



**Gifted & Entrusted VI - Resources**  
**November 15th, 2020**

*Twin Towers United Methodist Church*

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## WORSHIP GUIDE

*Before you begin your time of worship, find a comfortable place to be and gather whatever you might need: your Bible, some paper or a notebook, something to write with, your computer/connected device (if you intend to listen to music online), etc. Feel free to adapt this worship guide in any way that makes best sense to you and those you might be gathered with. (Consider inviting someone – a friend, a family member – to worship with you.) Commit to spending the next hour with God.*

**PRELUDE** - Listen and sing along to a song or hymn that blesses and centers your spirit!

**WELCOME** – Welcome to this time of worship! You are invited to pause for a moment and consider: *What are the resources that you have at your disposal? How do you experience each of these as gifts in your life? Are you using what you have for God’s purposes and glory? What does that even mean?* Today, we meditate on resources as a gift from God that we are entrusted with. When you are ready, take a deep breath in, out, and arriving in this time of worship.

**OPENING HYMN** - “We Are Called”, TFWS 2172

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MExgLzwpXo>

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| <p>1. Come! Live in the light!<br/>Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!<br/>We are called to be light for the kingdom,<br/>to live in the freedom of the city of God!</p> | <p>2. Come! Open your heart!<br/>Show your mercy to all those in fear!<br/>We are called to be hope for the hopeless<br/>so all hatred and blindness will be no more!</p>        |
| <p><i>refrain:</i><br/>We are called to act with justice,<br/>we are called to love tenderly,<br/>we are called to serve one another,<br/>to walk humbly with God!</p>            | <p>3. Sing! Sing a new song!<br/>Sing of that great day when all will be one!<br/>God will reign, and we’ll walk with each other<br/>as sisters and brothers united in love!</p> |

**OPENING PRAYER** – *You are invited to take a deep breath as you pray:*

You have called us salt and light, O God,

to shine with your joy and love,  
and to flavor the world with your life and hope.

And so we come.

We come because we neither want to lose our flavor nor to have our light be dimmed.

We come because we want to hear again how to walk in your ways and to love tenderly.

We come because we need to be reminded of that great day that is on its ways, when you will reign.

We come because we want to gather round you and listen,  
to sense your nearness, and seek your teaching.

Thank you for meeting us here.

We open our hearts to you.

We pray this in the name of the one who came to be with us and to show us your way, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE - The Sermon on the Mount : Matthew 5:1-14 / CEB**

<sup>1</sup>Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up a mountain. He sat down and his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> He taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> “Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup> “Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad.

<sup>5</sup> “Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> “Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full.

<sup>7</sup> “Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> “Happy are people who have pure hearts, because they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> “Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God’s children.

<sup>10</sup> “Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

<sup>11</sup> “Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. <sup>12</sup> Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven. In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you.

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It’s good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people’s feet. <sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can’t be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

### **LISTEN - What Are We to Do Now? The Gift of Direction** (Fred Fielding)

It was more than a month ago when Pastor Emily and I contemplated my participation in the service this morning. As many of you, at the time I was deeply troubled by the buildup to the election. Like rip tides, many currents seemed to be pulling us further and further away from our Father’s Kingdom. The plight of the sick, homeless, and those without hope were like receding images on the beach, as we were being pulled out into a sea of darkness.

We also assumed, at the time, that by November 15<sup>th</sup> all would be settled. We would know who and how the country was to be run. We could pray and plan for the future. Ha! No such luck! As I wrote this, I had no idea what our state will be today, or for that matter, what will happen in the weeks to come. It feels like we are still being pulled out to sea. We are still angry and afraid, looking for justice, looking for injustice, seeking self-justification and peace in our own, personal beliefs. These are the currents that are pulling us away, distracting us from what Jesus is telling us about the Father and the Kingdom. I sense we are looking in the wrong place for meaning and direction. We are seeking the divine in a very temporal space where we are only certain that what we believe is right. Oh my. Just as soon as we feel we might escape the undertow; cable news throws us something that weighs us down again.

But, as you might be experiencing in moments of silence and prayer, what we are going through, regardless of our individual political stance, gives us a real opportunity to look to the horizon for a new dawn. Today, we heard the comfort and direction that Jesus has given us in the Sermon on the Mount. We can intuit that Jesus is giving us a transcendent message, And, at the very least, answers the question “What Are We to Do Now?”

To give some perspective, this olive tree is one of eight ancient trees that are on the Mount of Olives today. While the Sermon on the Mount was in a different location, some have dated this one to the 12th century, others, in poor condition, cannot be dated. Some say that they date back

to the time of Jesus and may have been alive at the time of this lesson. Biologists tell us that DNA tests have proven that all of the oldest trees are from the same genetic stock. Likely, all



are at least scions or offshoots of the original trees. To me, seeing and touching these trees alone would be worth a trip to the Holy Land.

As we have heard, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus wants to remove our fears and tells us what our Father values. In fact, all of Mathew chapters 5-7, including the Lord's prayer, contain precise directions from Jesus to us about the love of our Father and how we are to live. These directions that are not negotiable, don't require our common agreement and are not subject to the principles of

democracy. We don't vote on them.

Let's look at what Jesus is saying in detail, while we hone in on the definition of familiar terms. To start with, picture Jesus smiling and happy. Why not? This is the good news. Many, many depictions of Jesus on the mount show a stern face.

The first three verses of the Sermon tell us to not be afraid. You will be poor, you will grieve, you must be meek, but do not fear, the Kingdom of Heaven and the earth will be yours. "Do not fear, your Father loves you" is a common message throughout the Gospel from the flowers and birds in the field to the Resurrection.

To this I would add the insight that fear drives us deeper into the storm. With what Jesus has told us, what are we to be afraid of?

In the middle verses, from 6 – 9, Jesus is telling us exactly what we should be doing.

Verse 6- Seek righteousness. What is righteousness? - being moral, virtuous, and doing what is right. How do we know what is right? We study Jesus in our Gospels and pray for understanding where we are uncertain. We search and seek. When we pray to really understand, we always start with a question not an answer.

Verse 7- Be merciful. Being merciful is to be giving and forgiving, it is healing the sick, feeding the hungry, providing shelter to the homeless, and forgiving those who have wronged you. It is exercising your gifts of empathy more than sympathy. It is often giving a hand-up instead of a hand-out.

Verse 8- Have a pure heart. Be without greed, lust, malice, treachery, or evil intent. Be truthful without spin, be sincere; and guileless without deceitful hidden motives. Today, it is often difficult to know if others speak the truth. Always be truthful in what you speak.

Verse 9- Finally, be a peacemaker. Peacemakers are not passive; they have to work. We know what that means. Pour the water of truth and justice on the fire, seek righteousness, be merciful and have a pure heart. I suggest being a peacemaker follows these others intentionally.

In verse 10, Jesus goes on to say that your life will not be easy. You will be persecuted for righteousness sake and people will say bad things about you. But again, in so many words, “do not be afraid”, rejoice.

In verse 13 he tells us we are the salt of the earth, but we have a choice. If we choose not to follow, then we will be trampled and thrown out.

In verse 14, Jesus sets a vision for us to become the light of the world. Illuminate and inspire. And, at verse 16, Jesus says “let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

So “What Are We To Do Now?”

1. Do not be afraid. Do not act out of fear for what might come. Don't listen to those who will coerce you with fear. The Father has given us all the loving assurances we could possibly ask for. Let's be courageous with what we have been given.
2. Use verses 6-9 as the basis of what you do. We should try to follow 6-9 when you are forming your opinions. That way, you will be a light to the world. You will be someone who others consult with in their own difficult decisions. Jesus' message is focused on you and me in God's Kingdom. We don't see any discussion of Tiberius, Caiaphas, or the hypocrites in the temple hierarchy. In today's world that would be the equivalent to including criticisms of the President, endorsing a Supreme Court Justice, complaining about the Vatican, or condemning politicians in general, as part of the Sermon on the Mount. We know how Jesus felt about these things in other parts of the Gospels, but here, he is just speaking to you and me about how we should strive to be in the Kingdom. For us, the REAL message is that the values from the Sermon on the Mount transcend our political beliefs. In this case, transcend means to rise above our current human condition. These values from the Mount of Olives are directions to a higher, transcendent, peaceful level of existence which may guide us in our choices in more temporal actions.



It is deceitful to try and retrofit righteousness, mercy, or a pure heart to actions we take for other motives.

3. Lead by example, not by debate or argument.
4. Get a bookmark for your memory. I tried to make up an acronym for a bookmark- FRPMP Fearless, righteous, pure-hearted, merciful, peacemaker. I will take more suggestions and ask Angel Tigas to give us an artistic rendition.

This is where I intended to end today, but Pastor Emily's message on purpose last week has been echoing in my thoughts all week. The first question I had is "what are our individual purposes"? I believe that to know them you must be FRPMP, become transcendent. As part of that, as the author Rick Warren tells us, "If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born *by* his purpose and *for* his purpose. And, that focusing on ourselves will never reveal God's purpose. Amen.

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE** – *Spend time in prayer. What did you hear for yourself through today's scripture and reflection? Talk to God about it. Then lift up the joys and concerns that are in your heart. You might write them down, speak them aloud, or pray them in silence.*

*I would be honored to pray with you and for you.*

*Please send a note via text, mail, or email or give me a call if I can do so.*

**SHARING OUR GIFTS**– *How might you offer yourself and all that you have to God this week? How are you being invited to practice generosity? Spend a moment listening for God's direction.*

*You are invited to contribute financially towards the purpose and ministry of TTUMC. We are a congregation committed to being conduits of God's healing in our neighborhood and beyond, and in so doing, impact the last and the least. You can contribute by mailing in a check, dropping off cash, or giving online via PayPal (visit [www.twintowersumc.org](http://www.twintowersumc.org)). Take a moment and do that now.*

**CLOSING HYMN** - "Give Thanks", TFWS 2036

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYRgB26rPIs>

Give thanks with a grateful heart,  
give thanks to the Holy One,  
give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ  
his Son. (x2)

*Refrain:*  
And now let the weak say, "I am strong";  
let the poor say "I am rich because of what  
the Lord has done for us"

**BENEDICTION** - May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOW GO AND PASS CHRIST'S PEACE!**



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<https://www.facebook.com/ttuncAlameda/>

**SCRIPTURE** for Nov. 22nd, 2020: **Psalm 98**

**PRAYER INVITES:**

- A peaceful transition of leadership in our country.
- **Ruth Bigelow's** upcoming surgery, Nov. 19th.
- Those among us who are without housing and struggling for hope.