



April 19 – WILD

What is worship? Have you ever thought about that before? I have. A lot. We have a lot of instructions on how to facilitate worship. There is a whole “Manual on the Liturgy” that gives specifics on a variety of topics from the entrance to processions, how to ring a bell...you name it, it is in there. There is a proper way to do everything. So, why are things not done the same way everywhere?

Well, to answer that we may think through a couple of things together. There are owner’s manuals for everything. How many of you have ever parked your car somewhere without setting the parking brake? How many of you have your driver’s seat set straight up and down, not leaning back at all? How many of you have ever slammed the trunk or back door to a vehicle? Has anyone ever NOT observed the posted speed limit? Have any of you ever adjusted a driver’s seat while driving? If that is not enough, how many of you have stored pots, pans, or other, in your oven’s warming drawer?

The truth is that there is a way to do everything that is the most proper, and then there is the way things are lived out in real time. We make decisions all the time on what is important and what is not. Should the parking brake always be on when in park? According to the manual, yes. Many reserve that for hills. I would think both approaches are okay.

So, back to worship. What is worship? Jesus gives us the simple answer to this question as he journeys to Emaus. There is this movie-like vibe as Jesus asks the two why they are so sad. They go on to describe his life, his death, and the mystery of the disappearance of his body. It is right out of a movie as Jesus plays along. They do not know that it was Jesus.

The disciples do not know they are in the presence of Jesus until two things happen. They studied Scripture and then shared a meal. That is when their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus was with them. It is as simple as that. What is worship? I like to think of it as an acronym. WILD. Worship is Learning and Dinner. We add a lot of things to the manual, but at the end of the day, what makes for worship is opening scripture and sharing in fellowship over food.

That means that worship is not confined only to this space. That means that something significant happens each time we open the word and break bread. The meal is not only the Sacrament of Holy Communion shared in this space. This table, or altar, becomes that which connects all the tables in all our homes, offices, and anywhere else we may share in word and meal. Christ joins us there.

This is a lesson that we learned during the Covid 19 global pandemic. In a time when we could not safely welcome all to this space, we gathered through virtual means. Many of you, in your own homes, shared in Scripture and then shared in the meal as we set the Holy Spirit loose through time and space. It was the closest we have ever been to the example Jesus gives on worship. We spent time learning and we shared a meal.

Some of you are gathered with us now in this way, and I thank God for the gift of technology and the truth that the Spirit is not bound by what we are able to see and do. The Spirit brings us together, through time and space, and joins us in an act of worship.

On Easter Sunday, we spoke of the need to “Go to Galilee.” We need to get back to basics, not letting the work of organized religion get in the way of what we are called to do. Last week, we talked about the need to be joined together again through the work of the Holy Spirit. Finding that glue that holds us together in mission and vision through the work and teachings of Christ. Today, may we see that our life of faith is not only in this place. We are able to gather with Christ any time there are two or more gathered. As we learn from each other and share in fellowship, Christ is there with us. It makes any place a holy place. It is as easy as that. Worship is Learning and Dinner. Amen.