

Let Us Go to the House of the Lord
June 10, 2020
Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”
² Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.
⁷ Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.”
⁸ For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
⁹ For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

“Worship gives us a workable structure for life”, says Eugene Peterson. This is absolutely true. Worship is the thread that is woven through every aspect of our spiritual existence. But before we begin to untangle the profound meaning of that phrase, we first need to take a stab at what it means to worship.

We often associate worship with going to a sanctuary, a meeting place, singing, listening to prayers and listening to a sermon. These are all activities, I would suggest, that are inspired by worship and then increase our desire to worship. But while they form part of the patch-work of the quilt that is worship, they are not in themselves what the Psalmist or the church’s mystical tradition, call worship. When the Psalmist says, “Let us go to the house of the Lord,” he means going to the Temple. He desires to stand in the magnificent space, silent and holy. He desires to place himself before God with awe and reverence, without words, only the promptings of the Spirit that empowers him to give his whole self to the infinite-holy God. Worship often happens without words, which then move us to do what is right and just in the world. The Psalmists last sentence is helpful to understand the act and effects of worship; he says, “For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek the good.” Worship, in the Psalmists heart, is to create righteous and loving works that come from God. But they can only come from a still heart

In a world disjointed by the unrest in our communities, worship is necessary to restore the peace within us. The purpose of worship is to honor God, and from this, God provides us peace within our conflicted hearts. It is hard to do what is right and just, when we are filled with the anger of years of frustration, and seemingly political indifference. Those that march in the streets should pray as they hold their signs. It is the only way to make it an act of peace. We all must worship to connect with the holy God, who meets us in the silence.

We don’t need a sanctuary to worship. We need only to prepare ourselves to walk into the solitude of peace with God. This could be anywhere. It could be in a gathering, it

could be in a room, it could be outside. It may seem strange to say, but you don't even need a preacher. You just need to be bathed in the Spirit of God who washes us with the Word of God, that turns our unrest into restful peace. When Eugene Peterson says, "Worship gives us a workable structure for life," this is what he means. Worship inspires good works, and the means to think through what those good works might look like, in a life that wants to follow God into the conflicted places of life.