

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP AT 11

Sunday March 11, 2018 (Praying with Hearts Wide Open).

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:

Look up and read Psalm 102:1-10 and 25-27. *We have the freedom to go directly to God with our laments, our distresses, our complaints. We don't need to cover our real feelings or bring ourselves to a certain point of maturity first. No matter how low we feel, we can turn to God. The writer of this psalm felt rejected and cast aside because of his great troubles. Problems and heartaches can overwhelm us and cause us to feel that God has forgotten us. But, God our Creator is eternally with us and will keep all his promises, even though we may feel alone. Read Ephesians 3:14-19.* The great family of God included all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in the present, and all who will believe in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father. He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything. God promises his love and power to his family, the church. Ephesians 3:14-17 MSG is printed here: My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit· not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength· that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you~~d~~ be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

SONGS:

Forever

There are about 180 instances of the words "His Love Endures Forever" in the Bible. Here are a few:

1 Chronicles 16:34--Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Psalm 100:5--For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 136--

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;

4 to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever;

5 to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;

6 to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;

7 to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;
8 the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;
9 the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever;
(and 17 more verses!)

Love is Here

(song text) **Come to the Water, you who thirst and you'll thirst no more.
Come to the Father, you who work and you'll work no more.
And all you who labor in vain, and to the broken and shamed:**

**Love is here Love is now Love is pouring from His hands, from His brow
Love is near, it satisfies Streams of mercy flowing from His side
cause Love is here**

**Come to the Treasure, you who search and you'll search no more.
Come to the Lover, you who want and you'll want no more... No.
And all you who labor in vain, and to the broken and shamed:**

**Love is here Love is now Love is pouring from His hands, from His brow
Love is near, it satisfies Streams of mercy flowing from His side**

**And to the bruised and fallen Captives bound and broken hearted...
He is the Lord. He is the Lord. By His stripes He's paid our ransom,
From His wounds we drink salvation... He is the Lord. He is the Lord.**

**Love is here Love is now Love is pouring from His hands, from His brow
Love is near, it satisfies Streams of mercy flowing from His side
Streams of mercy flowing from His side cause Love is here Love is here**

Here are some scriptures which relate to this song for consideration:

Matthew 11:29-3

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.+

Isaiah 53:4-5

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

John 4:13-14

Jesus answered, %Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.+

John 7:37-38

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, %Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.+

Revelation 7:16-17

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.+

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How He Loves

Scripture describes God as a %jealous God.+ But it is a specific kind of jealousy. The song is %How He Loves+; is about how God loves us. Each time the Bible talks about God being %jealous,+ it is in reference to people choosing to love some other %god+ more than Him.

Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. . Exodus 34:14. Whatever we love the most becomes our %god,+ whether that is money, comfort, prestige, or any other idol. None of those things are worthy of being number one in our lives, and none of them can bring us any lasting happiness.

Love is like a hurricane, I am a tree

This song uses poetic imagery to get across how strong God's love is: like the power of a hurricane bending a tree. Scripture often uses the power of storms to remind us of the power of God: When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. . Jeremiah 51:16.

Bending beneath the weight of His wind and mercy

%Mercy+is defined as: %Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.+ If one fully deserves to be punished, and the judge instead lets him go free, the judge has shown mercy. The greater the punishment one has been excused from, the more mercy he has been given. That is what God does. All of us have sinned (Romans 3:23), and the punishment for sin is death- eternal death. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. . Romans 6:23. Instead of what we deserve, God shows great mercy by freely offering us eternal life instead. The reason for describing this mercy so powerfully is because it is the greatest mercy possible: offering eternal paradise instead of eternal punishment, and offering it to everyone, no matter what they might have done. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. . 1 Timothy 1:15-16

When all of a sudden I am unaware of these afflictions eclipsed by glory

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. . Romans 8:18

And I realize just how beautiful You are and how great Your affections are for me

God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. . Philippians 1:8. The whole song is about God's affections or love for us, as is emphasized repeatedly:

Oh, how He loves us, oh, how He loves us How He loves us all

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . Romans 5:6-8

We are His portion

For the LORD's portion is His people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. . Deuteronomy 32:9 God's portion is the part of something that is set apart for Him. When used in reference to people, it means God's people. The people of Jacob (Israel) were originally His portion, until Jesus adopted (Ephesians 1:5) all believers into the family. The LORD's portion was also often used to refer to things set aside as sacrifices to Him. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God· this is your spiritual act of worship. . Romans 12:1.

and He is our prize

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. . 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Drawn to redemption by the grace in His eyes

Redemption means that we have been bought back; God paid the price of His Son's life to bring us back to Him. And whereas mercy means that we are spared the punishment that we really deserve, grace means that we are given a gift that we really don't deserve. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. . Romans 3:23-25°

If His grace is an ocean, we're all sinking

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. . Ephesians 3:17b-19

And Heaven meets earth like an unforeseen kiss So what's with this heaven meets earth+ and talk about kissing? That seems to be the least-understood and most controversial line in the whole song, to the point where David Crowder even changed the words. In the context of the song talking about God's love, which is most fully expressed by Jesus' life and death on the cross, It is referring to Jesus. God Himself descending from Heaven and becoming an earthly mortal, showing what God is like and demonstrating His love by dying for us· that is the fullest expression of Heaven meeting earth. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death · even death on a cross! . Philippians 2:5-8.

And my heart turns violently inside of my chest

Why do certain stories or songs (like this one) tug at our hearts, in a way that we really can't understand? Because they reflect God's eternal story of His love for us, which we

are hard-wired to respond to. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. . Ecclesiastes 3:11

I don't have time to maintain these regrets

We are not meant to dwell on mistakes or failures. God took on Himself the punishment for our sins; we are not asked to punish ourselves. He loves us+completely; He doesn't love us more or less based on our performance. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. . 2 Corinthians 7:10.

When I think about the way

OK, let's think about it. This should help drive the truth home:

Oh, how He loves us. oh

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. . Ephesians 2:4-5

Oh, how He loves us

For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. . Psalm 57:10

How He loves us so

For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave. . Psalm 86:13

How He loves

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. . Psalm 89:1.

Yeah He loves us

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him. . Psalm 103:11

Oh, how He loves us

Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD. . Psalm 107:43

Oh, how He loves us

For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD. . Psalm 117:2

Oh, how He loves

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. . Lamentations 3:22

Oh, what love

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. . John 15:13

Yeah He loves us

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. . Zephaniah 3:17

Yeah He loves us

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! . 1 John 3:1.

How He loves us

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. . John 3:16

Like an Avalanche

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. ~~But~~ he said to me, ~~My~~ grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.+Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.+ The idea of this song is that God's grace flows like an avalanche. The technical definition of an avalanche is: "a sudden arrival or occurrence of something in overwhelming quantities." Grace is going above and beyond forgiveness and doing something extra (such as blessing someone). Think of grace flowing like an avalanche for YOU— God going above and beyond forgiving you, and instead of being angry with you, He chooses to bless you.

Here are the song lyrics: Beautiful God laying your majesty aside, you reached out in love to show me life, lifted from darkness into light. King for a slave, trading your righteousness for shame despite all my pride and foolish ways, caught in your infinite embrace. 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. 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.

Hope Now

Read Psalm 139:1-12--O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the

light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Here are the lyrics to "Hope Now": If everything comes down to love, then just what am I afraid of? When I call out your name, something inside awakes in my soul. How quickly I forget I'm yours. I'm not my own. I've been carried by you, all my life. Everything rides on hope now, everything rides on faith somehow. When the world has broken me down, your love sets me free. When my life is like a storm, rising waters all I want is the shore, you say I'll be ok and, make it through the rain. You are my shelter from the storm. You've become my heart's desire. I will sing your praises higher, 'cause your love sets me free, your love sets me free. your love sets me free.

SEE YOU IN WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY! BRING A FRIEND!