

# PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

## Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

### June 27, 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:** In his pre-sermon comments, Alan writes: One of the great insights found in the prophetic writings was the understanding that faith is something that works from the inside-out, and not the outside-in. Imagine—God writing words on the human heart rather than tablets of stone. Today's singers will call us to worship with a song that speaks to this very thought. A portion of the text reads: In my heart and my soul, I give You control. Consume me from the inside out. Lord, let justice and praise become my embrace, to love You from the inside out. Your will above all else, my purpose remains. The art of losing myself in bringing You praise. Everlasting, your light will shine when all else fades. Never-ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame. Use this song, to take a deep breath, relax into the presence of God with you, and surrender any “foreign” thoughts which distract you from fully enjoying God's presence this hour.

**Call to Worship:** Today's words are inspired by the scripture Alan has chosen from Jeremiah 31:31-34. They speak of Jesus changing us on the inside, enabling us to love what God loves, as we begin to know him personally and intimately through our worship.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are the fulfillment of the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah.

**People: We worship you for what you have made possible through your sacrifice on the cross.**

Leader: By the life-changing power of your death and resurrection, we are covered with your righteousness and forgiven of our sins.

**People: You have changed us on the inside, enabling us to love what you love and hate what you hate.**

Leader: Instead of hearing about you from a distance, we can now know you personally and intimately.

**People: The new covenant is your triumph Lord Jesus. We are yours because of what you have done and we come to worship you today.**

**Hymn of Praise:** Today's opening hymn is filled with attributes of Christ---true Son of God and man; by whom all things consist, in whom all life began; the way to God, the living truth, true Life, and others. And, we use these words and melody to sing joyfully our praise and we acknowledge his presence in our worship today! Jesus said:

“I am the way and the truth and the life”. We ask him to fill our hearts that all may view his life in us and turn to him!

Vs1

We come, O Christ, to you, true Son of God and man;  
By whom all things consist, in whom all life began:  
In you alone we live and move, and have our being in your love.

Vs2

You are the Way to God, your blood our ransom paid;  
In you we face our Judge and Maker unafraid;  
Before the throne absolved we stand: your love has met your law's demand.

Vs3

You are the living Truth, all wisdom dwells in you,  
The source of every skill, the one eternal TRUE!  
O great I AM! In you we rest, sure answer to our every quest.

Vs4

You only are true Life, to know you is to live  
The more abundant life that earth can never give.  
O risen Lord! We live in you: in us each day your life renew!

Vs5

We worship you, Lord Christ, our Savior and our King;  
To you our youth and strength adoringly we bring:  
So fill our hearts that all may view your life in us, and turn to you!

**Confession and Pardon:** It's amazing that God gives us the opportunity each day (“new every morning is God's love”) to come to him and confess our sin. Usually we don't recognize our sin, unless we have spent time reflecting on who God is, which is what the opening of our worship time is designed to do! We now move from standing and singing and praise, to bowing (on symbolic knees) with contrite hearts and asking the Lord to forgive our sin and pardon us.

Leader: Awesome and compassionate God, you have loved us with unfailing, self-giving mercy, but we have not loved you. You constantly call us, but we do not listen. You ask us to love, but we walk away wrapped in our own concerns.

**People: God of grace, come to us in mercy. We repent in spirit and truth and admit our sin.**

\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are assured that there is no sin so terrible that God cannot forgive, no hurt so terrible that God cannot heal. God accepts, God forgives, and God sets free. Receive the forgiving love of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Scripture/Sermon:** Be sure to read Jeremiah 31:31-34. The old covenant, broken by the people, would be replaced by a new covenant. The foundation of this new covenant is Jesus (Hebrews 8:6). It is revolutionary, involving not only Israel and Judah, but even the Gentiles. It offers a unique personal relationship with God himself, with his laws inscribed on hearts instead of on stone. Jeremiah looked forward to the day when Jesus would come to establish this covenant. But for us today, this covenant is here. We have the opportunity to make a fresh start and establish a permanent, personal relationship with God.

**Song of Response:** Our closing song is a “dance”, a “waltz” to the familiar tune of “Morning Has Broken”. The words are powerful images of Jesus being present in every part of our life. As you prepare to leave worship, use this song to remind you wherever you go THIS WEEK, Jesus is there with you, supporting you and empowering you to be the witness for him he needs you to be!

Vs1

Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me king of my heart;  
Christ within me, Christ below me, Christ above me never to part.

Vs2

Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ all around me shield in the  
strife;

Christ in my sleeping, Christ in my sitting, Christ in my rising light of my life.

Vs3

Christ be in all hearts thinking about me, Christ be on all tongues telling of me;  
Christ be the vision in eyes that see me, in ears that hear me Christ ever be.

Vs4

Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, king of my heart;  
Christ within me, Christ below me, Christ above me never to part.

***See You Sunday Morning in Worship!***