

WORSHIP NOTES

Sermon: Distinctive: Living Above the Norm: "My Love"
Sunday October 8, 2017

SONG This anthem is based on Psalm 103. Musician Don Wyrzten says this about Psalm 103: *"David erupts in uninhibited praise. From the core of his being, he praises the holy name of the Lord. He (and we) have good reason to celebrate. The Lord forgives sin, heals sickness, delivers us from the grave, enriched our lives with gifts of loyal love and tender compassion, he satisfies our deepest desires with good things. We can become grounded with despair, but we can "bless the Lord" and soar like an eagle. Instead of a weak faith, we are blessed with vigorous spiritual health which vibrates in our praise."* Here's the anthem text: *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all within me bless his holy name; bless the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits; bless the Lord, O bless his holy name. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; and crowneth thee with lovingkindness. O bless the Lord! Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all within me bless his holy name; bless the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits; bless the Lord. O, bless the Lord. O bless the Lord. O bless the Lord. O, bless his holy name.*

CALL TO WORSHIP (a prayer before the Call to Worship-from Ephesians 5:1)
Heavenly Father, I thank you for the words of your son, Jesus: "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing," and "the words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father living in me, who is doing his work...anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing." And now Father, through faith in Jesus, I am also your child. Please teach me how to live up to your family name. Open my eyes to see what you are doing, and then please come and do your work through me. Show me how to live like Christ, so that it might also be said of me: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Leader: Now that we are alive in Christ, help us to live like Christ.

People: May the presence of your Holy Spirit be manifested through our lives to those around us.

Leader: May we abound in the fruit of the Spirit---love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

People: And let everything we do be done for your glory, O God, and bring praise to Your holy name!

PRAISE HYMN 1 John 4:16, 19-21—*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him... We love because he first loves us. If anyone says, "I love God" yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

Vs1

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee, Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

Vs2

All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Vs3

Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, Ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother, All who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.

CONFESSION a prayer before confession: *Lord, you have provided a simple but sobering test of Christians spirituality---our love for you can be measured by our love for others. And we have all, without exception, failed your test. Every time we refuse to lend a helping hand, to listen to a hurting friend, to curb a critical tongue, we refuse to love you or to obey your commandments. Strip away our selfishness, Lord, and help us learn to love our neighbors as ourselves, and in doing so to love you wholeheartedly.*

Leader: Jesus, it is difficult to forgive people when they hurt us and our friends. We want to hit back and sometimes we do. But you teach us to love our enemies no matter what they do.

People: Forgive us, Lord Jesus, when we do not forgive others. Help us to understand why people hurt others, and let our hearts be filled with love for them.

PARDON Read Ephesians 2:14 (*for Christ himself is our peace...*) Jesus has broken down the walls people build between themselves. Since these walls have been removed, we can come to real unity with people who are not like us. This is true

reconciliation. Because of Christ's death, we are all one family, our anger against each other has disappeared, we can all approach God through the Holy Spirit, we are no longer strangers to God and we are all part of a beautiful temple with Christ as our cornerstone.

Leader: Jesus Christ is our peace; those who are divided he has made one. He has broken down the barriers of separation by his death and has built us up into one body, with God. To all who repent and believe he has promised reconciliation. So live as people reconciled.

People: God has forgiven us in Jesus Christ. Let us forgive one another so the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with all.

SCRIPTURE Matthew 5:43-48 By loving and praying for our enemies rather than retaliating, we can overcome evil with good. Jesus says we are to love our enemies. If you love your enemies and treat them well, you will truly show that Jesus is Lord of your life. This is possible only for those who give themselves fully to God, because only he can deliver people from natural selfishness. We must trust the Holy Spirit to help us love those for whom we may not feel love.

SONG (a prayer) *Lord, teach us to love as you love, and teach us the meaning of love as your word defines it. Help us practice patience and kindness. Remove from us envy and pride, rudeness and selfishness, and the holding of grudges. Teach us to protect one another from harm, to trust each other without cynicism, to hope to one another's best and to persevere even when we feel like walking away. You have taught us to overcome evil with good, teach us also to overcome hatred and indifference with your holy, heavenly love.*

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art,
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.
Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.
Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.
High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Hymn 1 Peter 2:9-10 *You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the*

people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
(a prayer) We did not choose you; you chose us. We are humbled by your mercy which you have lavished upon us. It was not enough for you to forgive us, it was not enough for you to rescue us, you had so much more in mind. You have done immeasurably more than we could possibly have asked or imagined. We are amazed at your boundless love. What honor to be your priesthood; what security to be your cherished possession; what grace to be made holy; what joy to be rescued from the dominion of darkness; what privilege to be granted a share in the inheritance of the saint in the kingdom of light! For you have made us to be like the lights in the vast expanse of the sky, to reflect the light of your life on the earth.

Vs1

We are called to be God's people, showing by our lives his grace,
One in heart and one in spirit, sign of hope for all the race.
Let us show how he has changed us, and remade us as his own,
Let us share our life together as we shall around his throne.

Vs2

We are called to be God's servants, working in his world today;
Taking his own task upon us, all his sacred words obey.
Let us rise, then, to his summons, dedicate to him our all,
That we may be faithful servants, quick to answer now his call.

Vs3

We are called to be God's prophets, speaking for the truth and right,
Standing firm for godly justice, bringing evil things to light.
Let us seek the courage needed, our high calling to fulfill,
That the world may know the blessing of the doing of God's will.

SEE YOU IN WORSHIP ON SUNDAY!