

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP AT 11

Sunday April 22, 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:

Psalm 34:8-9

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!

God pays attention to those who call on him. Whether God offers escape from trouble or help in times of trouble, we can be certain that he always hears and acts on behalf of those who love him.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Comment: Christians are brand new people on the inside. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same any more. We are not reformed, rehabilitated or reeducated- we are new creations, living in union with Christ. We are not merely turning over a new leaf, we are beginning a new life under a new Master.

SONGS:

Here I Am to Worship

Psalm 63:2 (msg). *2 So here I am in the place of worship, eyes open, drinking in your strength and glory.* Once the psalmist David had beheld the power and glory of the Lord, he was never the same again. Deeply moved by the presence of God in the sanctuary, he was inspired to write some of the loftiest and most sublime praise music ever written. Because the love of God also means more to me than life, I will praise Him ~~as~~ as long as I live.+ Do you have or long for a similar experience when you worship? Jesus says: ~~As~~ Ask and it shall be given to you! Seek and you shall find+ (Matthew 7:7). AND, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to prompt and guide!

Better is One Day

“Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere” (Psalm 84:10a). The question is: “Really? Do you really believe that?” If you really believed that, then it seems like you would spend a lot more time in God’s courts (presence) than you do now . And perhaps here is why; you fell in love with somebody else long before you met God through His son, Jesus Christ. Years before you met Him, you were already in love with yourself: your interests, your desires, your schedule, your opinions, your will. And even though we have committed our lives to loving, serving, and following Almighty God, often we find our hearts sliding back and returning to our first love—ourselves!

Have you experienced that? If you have, then you are in good company. The Apostle Paul said, “For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Romans 7: 18b). Following that in verse 24, Paul cries out, “What a wretched man that I am!” and then he asks, “Who will rescue me from this body of death?” And we don’t have to wait long for the answer to his question, as verse 25 declares, “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

No wonder the psalmist wanted to be nowhere else than in the courts, or the presence, of God! Only in God’s presence could he find all that his heart desired—victory over temptation, peace no matter what was going on, purpose for getting up each day, forgiveness for sin, love for others, and a brand new life.

So... “better is one day in Your courts”?...YES! By God’s grace, may we turn away from ourselves and seek Him and His presence, because—no matter where we look— He alone can satisfy us.

Grace Like Rain

Psalm 72:6 May the reign of this son of mine be as gentle and fruitful as the springtime rains upon the grass---like showers that water the earth! That is, the King and King's Son, the Messiah, whose coming is compared to rain, and showers of it; see [Hosea 6:3](#); and may be understood of his incarnation; when, like rain, he came down from heaven; by assumption of human nature into union with him, as the Son of God; which was an instance of his condescending grace: like rain, he had no father as man; see [Job 38:28](#); but was born of a virgin, though the power of the Holy Ghost; which was very marvelous, like the dew that fell on Gideon's fleece, when the earth about it was dry. As the rain is the gift of God to persons undeserving, in consequence of a decree, [Job 28:26](#); sometimes comes suddenly, and is very grateful and refreshing; so Christ is the free gift of God to sinners, and by a decree of his; and his coming was suddenly, into his temple, and

was welcome to them that looked for him; as he still is to all sensible sinners. Or this may be interpreted of the coming of Christ into the hearts of his people, by the communications of his Spirit and grace, which, like rain, came down from heaven; are dependent on the will of God, are free grace gifts, and given in abundance; and, like rain, refresh, revive, and make fruitful. Or else this may be applied to the administration of Christ's offices; as his prophetic office, his Gospel and doctrine, being from heaven, like rain, and falling, by divine direction, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and like it in its effects, softening, quickening, and fructifying; and more especially it may respect the administration of his kingly office, since he is in the context spoken of as a King and Judge, and that in the latter day; whose administrations, though just and righteous; yet not cruel and severe, but mild and gentle; his commands are not grievous, nor his yoke heavy; though he will rule the wicked with a rod of iron, he holds forth the sceptre of grace and mercy to his own people; and when his kingdom shall come in all its glory, it will be times refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and his favor will be as the cloud of the latter rain; see [Acts 3:19](#); as showers that water the earth: signifying the same.

Mighty to Save

Read: Zephaniah 3:17 *The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.* God the Father has come to save you and He takes great delight in your life. His song proclaims to the heavens His undying affection towards you. Have you ever wondered what Father's singing must sound like? I can only imagine!

When I think of how Father quiets us with His love, the image of a **mother** nursing her newborn baby comes to mind. It is as if while nursing at the breast of God, Father (El Shaddai, The Many Breasted One) sings a lullaby that soothes our soul and brings us reassurance and a sense of belonging (Isaiah 66:11). Each word lovingly expressed in a tender voice that calms and quiets us in His love.

When I think of how Father rejoices over us with singing, another image comes to mind. I envision Father swinging us around in circles, all the while bellowing His song of extreme affection over us. The Hebrew word used here to describe how Father sings is 'rinnah'. It means to express a ringing cry, a loud shout, a proclamation of extreme joy and an expression of gladness.

He is not ashamed of the love He has for us and He wants the whole universe to know it. The next time you worship the Father in song, remember that as you sing of your love for Him, He in turn sings His song of love over you! Can you hear Him singing? PRAYER--Father, I pray that You would give me ears to hear Your love songs over me. I pray that I would be able to silence the busyness of my life so I could hear Your soothing lullabies and Your bellowing melodies. Thank You for being with me and for taking such great delight in my life that You rejoice over me with singing. In the name of Your beloved Son Jesus I pray, AMEN.

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