maybe full of guilt...to be in the presence of Christ. It doesn't matter about anything when it comes to having Jesus Christ in your life. There is no reason that can keep you from the presence of Almighty God through Christ...except yourself. Let me repeat that: there is no reason that can keep you from the presence of Almighty God through Christ...except your own self. This is a very true and accurate statement...it is only you and your own mind and actions that will keep you from the presence of Jesus Christ. Too many people put self-imposed limitations upon themselves and feel that they may be unworthy to come into the presence of Almighty God through Christ. But they are wrong...so very wrong. Don't you know that at this very moment you are in the presence of the Trinity: Almighty God, Jesus Christ Holy Spirit by virtue of the faith you have in God and because you are in worship and fellowship with Him right now? It is in worship that we collectively gather together in the name of Almighty God...it is in worship that we are reminded of Christ's presence and that he is truly with us. It is in worship that we feel the presence of Christ's Holy Spirit reaching out to heal us of our sins. We don't need to be lowered through the roof of any building. We are in the presence of Almighty God...right now. As I said before, it is only your own self and your misdirected ideas and actions that may be blocking the real and true feeling of God's presence in your life. Let me tell you that I can feel God's awesome presence right now...and his Holy Spirit is with me...and with each of you. The Holy Spirit of Christ is here right now in a very special way ministering to us all.

I could conclude this powerful message right now but Almighty God has a little more to share with us. Listen: Then Jesus said to that paralyzed man and to you and me; *"your sins are forgiven"*. Right now, we should all say: hallelujah and praise be to Almighty God. My sins...your sins, are forgiven because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Will you seek forgiveness of your sins...and commit to following Christ's teachings? Christ was there in person in Peter's mother's house in Capernaum...and he said to that paralyzed man those wonderful words *"your sins are forgiven"*. Christ is letting us in...into his inner circle saying those words to each of us today. Because he died on the cross, was resurrected from the grave...he now sits at the right hand of Almighty God and acts of our behalf for the forgiveness of our earthly sins. We can almost hear Christ saying those same words... *"your sins are forgiven"*...through the presence of his Holy Spirit right now.

I'd like to take these next few minutes to assist us all to free our own human spirit...our soul...of any known and unknown sins which we have committed. You know about those sins which are evident in your own life...those sins that you can easily identify. But there are also sins which are committed that we don't realize that we do like saying something unkind that offends someone and not realizing it. And because of your spiritual education and knowledge, I believe that you have already sought forgiveness for many of your sins in the past...but today...right now...I want us to experience this forgiveness in a most meaningful way...a way that we will remember...a way that we will know that Almighty God's Holy Spirit is present here and will receive our sins and sincerely forgive us.

I want us to all close our eyes and as we do this, will you ask for Almighty God's unseen Holy Spirit to come and be with your own spirit right now. Take a few deep breaths and as you do, feel any of those negative thoughts, which you may feel, leave your body...and while you are doing this breath in the Holy Spirit and allow Almighty God to be present in a very special way...right now. Begin to feel his awesome presence...begin to feel that

Christ's Holy Spirit is a part of you...feel him. Now speak to him in your mind. (pause) Ask Christ to see you as you are...a sinner...yes, a sinner but full of grace...seeking his forgiveness. Allow your mind talk to him...talk to him right now...now is the time...not later today...but right now. (pause)

Now, will you say these words to Jesus Christ with me (out loud); *Dear Lord Jesus, I come to you a sinner and I say this with my own lips, and I truly believe in my heart that you died for my sins, and were raised from the dead, to give me eternal life. Holy Spirit come right now, and take over my life. Set my own spirit free from my sins, set my soul (mind and emotions) free from torment, set my body free from all sickness and disease, and fill me with your spirit. Amen!*"

As I was saying those words, Almighty God said that you need to hear something else. Listen: and then Jesus said to the paralytic (and each of us today); *"get up, take your mat and go home."* (v12) Will you get up right now wherever you are and take up your mat (here meaning your sinful life) and go feeling the same forgiveness which the paralytic man felt? Will you take up your sinful life and go knowing that your sins have been forgiven? Will you take up your sinful life and go feeling the presence of Almighty God, through his Holy Spirit, alive in your life...like you never felt him before? Will you? Scripture says: *"he got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of everyone. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying. 'we have never seen anything like this!'"*

Get up! Each one of you, wherever you are...get up and praise Almighty God...and confirm that you also have never seen God's healing force like this before. God is waiting for each of us to respond. Let's do it...let's get up...go...knowing that our sins are forgiven through the power of Almighty God...and we can truly be with him in eternity when our earthly life is completed.