

# PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

## Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

### October 4, 2009

**Theme:** On the first Sunday of October, Christians around the world celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. As we remember Jesus' words to "*go into the world and teach all that I have commanded you*", we may ask "what has Jesus commanded us, and where are we to go? This famous passage concluding Matthew's Gospel suggests that we needed to be rooted to fly, and that wherever we fly... there we are to plant roots. Today's message has both local consequences and global implications for each one of us. As you come to worship today, think of the many languages, cultural customs, differing breads and wine that will all be used across the world to remember what Jesus has done for all humanity and give God thanks and praise for his amazing creative power.

**Preparation for Worship:** The opening music in our worship is chosen to remind us of God's presence in our lives. Today's song has a South African pop feel as we celebrate Worldwide Communion. The text speaks for itself: "*When I think of You, I see You dancing, You're dancing! When I think of You, I hear You singing to me! When I think of You, I see You praying, You're praying! When I think of You, I hear You calling for me! Yahweh, there is no one like You, Lord! Yahweh, Hallelujah!*" This music may even cause you to want to move a bit in the pew, maybe clap along or even (grasp!) smile. You have permission to do so, although any dancing in the aisle should be done "decently and in order"!

**Call to Worship:** Today's call to worship, combines a bit of Paul's words from Philippians 2 with Matthew's record of Jesus' words "to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation". Here are the words which will call us into worship:

Leader: All authority and power, every status and domain, now belong to the one who suffered our redemption to obtain; angels, demons, kings and rulers, over all shall Jesus reign!

**People: All the nations owe him worship. Every tongue shall call him Lord:**

Leader: How are they to call upon him if his name they have not heard?

**People: We will go and make disciples, proclaim his gospel and spread his word.**

**Hymn of Praise:** This hymn praises Christ for the opportunity to go into the world and share the gospel message. As the hymn suggests, we can share with: *the poor and them that mourn, the faint and overborne, sin-sick and sorrow-worn, and also the wayward and the lost, by restless passions tossed, redeemed at countless cost from dark despair.* Through faith and by the power of the Holy

Spirit, we have all we need to share the many good gifts which God has provided for us, and to seek to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control.

**Confession:** Though Jesus has commanded us to share with the entire world, we sometimes have difficulty sharing in our own communities, even in our communities and with our neighbors. Today's confession time is guided by these words:

Pastor: Gentle and holy God, we acknowledge to you, to one another, and to ourselves that we are not what you have called us to be.

**People: We have stifled our gifts and wasted our time. We have pretended that we could make no contribution to peace and justice in our world and have excused ourselves from risk-taking in our own community.**

Pastor: Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and help us to live our lives differently.

**People: Hear us now as we pray silently in the name of Jesus.**

**Scripture/Sermon:** Read Jesus' words in Matthew 28: 16-20. God gave Jesus authority over heaven and earth. In this authority, Jesus commanded his disciples and still commands us to tell others about him and to introduce them to becoming disciples for the Kingdom. We are to go---whether it is next door or to another country---and make disciples. It is not an option, but a command, to all who call Jesus "Lord". We have each received gifts that we can use in helping to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Following Alan's teaching, the choir will continue to remind us of Jesus' command through singing this scripture during the offertory anthem.

**Communion:** World Communion Sunday has taken on new relevancy and depth of meaning in a world where globalization often has undermined peace and justice – and in a time when fear divides the peoples of God's earth. On this day we celebrate our oneness in Christ, the Prince of Peace, in the midst of the world we are called to serve – a world ever more in need of peacemaking. We remember through partaking in this meal, Jesus' sacrifice of his body and blood for each and every one of us, wherever we live, whatever nationality we are. Praise be to God for his unspeakable gift to us through our Lord Jesus Christ!

***See you in Worship this Sunday. Rodney Barbour***