

Straight from the "Heart"

April 21, 2024

Enemies of Abundant Living (8)



Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve

Roll Back the Clouds of Guilt

Modern Affirmation (P: Pastor C: Reader with Congregation)

Do you believe in God the Father?

We believe that -- into the silence of the void the Creator spoke, and the world came into being. The Word of God in the vastness brought light from darkness, matter from nothing, flesh from dust, life from lifelessness.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

We believe that -- In the quiet of a small town in Palestine the Word of God came to us. Even though of one being with the Creator, Jesus our Christ, taking on human form, was born, lived and walked among us, speaking the words of life. He was crucified, died, and was buried. He rose from the dead and speaks to us today. He is the one who saves us from ourselves.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

We believe that -- In the stillness of our souls the Spirit of God, who is one with the Creator and the Christ, whispers the Word, and calls us back to the Creator, back to the Christ, back to the wholeness of everlasting life in the unity of the Creator, Christ and Spirit.

Adapted to be responsive from "*Ash Wednesday (Silence)*
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Opening Prayer

Lord, we rejoice for you are gathering your people from the farthest parts of the earth to bring us direction, consolation and new life. We give thanks that you have gathered us into your church and graced us with your faithful presence. We ponder our history, ancient and still developing, and marvel at being permitted to participate in your vision for your people on this earth. It is why we come, it is why we worship, it is why we give our resources, it is why we give our lives. Continue to gather us into Jesus' vision and dream that we, your faithful people, may become one in you. In Jesus name, Amen.

adapted from a call to worship (inspired by Jeremiah 31:7-9) and Invocation
by Rev. Bonnie Tarwater, ucc.org/worship/worship-ways

Call to Worship and Music Intro

Come, praise the God who lifts us up and provides healing. Gather to give him thanks, for he turns the tears of night into cries of joy with the coming dawn. Come to please him in worship, for when he is pleased, we are strong. When we seek his mercy, he invites us to replace our mourning with joyful dancing.

Therefore, let's offer our eternal heart-felt thanks to God by singing...

(Inspired by Psalm 30:1-2,5,7,9,12-13)



There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

Words: Frederick W. Faber, 1854

Music: Lizzie S. Tourjee, 1877;

(UMH harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1988)

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1. There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.
2. There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good!
There is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.
3. For the love of God is broader than the measure of our mind;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

Theme

Our story illustrates the need to learn the lesson of letting go of negative things.

There was once a hand whose all five digits were great friends. Then the owner of the hand started a dangerous job and, despite the care he tried to give, the thumb ended up with lots of cuts and bruises, while the fingers escaped undamaged.

No one knows for sure how it started, but the differing results began to come between fingers and the thumb, and eventually the fingers looked down on the thumb for what they assumed was his alleged carelessness, while the thumb resented the fingers because of their attitude and envy over their ability to not get injured on this difficult job. Eventually, the thumb stretched himself away from the fingers, and wanted nothing to do with them. Initially, the thumb looked dignified, straight, rigid and aloof. However, that kind of



position was forced and ridiculous. The owner couldn't figure out why he was so clumsy with that hand, and began shoving it into his pocket, the fingers suffered in darkness and obscurity, while the thumb was isolated and alone near the owner's belt buckle..

Finally, the thumb and fingers both realized that their bad attitudes of judgment and envy and inability to forgive was no way to be a hand. They also felt ashamed and guilty and so they weren't sure what to do and also feared how they would react to each other. Nevertheless, one day the fingers were out because they were on the job and we aren't sure who made the first move of confession, but because both sides realized no one is perfect, forgiveness was granted both ways and their friendship was restored and they worked in such a way that the owner realized he was not clumsy with that hand anymore. And he stopped stuffing his no longer shameful, clumsy hand into the gloomy, depressing darkness of his pocket.

adapted from "The Resentful Thumb", by Pedro Pablo Sacristán, freestoriesforkids.com

God's goal is that people will let go of past mistakes and missteps and come together in gracious unity. It means that we treat others how God treated us in Christ and that we allow the light of Christ to put away all darkness within -- and around us for the sake of others. Join me on the yellow font.

Responsive Reading 1 (R: Reader, C: Pastor with Congregation)

R: Right and wrong living cannot live in harmony any more than light and dark can occupy the same space at the same time. There is nothing in common between human-made idols and the living God.

C: We are the temple of the living God.

R: God promises that he will live in us and walk with us – that he will be our God, and we are his people.

C: Therefore, we do everything in *his* power to make a clean break with anything and everything that dilutes or distracts us from our devotion for God.

R: He has not treated us as our sins deserve. For those who revere him, his mercy is as high as the heaven is from the earth.

C: In his compassion, he has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west. He tramples on them and throws them into the depths of the sea.

R: He shows his faithfulness and unfailing love to us just as he had promised from

the beginning.

C: In Christ, we are new creations. The old is gone the new is come. All this is from God, who is reconciling the world to himself in Christ.

Inspired by 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Psalm 103:10-12, Micah 7:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19a

Music In his mercy, Jesus helps us put the past behind us and brings us together in peace and purpose. Let's sing

Jesus, Lord, We Look to Thee

Words: Charles Wesley, 1749

Music: Foundery Collection, 1742

1. Jesus, Lord, we look to thee; let us in thy name agree;
show thyself the Prince of Peace, bid our strife forever cease.
2. By thy reconciling love every stumbling block remove;
each to each unite, endear; come, and spread thy banner here.
3. Make us of one heart and mind, gentle, courteous, and kind,
lowly, meek, in thought and word, altogether like our Lord.
4. Let us for each other care, each the other's burdens bear;
to thy church the pattern give, show how true believers live.

God Moments (congregation's testimonies were not transcribed)

Music Sometimes we need to get quiet with God before we can find the freedom to move forward in our life. Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing...

Come and Find the Quiet Center

Words: Shirley Erena Murray © 1992 Hope Publishing Co.

Music: attr. to B.F. White, 1844

1. Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.
3. In the spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
there is a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
in the spirits lively scheming there is always room to spare.

Prayers

Heavenly Father, Holy Risen One, Jesus Christ, we are still in the Easter season, the season you are making your risen Self known. Signs of your resurrection

surprise us – the sacred revealed in the ordinary things of life. We go about our lives, not sure about how to live into the new life you promise, so we settle for going back to the normal business of our day. Yet in the back of our minds and hearts, our keen awareness of your presence lingers, and we miss and grieve the loss of those sacred experiences.

And when doubts begin to creep in, suddenly, you, the sacred, appears before us in an ordinary act of kindness, grilling fish on the beach, through a stranger on the street, a special moment with a friend, or a tulip blooming in the rain.

Remind us that everything is different in the living of our lives because of your resurrection. As we celebrate new life, and future hope, we are mindful of the places that are war-torn, places in poverty, those whose health is diminished and those who care for them, for all people who suffer in mind, body, and spirit or in other ways. **Petitions** Specifically we name today, , * Karen Nowak's sister who is having more heart blockages, for Earl Campbell who is recovering, * Jeff and Linda for the Mallots, Jim has had a rough week, we pray for him, Chri Holt requests for her daughter-in-law Stephanie's mom, Lori, who is in hypertensive crisis, has a detached retina, and the daughter who is now flying to Virginia to be with her, * the family and friends of Karis Gaydos who many of you know, and who passed away this week, We also continue to pray for * Stephen Brittain, * for Patti and Carl Didomizio, * Ann Marin, * for people having a hard time financially * for Wes, and for * Julie Tuck, * and for Fran Warthman. And there are probably others on our hearts and minds that we have not named out loud, but we are aware of them, and you, Lord, are aware of them, and we lift them up to you in this moment of silence. (pause) Lord, hear the prayers of our hearts and answer them, even if not spoken out loud, and open our hearts so that we can see your world in the way you see it, and love with the love you so freely offer us, learning to live the prayer that you taught us to pray. **Lord's Prayer** portions adapted from prayer written by Rev Karla, revgalblogpals.org

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul visits the church he had founded at Corinth. A serious conflict erupts between Paul and a person or people. The church is unsupportive and Paul leaves. He changes his plans about his next visit. Instead, he writes a harsh letter -- (which we are not privy to) -- in which he tells the Corinthians how he feels and how they should



feel towards him. Paul sends Titus with the letter and anxiously worries while waiting for a response. So much so that he disrupts his present ministry and goes off to another city, where he waits for word from Titus. Titus has returned and now Paul addresses their reaction in another letter:

For indeed when we came into Macedonia, there was no rest for us. On the contrary, we faced all kinds of troubles — altercations without, apprehensions within. But God, who encourages the downhearted, encouraged us with the arrival of Titus! His presence was a joy. However, it was not only his arrival which encouraged us, but also how encouraged he was about you, as he told us how you long to see me, how distressed you are over my situation, how zealous you are in my defense — this news filled me with joy!

If I caused you pain by my severe letter, I do not regret it. though I was sorry at first — for I do see that that letter did distress you for a short time — now I rejoice not because you were pained, but because the pain led you to change your ways and turn back to God. For you handled the pain in God's way, so that you were not harmed by us at all. Sorrow handled in God's way produces a turning from sin to God which leads to salvation, and there is nothing to regret in that! But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, produces only spiritual death. For just look at what godly sorrow has produced in you! What earnest diligence, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what readiness to put things right!

2 Corinthians 7:5-11a (CJB, NLT)

Music We strive to put right what is wrong in our life. Let's sing

Take Time to Be Holy

Words: William D. Longstaff, ca. 1882

Music: George C. Stebbins, 1890

1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
abide in him always, and feed on his word.

Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.

2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be;

thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.

4. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
each thought and each motive beneath his control.

Thus led by his spirit to fountains of love,
thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

Sermon Roll Back Clouds of Guilt

Michael Pollan used word association to see what the first reaction would be by people who lived in France and people who lived in America when he said the word “Chocolate Cake”. The top response for the French was “Celebration!”. The top response among Americans was “guilt”.

Like many of the enemies of abundant living, and as Paul indicates in our reading, guilt, godly guilt, can be a good thing. Feeling bad about considering doing something bad helps us realize it is bad and discourages us from doing it -- or it encourages us to make corrections if we have already done it. It is like a warning light on your car -- it tells you what to do so you can head off problems or make corrections before it gets worse. Or as one of my old Sunday School teachers use to say, the Holy Spirit is like a fuzz buster, which gives you a warning so that you do not experience worse consequences. The analogy does kind of fall apart in that most people who use them do so in order to try and get away with something, where the goal of the Holy Spirit is not to get away with something, but to not do something wrong in the first place.

It is not the emotion or shame and guilt and the words, attitudes and actions that flow from it that are necessarily wrong – it only becomes an enemy of living when it gets twisted into an unhealthy use of it. If people are guilty, they should feel guilty. It helps them adjust to being not guilty in what they are doing. This is what Paul describes as godly sorrow, or handling pain in God’s way – it helps us to eagerly live the way we want to live. It can be an effective tool to move us properly forward in our life. To nutshell Paul’s explanation -- worldly sorrow says, “I’m sad that I got caught and/or have to face consequences.” Godly sorrow says “I regret I did this because it created problems, and I want to make it right, and I don’t want to do it again.

It becomes an enemy when, for example, we can’t leave mistakes behind us. To use our earlier story, if the fingers and thumb could not get past their temporary conflict, if they could not let it go and leave it behind them, they will forever be

awkward with each other, and the owner would not be able to use that hand as well again...

Or another example is when people abuse that healthy emotion inside of us to manipulate us into their agenda, and sometimes we even do that to ourselves as well. On an old, popular police drama, a pharmacist had made a huge pledge toward a new building that a large church was attempting to build. At some point he had realized he had way over-committed himself and talked to the pastor about cutting back by about half – still paying it all but taking more time to pay. A bit later the wife came out of a meeting in a different place in the church and said the pastor said they had to divert funds from their youth center program to something else. When I asked why, he said I should talk to you. He tried to explain to his wife. She said, “No. We can’t say plead poverty to these people.” “We aren’t poor.” he replied. But she went right on, “They aren’t just fellow parishioners, they are our neighbors, our friends, we are in the PTA together and on and on she went about their connections.” Back against the wall, he had already started diluting his pills to maximize profits so he could keep up with the pledge he had committed to, and people died as a result. Enter the detectives whose investigation led them to the church and to pastor, who said, “Well, you know, detective, shame is a very underrated emotion. In the big city it's very easy to go unnoticed by others, so your conscience becomes your only witness. And for most of us, that's not enough.”

The detective replied, “And I'm sure every Sunday you play that card for all it's worth.” (Law and Order: Criminal Intent, “Malignant” S2:Ep 6)

The pharmacist not only felt guilty in his own conscience about what he could no longer do... but wherever he turned, instead of compassionate understanding, people just piled it on, rewarding him when he complied, and shaming and rejecting him when he didn't. Calvin & Hobbes, remember him? the boy and his stuffed tiger – he talks about this as well -- Calvin comes home saying,



Years ago, one parishioner was in support of enlisting guilt as a motivational tool because it would more quickly inspire *his* desired response of others in the church -- whether it was in the best interest of those others or not. (and he is right about this: most people are far more quickly motivated to act to relieve pain (in this case the pain of feeling guilt that someone has put on them) than they are to act to experience joy). But in the long term, this can lead to all kinds of resentment and other negative, painful feelings. This is what happened in the fictional detective show, and I fear, too often in real life -- instead of God's built in drive of beneficial guilt that leads to a clean conscience, better behavior and a more abundant and joyful life; when guilt is misused/abused from without, or sometimes, again, we do it to ourselves within, the pressure may lead not to a clean conscience, not to better behavior, but to self-destructive and destructive behavior that makes it worse for everyone in the long term.

At times the external actions (and even internal feelings) may not be completely indistinguishable between good guilt or bad guilt. In the detective show, from the church's point of view, until the pharmacist was finally caught at the end, he remained a beloved pillar of the church because he was doing what they considered the good thing) When Paul wrote the harsh letter between the two letters that we have that are in the Bible, he admits that he felt pained (he felt guilty) because he wasn't sure he had handled it right, it was hard to tell what was right and whether his words would inspire correction or make things worse by inspiring a worldly type of sorrow.

Paul implies that worldly sorrow does not create a clean conscience, is only sorry about being caught and/or accused, does not focus on their own words or actions that created that guilt, but focuses often on blaming the accuser. It is powerless to change behavior for the good, much less the heart, and it leads to spiritual death.

And yet guilt, even wrong guilt, is something that is frequently equated with our faith. When I was trying to choose music, I was telling the musicians on Friday, it is hard to find music that is on the topic "freedom from guilt". I couldn't find hardly any lyrics at all -- I did a search for "hymns on freedom from guilt" and all I got was a litany of the opposite, people naming hymns that made them feel guilty. In my opinion, guilt was already an enemy in their lives because in my opinion, from what they were saying, they had some really unusual interpretations of hymns that I know, many of which do not have any guilt inducing lyrics at all... but they stretched or twisted the meaning or did something and just felt guilty anyway -- maybe it was

how it was used in their context, I don't know... and many of these opinion givers, I got the impression, were not longer a part of any faith group, and blamed it, at least in this context, on guilt.

There was a claim going around at one time that in some circles of psychology, that ALL guilt was bad and needed to be eliminated without any correction of the behaviors that should make us feel guilty... Did you get that or did I say it too fast. [You got it but didn't like it] No, you shouldn't like it because those behaviors do damage to ourselves and others, and so we should feel guilty, not just get rid of the guilt and continue the bad behaviors.

On the other hand, and this is where I want to focus today, Aldous Huxley and E Stanley Jones write that chronic remorse (living in a state of guilt) – with that whole attitude, without being guilty of anything in particular – just a general state of feeling guilty all the time no matter where you go or what you do – is a most undesirable sentiment, and there is a good deal of false guilt that needlessly torments sincere people. Guilt like this is an enemy of abundant living that God intends for us and needs to be cleansed away. Throughout history, so much emphasis was put on the distortion and abuse of positive natural human drives that people felt guilty for having a healthy natural human drive.

For example, so much emphasis was put on service and self-denial and humbleness, that people felt guilty for feeling good about themselves, for having healthy self-esteem, for liking themselves! I can relate to the person who said, "The hardest thing about depression is that it is addictive. Over time, it becomes uncomfortable *not* to be depressed. You feel guilty when you feel happy."

Take it a step further. Guilt isn't just what we feel, it is what we think. For guilt is an emotion that flows from the conscience, and the conscience can be trained. Jones illustrates by talking with someone about how someone who was raised in a different culture and different faith tradition – how it would violate his conscience if he broke a certain rule, whereas Jones said he would violate his conscience if he did not break that same rule.

This is why diligence in raising our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren are so important. Our conscience, while it does have a basic universal spiritual code that is built right in to us, (we are created in the image of God) the moral code, the basic decency of how we treat each other - it cuts across all major religions (and most minor ones as well) and nearly all cultures, but our sensitivity to this can be heightened or deadened by our environment, by our

experiences, by our training, by our choices.

Repeated wrong actions will bother us less and less, right? until we don't any longer realize it is wrong. If someone steals a candy car from the store for the first time, they might have strong negative feelings about it. But if they don't get caught and are not forced to face consequences, by the 20th time they steal one, they may feel no guilt at all, and may not even recognize it as wrong anymore. They've trained their consciences to think differently.

Paul wrote Timothy describing this effect as people being "seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron". (1 Timothy 4:2) burned, charred, scarred and scabbed over, it has little to no feeling and may lead people to do harm to self and others without giving it a second thought. And if there are external negative consequences to their words and actions, they may not even understand the cause-and-effect relationship – they may not even understand why what they did caused that negative consequence.

So guilt and a sensitive conscience do have positive roles. But unresolved guilt for guilt's sake hinders the full life. So how do we fix unresolved or false guilt in our life?

1) First, avoid avoiding it. Whether the guilt is false or real, don't bury it. Don't put sleeping dogs out of their misery, they'll just come back to bite you later. Your mind and body are relentless – you won't be at peace when there is no peace deep within. Ignoring it won't make it go away. Bring guilt feelings to light so that you can deal with them.

2) Once an issue does come to light, don't deal with it on your own. Our conscience stands guard over right and wrong. In the line of some thinkers, the way to deal with guilt feelings is to eliminate core values, delete principles, and eradicate morality (kind of like the psychology thing I was talking about earlier, but it is not just in psychology). If you can convince yourself nothing is right or wrong; then you will never have the feeling of guilt, because guilt is the warning light that something is not right... But core values and universal truths cannot be so easily dismissed. They are built into us; and trying to dismiss them causes more inner conflict rather than less; not to mention that violating the rules of goodness can potentially cause outward conflicts as well.

3) Develop your conscience to be sensitive to truth and to God's impulses - and do this as an aid to better living (not to beat yourself up). Train it at the feet of Christ through Bible, through meditative prayer, through Christian conversation, through

devotional books, through music, and the list can go on and on. It doesn't happen overnight, and the process never ends, and we will never get it perfectly right; but over time we will learn more and more to distinguish between false and real guilt and how to deal with each.

False guilt can be relinquished, resolved, by solid godly wisdom. We can dismiss false guilt feelings if we have strong confidence that the truth of the situation declares us innocent. Real guilt takes a few more steps than that.

4) If you realize you have behaved badly, seek forgiveness. Forgiveness includes sorrow for the wrong and repentance, which means being sorry enough to make things right, to turn from the error and do your best to never do it again. Sometimes we leave half of that off.

Paul excitedly reports how overjoyed he was when Titus told him that this is what the Corinthian church did, that they gave all due diligence and zeal and effort to make things right and to return their loyal support to Paul.

Once we have secured God's forgiveness for the wrong, and if needed, attempted as best we can to secure the forgiveness of the people or persons wronged, and/or corrected the wrong situation -- then we must not forget to forgive ourselves. Don't hang onto guilt, don't punish ourselves for something that has been thrown into the sea, buried deeper than anyone can ever fathom. No amount of guilt can change the past, any more than worrying can change the future. Through Christ, with confession and forgiveness and restitution and a sincere desire to not repeat the error, comes no condemnation -- and becoming a new creation -- the old is gone (and we need to leave it gone) and the new has come (and we need to live in the newness). (Romans 8:1-3, 2 Corinthians 5:17-18a) Don't brood over wrongdoing. As Huxley wrote, "rolling in the muck is not the best way of get clean."

5) We've already talked about this, but part of forgiveness is restitution. Real guilt is not a response to someone else's anger or accusation, but a response to one's own actions or lack of action that has caused harm. But too often, we simply punish ourselves and feel bad, and leave it at that. We don't go on. If we use guilt properly, then it will lead us to change, make things right, and learning lessons and progress toward constructive change in ourselves and for those around us.

6) Ultimately, one of the goals of healthy guilt, is a drive toward reconciliation -- peace with God and peace with others. It can't always be accomplished, but IF it is within our power to restore a relationship to an acceptable mutual understanding,

then work toward that, (Romans 12:18) so that we can “work our fingers and thumbs” together -- for something good.

A brilliant woman ran a drug ring. She listened to religious radio to find arguments against God. She didn't just disbelieve, she hated God. At the time, she was taking three times the legal dose of sleeping pills in order to sleep. One night, something in the words she



heard on the radio broke her antagonism. She was converted. And then the fight of disentanglement began. First, the bad withdrawal from the pills she now refused to take. She went among her gang and told them what happened to her. Her testimony broke up the ring. Five of them were killed in action when they went to make amends. trying to help people whose lives they had wounded and destroyed through their drug selling. The leader became a radiant Christian in social service in a large city. A new love and loyalty broke the power of the old. E Stanley Jones sums it up: “Love Christ, and then do what you like, for you will like the right, and you will be free.”

In 1903 Edna Worrell wrote that she had a friend in Jesus whose love is strong and true, and even when I sinned against his love, when I confessed my guilt -- he rolled the sin-clouds away. Sometimes the clouds of trouble get in the way, but in his mercy he bursts through and shows me he is there – When clouds of sorrow make life seem useless, I take my grief to him, and in his care and tenderness and love that is over all, he whispers peace be still -- it's just like Jesus to roll the clouds away, It's just like Jesus to keep me day by day, It's just like Jesus all along the way, It's just like His great love.

paraphrase of some of “It's Just Like His Great Love” by Edna Worrell

Prayer Lord, the Bible teaches us that we are all guilty, but we don't have live with the clouds of guilt and despair. You promised to deal with our guilt on the cross. If we would only confess our sins, you would be faithful and just and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Train our conscience to discern good from evil, from helpful godly guilt from false and resolved guilt -- for our sake and the sake of those all around us. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Music When Jesus heals and cleanses us, our lives need not be burdened with guilt, but can be restored and filled with peace and joy. Let's sing

There's Within My Heart a Melody

Words: Luther B. Bridgers, 1910

Music: Luther B. Bridgers, 1910

1. There's within my heart a melody Jesus whispers sweet and low:
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still, in all of life's ebb and flow.

Refrain

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, sweetest name I know,
fills my every longing, keeps me singing as I go.

2. All my life was wrecked by sin and strife, discord filled my heart with pain;
Jesus swept across the broken strings, stirred the slumbering chords again.

Refrain

4. Feasting on the riches of his grace, resting neath his sheltering wing,
always looking on his smiling face, that is why I shout and sing.

Refrain

Blessing

Now being freed from guilt we do not need to carry, and enlightened by guilt we need to resolve, may God's love surround you and uplift you and stand with you as you go to free a world riddled with the pain of guilt, real, unresolved, and false – free them by how you love them, even as Christ loves us. Amen.

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