

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP AT 11

Sunday March 4, 2018

These notes are posted to help you take a few minutes to prepare for worship through reading the scripture and thinking about the songs!

SCRIPTURE: Read I Samuel 3:8-10. *One would naturally expect an audible message from God to be given to the priest Eli and not to the child Samuel. Eli was older and more experienced and he held the proper position. But God's chain of command is based on faith. His view of authority and ability is not based on age or position. In finding faithful followers, God may use unexpected channels. Be prepared for the Lord to work at any place, at any time, and through anyone he chooses.* Read John 10:1-6, then spend time in prayer: *How tenderly you care for me, Jesus, my Shepherd! When I hear your reassuring voice I know that I am secure. When I wander far away you search for me. When you find me, you hoist me upon your strong soulders, rejoicing that I have been found. You are the gate the leads to the fold of salvation. You are the fold in which I find safety. When I am in danger, you lay down your own life for me. You give me the gift of life, life to the full. Oh to know you, gracious Shepherd, and to be known by you---that is true life!*

SONGS:

1. Song-God is Able.

Here is Paul's prayer for the Ephesians from Ephesians 3: *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge---that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to **HIM WHO IS ABLE** to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen!*

2. Song-Came to My Rescue

This song is divided into two parts: one is the truth and the other is the application of that truth.

The first part is about our depravity and our sinful nature; it talks about our need for a divine rescue and thus a Rescuer. We were captives to sin meaning that all we did was sin but because of Christ's death and resurrection, we are no longer captives of sin. What glorious news! However, we know that we are all perfect and we still do sin, which is why we still need Christ's love and grace.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.+(Romans 3:23 NIV)

**“My whole life I placed in your hands
God of Mercy, humbled I bow down
In your presence, at Your throne.”**

That is the truth and our prayer. We need to place our lives in God's hand meaning we need to trust in Him and not worry about trivial things of the world. God is a God of mercy. Our response to that truth is that we are humbled. When we see God for who He is and what He has done, only one response is genuine and appropriate and that is humility. All pride vanishes when we see our need for God in our life and His love, grace, and mercy.

**“I called, You answered
And You came to my rescue
And I want to be where You are.”**

God did answer our prayer. He did come to Earth and He did die for our sins and our guilt. He did come to our rescue. We should desire to be where He is now---seated at His throne. The first part is essentially the truth that God rescued us from our sins and that we should be humbled because of His love and mercy and we should seek after Him. The second part is the application of the truth.

**“In my life be lifted high
In our world be lifted high
In our love be lifted high”**

Because of God's mercy, grace, and infinite worth, we should lift Him up in our life, in our world, and in our love.

ō my lifeō

For God to be lifted high in our life means that He is the center of it, the Lord of it, and our ultimate satisfaction in it.

ō our worldō

God is lifted high in our world when we honor Him with holy living- when we become the light for the world. Our lives must be honorable to God and worship must be our style of life. God is lifted high in our world when we are able to reach others by helping others see God in us.

ō our loveō

In the way we love God and in the way we love others, may God be lifted high. Our love for God must be genuine and our love for others must be authentic and real. In this way, God can be lifted high.

3. Song-Word of God Speak

I'm finding myself at a loss for words,

**and the funny thing is it's okay.
The last thing I need is to be heard,
but to hear what You would say.**

There are times we need to unload and get things off our chests. But, in the end, being heard is not as essential as hearing what God is saying to us.

Be still, and know that I am God+came to mind (Psalm 46:10).

After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gently whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. (1 Kings 19:12-13)

The song Word of God Speak+goes on to say:

**I'm finding myself in the midst of You,
beyond the music, beyond the noise.
All that I need is to be with You,
and in the quiet hear Your voice.**

The New Testament tells us that Jesus often+spent time alone so that He could pray to His Father (Luke 5:16). Take time to listen to God speaking to your heart today.

4. Song- I Will Follow

Here is what the composer Christ Tomlin says about this song:

"The chorus of this song makes some pretty bold claims: Who you love, I'll love. How you serve, I'll serve. Where you go I'll go. Even if I lose my life I'll follow you. While those words might be a true expression of the heart, when we hear them coming out of our own mouths it should still be a little sobering. Are we really considering the implications of what we're saying? Or are we just speaking with bravado the way the Apostle Peter did in his early days of following Jesus? After all, he was the brash one, the impulsive one who was always making those sorts of big, bold statements. He told Jesus things like "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." But when Jesus was arrested, those claims fell apart. Peter ran and hid and even renounced Jesus. Thankfully, that failure wasn't the end of Peter's story. In time, God's grace and power would transform him into a man whose boldness was based on God's strength rather than his own. But it cost him something to get to that point of understanding what following Jesus was really all about.

Mark chapter 8 contains what must have been one of the most difficult and pivotal points in Peter's journey as a disciple, and it illuminates something about our own hearts as well. In this passage Jesus is explaining plainly to the twelve how he was soon going to have to suffer and die. Peter takes him aside and rebukes him for saying such things. Jesus responds with his shocking "Get behind me, Satan," and then explains: "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus gathers the crowd around him and elaborates: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny

himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it."

Jesus knew beforehand the road of suffering he would walk in faithful obedience. He was explaining God's plan of redemption to his followers. But Peter—and probably the other disciples too—already had set in their own minds a different version of how God's salvation for Israel was going to unfold. Most likely they were still dreaming of the day when Jesus—with the twelve of them on his right and his left commanding the thousands that would rally to their cause—would take up the sword to drive the Romans out of Jerusalem and restore all things to their rightful place. At the very least, the idea of a suffering and dying messiah wasn't part of Peter's plans. When he had signed up to follow the Christ, it certainly wasn't for that.

That's probably why Peter pulled his master aside and rebuked him for his talk of being humiliated and put to death. You have to wonder if Peter's rebuke of Jesus was born out of fear. Because what Jesus was revealing was threatening the dream that Peter had invested his hope in. And yet, what Peter had in mind was not what God had in mind. How often do we find ourselves in similar positions—feeling disappointed, or angry or scared because God's plans turned out to be something very different from our own expectations?

In time Peter did respond in the only way a disciple can, by laying down his own ambitions and embracing what it meant to truly follow. At the end he even willingly gave his life for Christ. But I think the hard work of divestment from the things and hopes and dreams of this world was already complete by the time Peter allowed himself to be nailed to a physical cross. I think the hardest step for Peter must have come the moment right after this conversation in Mark 8, because that was the moment he realized this business of being a disciple, of following Jesus, was not about seeing his own agenda accomplished and his own dreams fulfilled. It was about seeing them crucified, and surrendering them to God's greater purposes instead.

Isn't that still what it means for anyone to follow Jesus? It means that we lay down our own agendas and hopes and dreams, and faithfully obey day by day. It's a daily dying to self—the crucifying of our own petty and self-centered desires so that we might more clearly reflect Christ to the people around us. In the end, it's not about bravado and bold statements. It's about simple, ongoing obedience to the words of our Lord. To say 'I will follow' is really not so different from saying 'Help me every hour to die to my own desires, Jesus, so that you can live more fully through me.'"

SEE YOU IN WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY! BRING A FRIEND!