

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

February 28, 2010

Theme: Pastor Alan writes: *Through the centuries, the Lord's Prayer has stood as a secure lighthouse in the midst of turbulent times, and a rock upon which we can build our lives. Simple enough for a child to memorize, it is profound enough to build one's life philosophy around. During the six weeks leading up and concluding the Sunday following Easter, we'll look at each of six petitions in depth to learn what we can about our Lord's Prayer. Today's focus will be on the phrase "hallowed be Thy Name".*

Preparation for Worship: The choir and instruments lead us into praise through a song combining the music from today's Hymn of Praise with a paraphrase of texts from Psalm 100 and Psalm 98. The opening text follows today's focus by saying: *"O God, who reigns on high, your glory we proclaim. We gather now to worship you and praise your name."* The text continues: *"Alleluia, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord a new song."* Let's follow these instructions as we gather today for worship to praise God's name with our whole being.

Call to Worship: Today's call to worship is inspired from the story of Exodus 3. Moses sees the burning bush and God calls to him and instructs him to take off his sandals for the place where he is standing his holy ground. In speaking to Moses, God introduces himself as "I AM", his name forever, the name by which He is to be remembered from generation to generation. A question for you as you come to worship is "do you have a sense you are standing on holy ground"—not the property of Crestview, but standing in a place where you recognize and submit yourself to the holiness of God's presence? Have you "taken off your sandals" or have you left your "attitude" outside the door? Too often, folks today want worship to be pleasing to them, music they like, décor, temperature and padded seats so they can be comfortable. As another song says: it's not about us, it's all about you, Lord!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We tremble before your presence, Lord.

People: We are both humbled and hopeful at the revelation of your name and the awesome power of your being.

Leader: You are the I AM, the eternal majestic One. Yahweh!

People: But you also name yourself as the God of committed relationship with imperfect people.

Leader: You are the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This is your identity forever, our God.

People: We are hopeful in your love. We will ever honor you for both your transcendent glory and your immanent care. Hallowed be your name!

Hymn of Praise: Today's opening hymn is paraphrased from a Jewish Hymn "Yigdal" which is a hymn of importance often used at the opening or close of an important time of worship. The words are deeply rooted in scripture and connect us with the story of God's worshipping people throughout creation. Notice the references to Exodus 3 "I

AM”, to Isaiah “on eagle’s wings”, to Revelation 4 “holy, holy, holy”. As you sing today “praise God’s name” with exuberance!

The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above,
Ancient of everlasting days, and God of love.
Jehovah, great I AM, by earth and heaven confessed:
We bow and bless the sacred name forever blest.

Vs2

He by himself hath sworn, we on his oath depend;
We shall, on eagle’s wings up borne, to heaven ascend;
We shall behold his face, we shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace forevermore.

Vs3

The God who reigns on high the great archangels sing,
And “Holy, holy, holy” cry, “Almighty King!
Who was and is the same, and evermore shall be;
Eternal Father, great I AM, we worship thee.”

Vs4

The whole triumphant host give thanks to God on high;
“Hail, Father, Son and Holy Ghost!” they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham’s God and mind! With heaven our songs we raise;
All might and majesty are thine, and endless praise.

Confession and Pardon: As implied above, it is so easy for our worship to be focused on ourselves, rather than on God. Today’s confession time takes us to this place. Ask God to cleanse you of sin, so nothing will distract you from recognizing and embracing God’s love, forgiveness, grace and power in your life.

Leader: Lord, you have called us to worship you. We gladly gather! As we praise you, though, our own inadequacy reminds us of how we have broken our relationship with you. Because we have sinned against you, even our worship fails to be what it could. We often treat it as a show. We simply go through motions, failing to recognize that you want to engage us deeply.

People: Renew us, we pray, according to your steadfast love. Remind us of your covenant faithfulness and have mercy on us in the name of Jesus Christ.

As we confess our sins, God responds in drawing us close to him as our words of assurance indicate:

May Almighty God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, cleansing us from all our sins and restoring us to the light of the knowledge of God’s glory, in the face of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Scripture/Sermon: Take time before Sunday to read Exodus 3:1-15 and Matthew 6:7-15 (The Lord’s Prayer). The Egyptians had many gods by many different names. Moses wanted to know God’s name so the Hebrew people would know exactly who had sent him to them. God called himself “I AM” a name describing his eternal power and unchangeable character.

Song of Response: Today, we conclude our time together singing another great hymn of praise. This hymn is reminiscent of Psalm 103, a psalm in which the writer says “Bless the Lord, and forget not all his benefits”. Some of these benefits are listed in this hymn. “Take the words with you” as you leave this time of worship and move into your daily activities.

vs1

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near;
Join my in glad adoration!

Vs2

Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e’er have been
Granted in what he ordaineth?

Vs4

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the Amen sound from his people again:
Gladly forever adore him.

See you in Worship this Sunday! Rodney Barbour