

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

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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: Today, we have two songs to help us relax into a time of worship. First the Crestview Ringers complete their 2009-2010 season of service with a lively arrangement of an amazing worship song called: ***Gather us In***. Here is a portion of the text:

*Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name.
Here we will take the wine and the water, here we will take the bread of new
birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the
earth.*

*Give us to drink the wine of compassion, give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are
true.*

Following Alan's welcome, our women's quartet: Susan James, Elizabeth Zellers, Donna Robson and Teri McKibben will sing: ***Amazing Grace***. As they sing, remember these words from 2 Corinthians 9:8—"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times...you will abound in every good work."

Call to Worship: A gathering Psalm is Psalm 95 where these familiar words are found. As we prepare to stand and sing, do so joyfully and in full voice!

Leader: Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

People: Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

Hymn of Praise: Today's scripture (Matthew 7:24-27) teaches us to build our faith on the foundation of Jesus Christ. This gospel hymn further defines this to include: Jesus' blood, His righteousness, His unchanging grace, His oath and covenant. Truly, when one has such objective truth upon which to build a life and future hope, all other ground is sinking sand.

vs1

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

vs2

When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace;
in every high and stormy gale my anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

vs3

His oath, his covenant, his blood support me in the whelming flood;
when all around my soul gives way he then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

vs4

When he shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in him be found,
dress in his righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

Confession and Pardon: If we are rooted in Christ, if we abide in Him and his Word abides in us, we have the foundation to make better life choices. When we choose to operate in our own wisdom and power, we can make some poor decisions and choices. Today's confession time speaks to this thought from today's scripture.

(unison) Almighty God, we ask you to make us like a tree planted by the waterside, that we may bring forth fruits of good living in due season. Forgive our past offenses, sanctify us now, and direct all that we should be in the future, for Christ's sake. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins and the riches of God's grace. This grace was given to us: to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ.
People: Thanks be to God!

Scripture/Sermon: Before worship, take time to read Matthew 7:24-27. Most people do not deliberately seek a false or inferior foundation upon which to

build their lives; instead, they just don't think about their life's purpose. Many people are headed for destruction, not out of stubbornness but out of thoughtlessness.

Offertory Song: Today is the last Sunday the Chancel Choir sings before taking a summer vacation. The anthem is a powerful one, reminding us 'who God is'. The questions asked in the beginning are reminiscent of those asked toward the end of the book of Job: *who hold the wind in His hands?, who formed the stars?, who calms the storm?.* A quote from Isaiah 40: *Do you not know? Have you not heard?* leads us to this answer: *Our God is God! We are the works of His hands. He is Creator! Angels serve at His command. All creation bows before Him and we must do the same, for God alone is worthy, worthy of our praise.*

Themes during today's worship are knowing who God is through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and building our lives on this foundation.

See you in Worship this Sunday!