

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

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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 "Give us this day our daily bread".*

Preparation for Worship: During this time of preparation Cynthia Tate will play the hymn *He Leadeth Me* on her flute. A portion of the text reads: *what-e'er I do, where-e'er I be, still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.* Today, in our worship we realize: *that the Lord "I AM" is our God...he directs us in the way we should go.* (Is 48:17). As we reflect on God's leadership and provision guided by the flute music, remember King David and the shepherds in the fields played their harps and flutes while writing Psalms. From *Psalms 103* we read: *(the Lord) satisfies our desires with good things.* From the hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness* we read: *all I have needed thy hand hath provided.* God generously gives us all we need and more!

Call to Worship: These words lead us into worship reminding us that: all blessing, all provision, all protection, all comfort, all joy, all peace, all righteousness are in God's hand.

Leader: Father, in your hand are the untold riches of heaven and earth.

People: In your hand are the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

Leader: In your hand are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

People: In your hand are my life, my times and all my ways.

Leader: All blessing, all provision, all protection, all comfort, all joy, all peace, all righteousness are in your hand.

People: O let me stay hidden in your hand, Father, and I will lack nothing.

Hymn of Praise: In today's opening hymn, *God's Holy Ways Are Just and True*, we find a familiar tune with a text leads us to praise God for his grace and love, for providing for our needs.

Vs1

God's holy ways are just and true, his promises are ever new, O praise him,
alleluia!

Let every heart with praises sing and make this house with voices ring:

O praise him, O praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Vs2

Bring back to mind his grace and love, our needs provided from above; O praise
him, alleluia!

He kept his word and Jesus came to make a people for his name;

O praise him, O praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Vs3

Tell once again his deeds of old, the story of our mighty God, O praise him, alleluia!
For all his glorious works and ways we shall rejoice through endless days;
O praise him, O praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Confession and Pardon: As we pause to examine the riches God has provided for us, we begin to realize how generous God is in bringing resources to us as we need them according to his will. During today's confession, we realize that it's easy to focus on what we think we need, and easy to ignore the riches we have. Use this time to ask the Holy Spirit to prompt your conversation with God.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: Lord, we who own more than we use, proclaim more than we experience, and request more than we need, come asking your forgiveness. We seek your salvation, then act like we save ourselves. We beg your forgiveness, then repeat our errors. We experience your grace, then act defeated. We rely on your power, but only in hard times. We have become confused and misguided.

People: Forgive our every defection. Bring us to a deeper level of commitment and a steady trust, through Jesus Christ, who is the way of hope, the truth of God, and the life of love, now and always.

As we confess our sin, God hears and answers with forgiveness.

Leader: Those who love me, I will deliver, says the Lord; I will protect those who know my name.

People: When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them and show them my salvation.

Leader: Receive the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God!

Scripture/Sermon: Take time before Sunday to read Matthew 6:9-13. This is the entire Lord's Prayer which we have been studying. Debbie Handkins will be leading us today focusing on verse 11: *Give us today our daily bread.* When we pray these words, we are acknowledging that God is our Sustainer and Provider, as opposed to the misconception that we provide for our needs ourselves. We are also showing that we trust God daily to provide what he knows we need.

Offering Music: As we continue our worship, the choir will sing the spiritual song, *All the Way My Savior Leads Me.* The text reminds us: *He through life has been our guide, He cheers each winding path we tread, He gives us grace for ev'ry trial, He feeds us with the Living Bread. The chorus completes the thought: He leads me, and keeps me from falling, He carries me close to His heart, and surely His goodness and mercy will follow me.*

Song of Response: Today's final song is Psalm 23 and carries the thought from the choir anthem to conclusion. It's amazing to realize that we don't have to go looking for goodness and mercy, but that as we leave this hour of worship, that God's goodness and mercy will FOLLOW US as we go into the world!

See you in worship this Sunday!