

# PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

## Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

### July 18, 2010

**Theme:** Pastor Alan writes about our Summer Sermon Series: *12 Smooth Stones: Favorite Bible Passages*. *The Bible is laced through and through with poignant passages that inspire, comfort, encourage, direct and teach us. Everyone has their favorites; this summer we'll touch on a dozen passages that seems to consistently rise to the top of most people's lists. Like smooth stones in the pocket of your favorite summer shorts, they have a familiar feel to them. Let's pull them out and turn them over and over in our hearts; plan to join with the rest of us in re-visiting some old friends as we examine them to see what new insights they offer up.*

**Preparation for Worship:** Today we consider Mark 2:1-11. The faith of those who lowered the paralytic man and this man's faith in Jesus resulted in Jesus forgiving his sins and in Jesus' healing words: "take up your mat and walk". Today's prelude echoes a theme of comfort and healing. The text of this traditional spiritual song "There is a Balm in Gilead" refers to Genesis 37 where we find a balm made from the resinous gum of the balsam poplar tree. This balm was carried from Gilead by the merchants present when Joseph was sold by his brothers. Later in Jeremiah 8, the balm is again encountered at Jeremiah's lament: "I weep for the hurt of my people; I stand amazed, silent, dumb with grief. Is there no medicine in Gilead?" Although the people's spiritual sickness was still very deep, it could be cured. But the people refused the medicine. God could heal their self-inflicted wounds, but he would not force his healing on them. Today, as you hear the soothing music, relax in God's presence and ask Jesus to send his healing Spirit to remove your sin, your guilt, your discomfort and set you free to worship him. If you would like the full text for this song at home, search for lyrics: "**There is a Balm in Gilead**". At church, you could turn in the red hymnal to hymn no. 611.

**Call to Worship:** Today's call to worship continues with the theme of comfort and healing. God seeks to bring us from our sin and discomfort into joyous life with him according to his plan for us. He is the one who restores us through our faith in Him.

Leader: God invites us into his healing presence with these words: "I am the Lord, who heals you."

**People: Diseased, depressed, dysfunctional, defeated, we come hungry for health that only God can provide.**

Leader: God calls us to bring open eyes, hearing ears and tender hearts turned toward him, the Great Physician.

**People: We bow before him in faith and expectancy!**

**Hymn of Praise:** This hymn helps us connect with Jesus as a friend, a Savior, our strength, and our help! The chorus is a strong affirmation of praise: Hallelujah! What a Savior, what a Friend! Let's sing together—joyfully proclaiming the good news found here!

**Jesus! What a Friend for sinners! Jesus! Lover of my soul;  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me, he, my Savior, makes me whole.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving, he is with me to the end.**

**Vs2**

**Jesus! What a Strength in weakness! Let me hide myself in him;  
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing, he, my Strength, my victory wins.'  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving, he is with me to the end.**

**Vs3**

**Jesus! What a Help in sorrow! While the billows o'er me roll,  
Even when my heart is breaking, he, my Comfort, helps my soul.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving, he is with me to the end**

**Vs5**

**Jesus! I do now receive him, more than all in him I find,  
He has granted me forgiveness, I am his, and he is mine.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving, he is with me to the end**

**Confession and Pardon:** This confession is drawn from the passage Alan has chosen—Mark 2:1-11. This is the first time in Mark that Jesus calls himself the “Son of Man”. The title Son of Man emphasizes that Jesus is fully human, while Son of God emphasizes that he is fully God. As God’s Son, Jesus has the authority to forgive sin. As a man, he can identify with our deepest needs and sufferings and help us overcome sin.

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, you came to serve. As you came to a blind man and gave him sight, come to us in our darkness and show us the things we cannot see.

**People:** Lord Jesus, as you saw the faith of those who brought the paralytic and said to him, “Son, your sins are forgiven”, see our faith and forgive our sin. Make us whole and keep us holy in your sight, Jesus, our redeemer and healer.

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Leader:** Jesus brings you new life, forgives and redeems you. Take hold of his forgiveness, and live your life in the Spirit of Jesus.

**People:** In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

**Scripture/Sermon:** Before you come to worship, be sure to read Mark 2:1-11. It wasn't just the sick man's faith that impressed Jesus, but the faith of his friends as well. Jesus responded to their faith and healed the man. For better or worse, our faith affects others. We cannot make another person a Christian, but we can do much through our words, actions, and love to give him or her a chance to respond. Look for opportunities to bring your friends to the living Christ.

**Offering Song:** During Sunday's worship we will have the opportunity to commission and dedicate the team of youth and sponsors from Crestview Presbyterian Church who will be leaving for their mission trip to Laos (as well those who will witness to our community at Crestview through Vacation Bible School). As we surround all with prayer, we remember they are responding to Jesus' command in Mark 16:15 "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature!" The vocal ensemble will sing these words and combine them with other scriptures including John 15:12, John 15:13 and John 14:1. Take some time before Sunday and look at these verses. Relax in the comfort they offer.

**Closing Song** This morning's worship centers around Jesus Christ, his amazing power, his power to bring healing, his words of comfort to us, and his command to make disciples. This final song is a powerful reminder of many of these things. Once again, stand and sing joyfully these words, asking the Spirit to put on your heart what you will take from today's worship to empower your ministry in your world this week!

Vs1

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does its successive journeys run;  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no  
more.

Vs2

To him shall endless prayer be made, and endless praises crown his head;  
His name like sweet perfume shall rise with every morning sacrifice.

Vs3

People and realms of every tongue dwell on his love with sweetest song,  
And infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on his name.

Vs4

Blessings abound where'er he reigns; the prisoners leap to lose their chains,  
The weary find eternal rest, and all who suffer want are blessed.

Vs5

Let all the people rise and bring their special honors to our King;  
Angels descend with songs again and earth repeat the loud Amen.

*See You Sunday Morning in Worship!*