

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

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Theme: Pastor Alan writes: *You're not alone. There is a Spirit that has come to bring you both peace and truth...with those in hand---you need not be troubled...come what may.* As we worship today, we praise God as Father, Son and Spirit.

Preparation for Worship: Today we celebrate Pentecost. Jesus promised the disciples, *"I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, just as my Father promised"*. He told them *"to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven"*. In Acts 2, the believers were meeting when suddenly there was a sound like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on their heads. Everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in languages they didn't know, for the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. The choir's anthem today expresses musically some of this excitement and energy. There is a prayer included in the text which repeats several times: *"Send, O send your Spirit, Lord, stir up our wand'rin' lives. Send, O send your Spirit, Lord, may your glowing flame revive."*

Call to Worship: This call to worship helps focus our attention on many attributes of the Holy Spirit. If you have time to ponder these words before reading them in worship, stop at the end of each sentence and identify how the Spirit is active in your life.

Leader: Jesus says: If you love me, obey me; and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter, and he will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who leads into all truth.

People: **Through your Word, we learn the Holy Spirit will never leave us; he will lead us into all truth; he will live with us and in us and will teach us.**

Leader: We know the Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus' words; he is the source of all truth; he convinces us of sin, the availability of God's goodness, and the certainty of God's judgment.

People: **The Holy Spirit gives insight into future events and he shows Christ's glory.**

Leader: The Holy Spirit has been active among people from the beginning of time, but after Pentecost, he came to live in all believers.

People: **As we come to worship you Father, Son, Spirit, we thank you for the light which wakes us morning by morning and for the greater light which shines in Jesus Christ. Renew us through your Spirit day by day.**

Hymn of Praise: "A Mighty Fortress" is an amazing hymn of praise which references God as our helper (Spirit). It reminds us that Jesus Christ is on our side (and remember from notes above, Jesus promised to send the Spirit to us). Verse four states: *"the Spirit and the gifts are ours thru Him who with us sideth"*. Use these words and the power of this music to praise God as Father, Son, Spirit.

vs1

A mighty fortress is our God a bulwark never failing
Our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate
On earth is not His equal.

vs2

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing-----
Were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing.

Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He,
Lord Sabaoth His name, from age to age the same, and He must win the battle.
vs 3

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure; one little word shall fell him.

vs4
That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.
The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still:
his kingdom is forever.

Confession and Pardon: During today's time of confession, we will use words from the ancient church (*Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison* or Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy). Since the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been present to gather the church and to interpret, teach us the words of Jesus and empower them for ministry. Today, we can come and confess times we have resisted the leading of the Spirit in our lives.

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord fills the world and knows our every word and deed. Let us then open ourselves to the Lord and confess our sins in penitence and faith. You raise the dead to life in the Spirit---Lord, have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart---Christ, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided---Lord, have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

These words of assurance are based on Ezekiel 36: 24-28.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: "I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees. You will be my people, and I will be your God." Friends in Christ: by the power of the Spirit, we are united with Christ and given a new spirit. Live in the joy and peace of that assurance.

People: In the name of Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Scripture/Sermon: Take time before Sunday to read: John 14. In John 14: 15-31, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. The disciples must have been perplexed, wondering how Jesus could leave them and still be with them. The Comforter---the Spirit of God himself---would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants. The result of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives is deep and lasting peace. Unlike worldly peace which is usually defined as the absence of conflict, this peace is confident assurance in any circumstance; with this kind of peace, we have no need to fear the present or the future.

Closing Song: Today's closing song is (again!) a hymn of praise to the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit---God Three-in-One). The chorus repeats the exclamation of Psalm 103: Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my Soul. Use this time to joyfully sing these amazing words to this joyful tune!

Vs1

Sing praise to the Father, Creator and King, whose mercy has taught us a new song to sing;

Who made us, and loved us tho' rebels and lost, and planned our redemption at infinite cost.

Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul,
for the grace that redeems, for the love that makes whole;
O come and adore him, his glories proclaim, and worship before him---the Lord is his name!

Vs2

Sing praise to the Savior, Redeemer and Friend,
for grace past all telling, for love without end;
Who stripped off his glory, put on mortal sin, and died in our stead, full atonement to win.

Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul,
for the grace that redeems, for the love that makes whole;
O come and adore him, his glories proclaim, and worship before him---the Lord is his name!

Vs3

Sing praise to the Spirit, the gift of God's love,
who quickens our hearts with new life from above,
Who woos us, subdues us, and seals us his own,
and faultless presents us before the White Throne.
Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul,
for the grace that redeems, for the love that makes whole;
O come and adore him, his glories proclaim, and worship before him---the Lord is his name!

Vs4

Sing praise to the Father, sing praise to the Son,
sing praise to the Spirit, great God Three in One;
The God of salvation, of glory, of grace,
who wrought our redemption---my soul, sing his praise!
Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul,
for the grace that redeems, for the love that makes whole;
O come and adore him, his glories proclaim, and worship before him---the Lord is his name!

See you in Worship this Sunday!