

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

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Theme: So how would you answer this question if the Lord asked you: “*O my people, what have I done that makes you turn away from me?*” In Micah 6, the Lord asks this question of Israel. Micah sets up a court-like defense with the mountains and hills as witnesses. These are good witnesses for it was in the “high places” the people had built pagan altars and sacrificed to false gods (1 Kings 14:23, Jeremiah 17:2,3; Ezekiel 20: 27, 28). The people would never be able to answer this question because God had done nothing wrong. His patience with Israel was great. He has always lovingly guided them and given them every opportunity to return to him. And he does with you and I as well. Today let us worship God as Creator, Provider, Redeemer, Comforter.

Preparation for Worship: Our Chancel Choir returns to lead in worship for the new fall season. Their song is a prayer asking the Lord to speak to us in worship...that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith. Remember, you don’t “come to church”. You ARE the church, in your home, your community, your job, wherever you are!

Call to Worship: Today’s Call to Worship is from today’s scripture Micah 6: 6-8. Israel responded to God’s question by trying to appease him with sacrifices. Sacrifices and religious rituals aren’t enough. Coming to this building and sitting for one hour once a week is not enough. God wants changed lives. God wants living sacrifices, people who are not doing token religious deeds, but living rightly.

Hymn of Praise: This hymn follows our worship theme by praising God as Creator, Provider, Redeemer, Comforter. Read through these verses and thank God for the attributes which specifically apply in your life this week:

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

Vs1

**Sing praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation,
The God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation.
My soul with comfort rich he fills, and every grief he gently stills:
To God all praise and glory!**

Vs 2

**What God’s almighty power has made, in mercy he is keeping;
By morning glow or evening shade his eye is never sleeping.
And where he rules in kingly might, there all is just and all is right:
To God all praise and glory!**

Vs 3

We sought the Lord in our distress: O God, in mercy hear us.

**Our Savior saw our helplessness and came with peace to cheer us.
For this we thank and praise the Lord, who is by one and all adored:
To God all praise and glory!**

Vs 4

**Let all who name Christ's holy name give God the praise and glory.
Let all who know his power proclaim aloud the wondrous story.
Cast every idol from its throne; the Lord is God, and he alone:
To God all praise and glory!**

Confession: Remember the story of Martha and Mary. Martha was too pre-occupied with 'busy-ness' doing all the preparations for the Lord's visit, so focused that she was missing the blessings of Jesus' presence. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet taking in every word. Where are you in your life? Are you so busy, serving on every committee, attending every event, doing so much there is no time for healing, restoration, focus? Today's confession speaks to this, pray these words:

CALL TO CONFESSION

(unison) **Our lives are cluttered, Lord Jesus, by too many things and too much to do. We are driven by the need to succeed and distracted from our service. We have often lost our way. Forgive us. Let us find the one thing that is needed and sit at your feet, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

SILENT CONFESSION *(Use this time for your personal confession as the Holy Spirit leads you.)*

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: All the prophets testify about Christ that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

People: Praise the name of Jesus, who forgives our sins and rescues us from the dominion of darkness.

Scripture/Sermon: Again we look to Micah 6:1-8. Take time to read this passage before you come to worship on Sunday. After reading ask yourself these questions: Are you fair in your dealings with people? Do you show mercy to those who wrong you? Are you learning humility? Have you been a "living sacrifice" this week in your car, in the check-out line, at the gym, at work? If you agree with the line in the opening paragraph, how have you been "the church" in your community?

Going into the World: What are some ways you can take this scripture and these thoughts and apply it to your life this week? Here are words from our final hymn. If you sing these and mean these, you are telling the Lord, you will go on his behalf, and share his love: ***Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.***

See you in Worship this Sunday. Rodney Barbour