

When I was 5 years old I lived in an old, two-story house in Kent, Ohio. I still remember very clearly the day when my mom and dad told me that I was going to move out of the bedroom my sister and I were sharing, into my own bedroom. I was excited at first, but maybe you can remember how *you* felt when you were 5. I remember the first night in that room all by myself. When the light was turned off, there I was in my bed, and I could hear every car going by on the street out in front of the house. Every time the wind blew a branch of a tree against my window, I jerked over to see what that sound was. I imagined that there were monsters hiding under my bed and in the closets. It felt especially dark and I was scared. I remember that night, I called for my mom, and she came into the room. Even today, I remember what she said, “Don’t worry honey, God’s in here with you. Nothing can happen to you. If you get scared, just talk to God about it and he’ll help you.”

Sometimes when we hear the word, “worship,” the wrong images come to our minds. For example, people often associate “worship” with of sitting and listening to a lecture about religion. When other people hear the word “worship,” they may think of some formal ceremony accompanied by organ music. But did Jesus first disciples have organs? Of course not. Yet they worshipped. When others hear “worship,” they might think of learning what the God who lives “up there” somewhere else, wants us “down here” in the real world to know.

But worship is fundamentally very simple. “Worship” fundamentally means “being together with God.” Just like I’m together with you right now, in this place, I am right now, in this place together with God. Just like I can talk to you, I can talk to God. Just like, if I’m listening, I can hear you talk to me; in the same way, if I’m listening, I can hear the words God wants to speak. *That’s worship.* Simple, right? It’s not difficult. It can happen in a room like this. It can happen in a big, beautiful church building. It can happen as you’re walking to the bus stop. Or it can happen in a dark bedroom on the second floor of an old house in Kent, Ohio.

In today’s Bible passage, we read about Jesus telling his disciples that God would leaving a “bengosya” in the world—the Spirit of Truth, that would live within us. This Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus.

In the “Shinkyodoyaku” translation of the Bible that is written on your orders of worship, the word “bengosya” is used to describe this Spirit. That’s obviously a word used in courts. But in the older “Kogoyaku” translation of the bible, the word “tasukenushi” is used rather than “bengosya”—I think I like that translation a little better. The reason why is that the fundamental meaning of the original Greek word used here, “parakletos” is “One who stands beside” or “one who gives help or comfort.” The Spirit who lives within us and among us is a Spirit who helps and encourages us.

I think that what Jesus was telling his disciples is very important for us today. Sometimes we imagine that God is just an idea. We're tempted to imagine that God is far away. The powers of the world want us to imagine that God doesn't even exist. And if God doesn't exist, then we are alone.

But we're not alone. I was not alone in my new bedroom in Kent, Ohio when I was five years old. I could feel that even when I was 5. I am not alone now. We are not alone in this room. Jesus' Spirit is here. And that Spirit loves us. And that Spirit is a Spirit of truth. And that Spirit longs to "be together with us." And if you can realize at least that one fact, you have been "in worship" today.

There's no reason to believe that the world is scary. It's not scary because we are not alone. And when we worship, this is the truth we come to know. In just a moment we're going to have a time of silent reflection. Maybe today, instead of this just being a time of silence, try to make it something else. In the silence, take a risk and say something to the Spirit that is here. And listen for what that Spirit has to say to you. *This* is worship.