**Sunday, April 15, 2012**

**Welcome** – Greg Snow

**Unity of the Church –** Psalm 27

*Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God;
Will you pray with all your power, while we try to preach the Word?*

*All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down;
Brethren, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.*

Americans tend to think of prayer as a solitary thing -- locking yourself into a closet, or maybe heading off into the desert or in a retreat. Private prayer really is important to our relationship with Christ. Yet before it is anything else, prayer is something done with others: the Body of Christ. This is the fellowship as it is found around you, wherever you are -- the small group gathering, the people laying hands on someone in need, and more than anywhere else, at the church building during worship.

Praying together was one of the hallmarks of the church from its start. The early Christians gathered, much like we do, to hear the Word and to do the acts that the Lord had set down for them. They heard, felt, saw, smelled, tasted, and sang God's love. The Spirit knit them together, as in a quilt or tapestry. And they responded in prayer. Their public prayers taught them a lot about what private prayers were about.

This morning as we begin our corporate worship service, I encourage you to spend a few moments in prayer as we seek to love our God supremely, as well as love each other. And may we never forget to pray for the poor lost sinners that surround us. Listen to the words from the great hymn, Brethren We Have Met To Worship, “death is coming and hell is moving…can you really bear to let them go? See our fathers and our mothers, and our children sinking down.” Charles Spurgeon once said, “*If sinners be dammed, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for.”*

Please join me for a few moments of quiet prayer.

**We have gathered together today, O Lord because our spirits long to come into your presence. You alone are the hope and joy we seek for the living of our lives.  You alone are the salvation we long for. O Lord, do not turn away from us, but come and dwell in our midst today. Reach into every heart and soul that has assembled in this place and be gracious to us. Answer our heartfelt prayers and send us away to proclaim the glory of your name in all the world. Amen.**

**Song of Praise** – *Brethren, We Have Met To Worship*

**There Is No Substitute For Obedience –** *A.W. Tozer*

Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late - and how little revival has resulted? I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work. To pray for revival while ignoring the plain precept laid down in Scripture is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience.

*Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”*

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; show me any wicked way that needs to be corrected in my own life before revival can come. I'm praying for revival; help me to also be obeying. Amen."

**Song of Worship** – *Trust and Obey*

**The Great God** –*Excerpt from**A Puritan’s Prayer*

Destroy in me every lofty thought,
Break pride to pieces and scatter it to the winds.
Annihilate each clinging shred of self-righteousness,
Implant in us true lowliness of spirit,
Abase me to self-loathing and self-abhorrence,
Open in me a fount of penitential tears,
Break me, then bind me up;

Thus will my heart be a prepared dwelling for my God;
Then can the Father take up his abode in me,
Then can the blessed Jesus come with healing in his touch,
Then can the Holy Spirit descend in sanctifying grace;
O Holy Trinity, three Persons and one God,
inhabit me, a temple consecrated to thy glory.

**Songs of Worship** – *O Great God/Give Us Clean Hands*

**Offering**

**Meekness and Its Blessing *– (Ralph Bouma/Charles Haden Spurgeon)***

 *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

*“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

Each of these steps—humility, penitence, and meekness—are only obtained through grace.

Those who are privileged to obtain these graces find that they never receive them in the way of perfection. They might have humility, yet they may still have to strive against pride that continually sticks up its ugly head. They may be blessed with the grace of mourning over the power of sin. They find that the mourning is continual because sin continues to boil up in their heart. They have to continue to mourn over the sins of each day.

Meekness is the third step. This is a special grace. "Blessed are the meek" is against human reasoning. The human reasoning of the heart boils up against the grace of meekness. Human reasoning strives for honor, superiority, aggressiveness, and self-centeredness. The sin of self-centeredness continually boils up in the heart. This grace must continue to war against that sin.

We must be born again, or else our proud spirits will never be meek. And if we have been born again, let it be our joy, as long as we live, to show that we are the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, with whose gracious words I close my discourse:

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

**Songs of Worship –** *Hide Away in the Love of Jesus/Have Thine Own Way, Lord*

**Message** – *“Blessed Are The Meek”*

*Scripture Reference: Matthew 5:5*

* The narrow gate to the Kingdom is being laid out for us by Jesus – He is the Gate!
1. Meaning of Meekness
	* Meekness is defined as power under control
		1. Such as an animal that is broken for usefulness
	* Being *“poor in spirit*” and “*mourning over our sins*” leads us to a gentle & meek spirit that can receive & focus on God’s Glory & His Righteousness.
	* Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12
		1. Illustration of the Farmer in the field. The plow is symbolic of the Word of God – breaking up our soil. The plow discs breaks up the sinful soil of our lives. The seed (Word of God) is planted in our lives.
2. Seeing Meekness in Action
	* Abraham (Genesis 13:5-9)
	* Joseph (Genesis 45:2-8, 50:19-20)
	* David (1 Samuel 24:5-6)
	* Paul (Philippians 3:1-12)
	* Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-23)
3. Results of Meekness
	* Salvation of your soul – James 1:19-21
	* Paradise regained – Genesis 1:28-31; Revelation 21:1

***Questions to think about:***

1. Do you see yourself as a hopeless sinner before a Holy God?
2. Are you broken & mournful about your sinful condition every time you see yourself as you are?
3. Are you now humbled by your sin and looking to Jesus for forgiveness & worship?

**Time of Prayer**