

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

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Theme: Today, Pastor Alan Landes writes: Imagine winning the Powerball Lottery or hitting the big progressive jackpot at that new casino in Lawrenceburg...now what? Like manna from heaven, or a buried treasure, or money in the mattress or an unexpected bonus at work...what do you do with all that loot? Wonder what those laborers did with their unexpected paychecks in Jesus' parable, and wonder why the others complained so bitterly...fair or not?

Preparation for Worship: Today, our worship begins with time to listen to music and meditate on the text from the song "In Christ Alone". Our lives become fruitful, productive, satisfying ONLY with Christ as the foundation, the vine, the solid rock, the source. Here is the text: *In Christ alone, my hope if found, he is my light, my strength, my song. This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm thro' the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease. My comforter, my all in all, her in the love of Christ I stand.*

Call to Worship: These words help each of us make a positive statement or movement towards praising Jesus. We need to take action, to do something during this hour, not just sit back and let "worship happen". Here are the words:

Leader: Our hearts are ready, O Lord, our hearts are ready!

People: We will sing and make melody! We will awaken the dawn!

Leader: We will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples,
we will sing praises to you among the nations.

People: For your steadfast love is great above the heavens, and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Hymns of Aspiration and Praise: We continue worship through this prayer hymn. In it we are praying to the Holy Spirit, who prompts our worship, *to open our eyes to the truth which will set us free; to open our ears to hear the truth of God's word; to open our mouth to share our witness.* The song suggests that during this hour, we become silent before God, allowing our desires as well as anything which would distract us from fully experiencing God's presence to move to the background so we are free to fully worship Creator, Redeemer, Comforter. Following a prayer of adoration (or a prayer of expressing and abiding in our love for God), we continue with a great chorus of praise. We Will Glorify reminds us of names of God: King of Kings, the Lamb, Lord of Lords, I AM, Jehovah, Lord of Heaven, Lord of earth, Lord of all who live, Lord above the universe. When we praise God we praise the fullness of who God is. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Scripture/Sermon: Take time to read today's scripture, the story from Matthew 20: 1-16 of the workers paid equally. The story is of Jesus clarifying the membership requirements of the Kingdom of Heaven---entrance by God's grace alone. In Jesus, we are set free from focusing on things other than the grace God has given us, and set free to use the resources God has entrusted to us to benefit others and further the kingdom.

Offertory Anthem: Today the Summer Choir will help lead us to the table with a new anthem titled: "The One". A portion of the text reads: *The One who knows your name has bid you, "come." The One who bore your shame, God's only Son, has prepared a celebration as a gift from God above; a sacrament of peace, a feast of love. He took, he blessed, he broke, he gave; a sacrament of peace, a feast of love.*

See you in worship this Sunday!
Barbour

Rodney L.