

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP
Notes from Rodney L. Barbour
October 18, 2009

Theme: Pastor Denise writes: *“Being a disciple of Jesus means we are called by Jesus and follow him wholeheartedly and constantly. We share his life and destiny at the expense of all other engagements and commitments. We attach ourselves to Jesus, place ourselves in his service, and consequently, show that we are qualified to be his disciples.”* In following Jesus we praise him as: The Way (John 14:6), The Rock (I Cor 10:4), The Lord of All (Acts 10:36), Our Hope (1 Tim 1:1), The Good Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4), The Cornerstone (Eph 2:20).

Countdown to Worship: Be sure to arrive a few minutes early so you can participate in our Bible knowledge countdown shown on the video screens. And consider joining on Sunday evenings in our Adult Discipleship Courses.

Preparation for Worship: Today’s preparation is a spiritual song expressing resolve to not let anything get in the way of following Jesus. The song says: *“not gonna stammer, not gonna trip, not gonna stumble, no, I’m not gonna slip...and if you listen for the Spirit’s voice, he’ll help you make the right choice...”* Remember, Jesus did not leave us alone in our “struggle”, he left his Holy Spirit to guide our walk, our prayer and to empower us. Recognize and claim this power as you seek to follow Jesus.

Call to Worship: The words of today’s call to worship are based on I Peter 2:9 and 3:9). The idea is answering God’s summons to follow him and that we can praise God through any circumstances we face in following him. Here are the words:

Leader: I cannot escape your call; help me not to resist it.

People: You have set your love upon me and summoned me from above, calling me out of darkness into light.

Leader: Now therefore, here in the midst of suffering I will sing! Though I am reproached, I will rejoice!

People: When threatened with chaos I will answer with a chorus that declares your great glory and spreads your praise to others yet outside your loving embrace. (I Peter 2:9; 3:9)

Hymn of Praise: The hymn “All Glory Be to God on High” is a powerful hymn of praise to God as Lord of all, to Jesus as Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit as comforter. Take time to look through these words and apply the images to how the Trinity is manifesting itself in your life this week:

*Vs 1: All glory be to God on high and thanks to him forever!
Whatever Satan’s host may try, God foils their dark endeavor.
He bends his ear to every call and offers peace, goodwill to all,
And calms the troubled spirit.*

*Vs 2: O Father, for your lordship true we give you praise and honor;
We worship you, we trust in you, we give you thanks forever.
Your will is perfect, and your might relentlessly confirms the right;
Your lordship is our blessing.*

*Vs 3: Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, creation's author,
Redeemer of your wandering ones, and source of all true pleasure;
O Lamb of God, O Lord divine, conform our lives to your design,
And on us all have mercy.*

*Vs 4: O Holy Spirit, perfect gift, who brings us consolation:
To men and women saved by Christ assure your inspiration.
Through sickness, need, and bitter death, grant us your warm, life-giving breath; Our
lives are in your keeping.*

Confession: Even though we have the best intentions of following Jesus teaching, it's our nature to trust our own minds, desires and plans. During today's confession, we confess this, and ask Jesus to forgive us and restore us according to his will.

Lord God, we have not followed you, but instead we have followed the devices and desires of our own hearts. Lord, have mercy upon us. Restore us according to your promise declared to the world in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Hear now our silent prayers.

Assurance: Jesus hears our prayers and offers us his forgiveness as stated in these words:

Pastor: Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven, and be at peace.

Knowing that we are forgiven, and become a "new creation" should bring us great joy and freedom to live our lives differently than before! We should have a sense of release and exuberance and shout "Thanks be to God"!

Scripture/Sermon: Take time before Sunday morning and read through these scripture passages: Luck 5:27-28; I Peter 1:22, I Corinthians 1:10-25.

Song of Response: During the offering, the choir will sing "The Summons" as a response to Denise's teaching. We'll sing these words as we prepare to go into the word: *Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known, Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me? Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name. Let me turn and follow you and never be the same. In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show. Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.*

See you in Worship this Sunday. Rodney Barbour