

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

July 4, 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: On this Fourth of July Sunday, the choir and instruments begin our worship singing a favorite patriotic song of many, The Battle Hymn of the Republic. This song dates from the civil war and was originally a marching song of the troops. The lyricist, Julia Ward Howe was traveling from Massachusetts to Washington, DC and heard troops singing the melody. Her pastor traveling with her, suggested she write more fitting words, and she completed them the same night.

Stanza One begins: *Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.* A scriptural reference might be Revelation 14:19, 20--*So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and loaded the grapes into the great winepress of God's wrath...and the grapes were trodden in the winepress outside the city...* The winepress is often used in the Bible as a symbol of God's wrath and judgment against sin (Isaiah 63:3-6; Lamentation 1:15; Joel 3:12,13). Stanza Four: *In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, with a glory in His being that transfigures you and me; as He died to make men holy let us live to make men free! While God is marching on.* This stanza references Colossians 1: 21-22 "...he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through the death on the cross of his own human body, and as a result Christ has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are standing there before him with nothing left against you..." This morning let's use this song to march into the presence of Christ with us, declaring his glory, praising his name, and celebrating his truth!

Call to Worship: In our worship, sacrifices and other religious rituals aren't enough. God wants us to worship him with all our hearts, minds, soul and strength. He wants us to be fair, just, merciful and humble. He wants us to become living sacrifices (Romans 12:1,2) not just doing religious deeds, but living rightly (Jeremiah 4:4, Hebrews 9:14).

Leader: With what shall we come before you in worship, O Lord? How shall we offer ourselves to you?

People: Shall we come with songs of praise, with hymns of glory? Will you be please with shouts of thanksgiving , with prayers of confession? Shall we offer the tithe of our labor and gifts of gratitude?

Leader: You have shown us what is good and what you require---not to merely to do that which we call "worship", but to live our lives in service to you, to present our

bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to you. This, indeed, is worship that pleases you.

People: Awesome God, be glorified in our prayers and praises. Delight in our songs and hymns. Receive our tithes and gifts.

Leader: Help us, by your indwelling Spirit, to worship you with all that we are, in each and every moment of each and every day.

People: May our worship, once begun, never end!

Hymn of Praise: This song is a response to Psalm 95, *come worship the Lord, for we are his people, the flock that he shepherds. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under his care. As we come to worship, we would do well to think on what it cost Jesus to come to earth: the limitless God stuffed into a human body, the Eternal limited by time, the All-Knowing asked to go to school, and the perfect, sinless One bearing our sins and our punishment in His body on the tree... As we consider these things, our only response is to come and to worship him in gratitude and awe.*

Verse 1

Light of the world your stepped down into darkness opened my eyes, let me see.
Beauty that made this heart adore you, hope of a life spent with you.

Chorus

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that you're my God.
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me.

Verse 2

Kings of all days oh so highly exalted, glorious in heaven above.
Humbly you came to the earth you created, all for love's sake become poor.

Chorus

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that you're my God.
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me.

Bridge

I'll never know how much it cost, to see my sin upon that cross. *(repeat 3 more times)*

Chorus

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that you're my God.
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me.

Hymn of Response: Though this text of this beloved hymn sung on this fourth of July sparkles with descriptive language, it is interesting to note, that each stanza is rounded off with the earnest prayers, that God will always help our land to attain its real destiny. The hymn also reminds us of our noble heritage, the Pilgrims as well as the liberating heroes. The composer, Katharine Lee Bates wrote: "unless we crown our good with brotherhood, of what lasting value are our spacious skies, our amber waves of grain, our mountain majesties or our fruited plains"? She added: "we must match the greatness of our country with the goodness of personal godly living". She spoke of two stones that played important roles for our nation: the tablets containing the Ten Commandments and Plymouth Rock: "If only we could couple the daring of the Pilgrims with the moral teaching of Moses, we would have something in this country that no one could ever take from us."

Vs1

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

Vs2

O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control, thy liberty in law!

Vs3

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine!

Vs4

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

Confession and Pardon: Today's call to confession is a familiar prayer from Second Chronicles 7:14. It is important to confess our sin individually, and important for us to confess our sin corporately and as a nation. What would the Holy Spirit prompt you to confess individually during today's worship time?

Leader: If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

People: Lord, we humble ourselves before you confessing our sin.

Leader: Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the offenses of your people? You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show your mercy. Once again you have compassion on us. You tread our sins underfoot and hurl our transgressions into the depths of the sea.

People: Through the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Glory to God! Amen!

Scripture/Sermon: Before you come to worship, be sure to read Luke 4:14-30. To know Christ is to know the truth, and knowledge of the truth is what this world needs. People today are confused and lost. If we want people to turn to God, we will have to let them see the truth that is within us. Your life should be so full of Jesus' love that others will know it by your words and actions.

Offering Song Today is a day when all of Crestview Presbyterian Church worships together. In 1 Chronicles 29, when David was in the presence of the entire assembly (at the announcement of the building of the temple), he acknowledged God's greatness "*O Lord God of our father Israel, praise your name for ever and ever! Yours is the mighty power and glory and victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and*

earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything.” Our constantly changing world is controlled by a constant and unchanging God. As we see life come and go, objects fade, materials decay, and friends change, the only thing on which we can truly depend is God’s control. His love and purpose for us never change. Only when we understand this can we have real peace and security. Let’s join together and bless his name, in the land that is plentiful that we are blessed to live in.

Vs1

*Blessed be your name in the land that is plentiful
Where your streams of abundance flow—blessed be your name.
Blessed be your name when I’m found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness—blessed be your name.*

Pre-chorus

*Every blessing you pour out I’ll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in Lord still I will say*

Chorus

*Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your name.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your glorious name.*

Vs2

*Blessed be your name when the sun’s shining down on me
When the world’s all as it should be—blessed be your name
Blessed be your name on the road marked with suffering
Though there’s pain in the offering—blessed be your name.*

Pre-chorus

*Every blessing you pour out I’ll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in Lord still I will say*

Chorus

*Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your name.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your glorious name.*

Bridge:

*You give and take away, you give and take away
My heart will choose to say, Lord, blessed be your name
You give and take away, you give and take away
My heart will choose to say, Lord, blessed be your name*

Chorus

*Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your name.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your glorious name.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your name.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be your glorious name*

See You Sunday Morning in Worship!