

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

July 25, 2010

Theme: Pastor Alan writes about our Summer Sermon Series: *12 Smooth Stones: Favorite Bible Passages. The Bible is laced through and through with poignant passages that inspire, comfort, encourage, direct and teach us. Everyone has their favorites; this summer we'll touch on a dozen passages that seems to consistently rise to the top of most people's lists. Like smooth stones in the pocket of your favorite summer shorts, they have a familiar feel to them. Let's pull them out and turn them over and over in our hearts; plan to join with the rest of us in re-visiting some old friends as we examine them to see what new insights they offer up.*

Preparation for Worship: This past week we held Vacation Bible School at Crestview Presbyterian Church. We've had "tons" of children singing their hearts out each morning. We are planning for those who can come to today's worship to sing several of the songs as they share their love and enthusiasm for God's Kingdom as they experienced it this week. You should be able to join their lead and enthusiasm by clapping or even singing along as you quickly pick-up on the words of their songs.

Call to Worship: Today's theme centers around the parable of the good Samaritan. The message is simple and follows Jesus teaching of loving the Lord our God with all your heart, soul and strength and loving your neighbor as you love yourself. We call ourselves to worship with these words:

Leader: God, how often we seek answers when we already know what the answers are.

People: **Your plan for us and your command to us is so clear and so simple.**

Leader: We are to love you with all our heart, soul, strength and mind...

People: **...and to love our neighbors just as we love ourselves.**

Hymn of Praise: This year's Bible School Theme was "High Seas Adventure". One of the songs the children learned was "O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus", a song found on page #477 in the hymnal. As you read through the text, notice the imagery of things "ocean"! If you have ever had the opportunity to gaze upon the seas from the shore, or been on a cruise, you should relate to words like: deep, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free, rolling, current, shore. God's love is all of these things! The Apostle Paul writes to the Ephesians: "I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Eph, 3:17,18). May you experience the fullness of God's love as you sing these words:

Vs1

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free,
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of his love,
Leading onward, leading homeward to that glorious rest above.

Vs2

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread his praise from shore to shore!
He who loves us, ever loves us, changes never, nevermore;

He, who died to save his loved ones, intercedes for them above;
He, who called them his own people, watches over them in love.

Vs3

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best,
Vast the ocean of his blessing, sweet the haven of his rest!
O the deep, deep love of Jesus---for my heaven of heavens is he;
This my everlasting glory---Jesus' mighty love for me!

Confession and Pardon: During today's time of confession, we need to stop and think of how many "neighbors" we have left lying in need either by thoughtless omission, neglect or deliberate action. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and heart for confession as forgiveness and grace await those who are repentant.

Leader: Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength.

People: We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: This is the message we have heard from God and proclaim to you, that God is light and in God there is no darkness at all.

People: If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. Thanks be to God!

Scripture/Sermon: Before you come to worship, be sure to read Luke 10:25-37. In this passage the Jews saw themselves as pure descendants of Abraham, while the Samaritans were a mixed race produced when Jews from the Northern Kingdom intermarried with other peoples after Israel's exile. To this scripture's expert in Jewish law, the person least likely to act correctly would be the Samaritan. The expert's attitude betrayed his lack of love, which he had earlier said the law commanded. The legal experts treated the wounded man as a topic for discussion; the thieves, as an object to exploit; the priest, as a problem to avoid; and the temple assistant, as an object of curiosity. Only the Samaritan treated him as a person to love. In this parable we see three principles about loving our neighbor: 1. lack of love is often easy to justify; 2. our neighbor is anyone of any race or creed or social background who is in need; 3. love means acting to meet the need. Wherever you live, there are needy people close by. There is no good rationale for refusing to help. This parable pictures the love Jesus has for us. Like the traveler, we have been wounded and left to die, and we can do nothing to save ourselves. But Jesus came along and took us to a place of healing. Our salvation is his doing, not our own.

Offering Song: During today's offering time, the Summer Choir sings these words from Psalm 62: "My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone". This psalm's theme is placing all hope in God. Knowing that God is in control allows us to wait patiently for him to rescue us. True relief does not come when the problem is resolved because more problems are on the way! True relief comes from an enduring hope in God's ultimate salvation. Only then will all trials be resolved.

Closing Song: The summer choir will be in place to help us sing today's final hymn, a re-telling of today's scripture from Luke 10:25-37. The final verse reminds us: our neighbor is anyone who has a need—that's who we should love!

Vs1

They asked, "Who's my neighbor and whom should I love;
For whom should I do a good deed?"
The Master related a story and said,
It's anyone who has a need, yes, anyone who has a need!"

Vs2

There once was a traveler set on by thieves
Who beat him and left him to die;
A priest and a Levite each saw him in pain;
But they turned away and walked by, yes, they turned away and walked by!"

Vs3

A certain Samaritan then came along
To bind up his wounds and give aid;
He took him to stay at an inn until well,
And for all the service he paid, yes, for all the service he paid!

Vs4

I know who's my neighbor and whom I should love,
For whom I should do a good deed;
For Christ made it clear in the story he told
It's anyone who has a need, yes, anyone who has a need!

See you Sunday in Worship!