

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP AT 11

Sunday April 15, 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 John 14:16-26. The Holy Spirit will never leave us (14:16); he leads us into all truth (14:17); the world at large cannot recognize him (14:17); he lives with us and in us (14:17); he teaches us (14:26); he reminds us of Jesus words (14:26, 15:26); he is the source of all truth (15:26); he convinces us of sin, the availability of God's goodness, and the certainty of God's judgment (16:8); he gives insight into future events (16:13); he shows Christ's glory (16:14). The Holy Spirit has been active among people from the beginning of time, but after Pentecost (Acts 2) he came to live in all believers.

SONGS:

I Will Follow

Chris Tomlin (the composer) explains the song's meaning: "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.'"

Breathe

Read---1 Corinthians 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

Here's a prayer: Jesus, forgive me for disparaging this temple's value. I have lived to please myself, often forgetting that this flesh, these bones are to be a living sacrifice. How it must hurt you when I diminish the worth of your sacred residence, behaving as though only mind and spirit matter. After all, you gave your body for me! The very least I can do is to honor you with mine!

Oceans

Here's a mini-Bible-study on the song OCEANS!

**You call me out upon the waters [Philippians 3:13-14]
The great unknown where feet may fail [Isaiah 40:30-31]
And there I find You in the mystery [Colossians 2:2-3]**

In oceans deep, my faith will stand [1 Corinthians 16:13-14]

And I will call upon Your Name [Psalm 116:17]

And keep my eyes above the waves [Psalm 69:14-18]

When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace [Psalm 5:11-12]

For I am Yours and You are mine [Song of Songs 6:3]

Your Grace abounds in deepest waters [2 Corinthians 12:9-10]

Your sovereign hand will be my guide [Psalm 73:23-24]

Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me [Proverbs 4:11-12]

You've never failed and You won't start now [Lamentations 3:21-25]

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders [Psalm 143:8-10]

Let me walk upon the waters [Matthew 14:25-29]

Wherever You would call me [Exodus 33:14-15]

Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander [1 Corinthians 2:10-12]

And my faith will be made stronger [2 Thessalonians 1:3]

In the presence of my Savior [Matthew 28:18-20]

Avalanche

How is it possible for God's grace to be like an avalanche? An answer is that His grace comes down upon us in such an overwhelming and overpowering manner that we have no other choice but to submit to its power. Many of us will experience His grace much in the same way a soft breeze comes and goes around us. Some of us will experience the total opposite! Grace in the form of an avalanche! When Saul of Tarsus (aka Paul), was knocked off his horse with a blinding light that came from Jesus, he experienced God's grace in the form of an avalanche. Here is a portion of the song text:

**And I find myself here on my knees again, caught up in grace
like an avalanche**

Nothing compares to this love love love, burning in my heart.

**Savior and Friend, breathing your life into my heart
Your word is the lamp unto my path, forever I'm humbled by Your love**

**Oh, take my life take all that I am, with all that I am I will love You
Take my heart take all that I have, Jesus how I adore You**

***SEE YOU IN WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY!
BRING A FRIEND!***