

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Notes from Rodney L. Barbour

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Theme: Pastor Alan writes: *Jesus speaks of life being like a house built on rock, or on shifting sand; which describes you? There is something about scripture- the Word of God- that offers stability in the midst of uncertain times, and its something we want to share with our children.* Today we worship Jesus as the Word become Flesh, and we praise God for his Word given to us and for us.

Preparation for Worship: The Chancel Choir calls us to worship with these words adapted from Psalm 139. *“O Lord, Thou hast searched and known me. Thou knowest when I siteth down, and when I rise up, Thou searchest out my path, and my lying down, and are acquainted in all my ways”.* As the text continues, we are inspired and exclaim *“wonderful are Thy works, O Lord”.* We rationalize, *“if I ascend into heav’n, Thou art there! If I take the winds of the morning, Thou art there! I praise Thee for Thou art wonderful...I praise Thy name”.*

Call to Worship: Today we present Bibles to our Third Graders. Remember last week in worship we celebrated the Confirmands (8th graders) completing their studies and at the end of worship we were reminded of a couple celebrating a 65th wedding anniversary. A portion of today’s call to worship is from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and is called “Shema”. These words from the “Torah” were some of the first words the Hebrew Children memorized and important words as the part of the prayer service and worship for the folks of Israel. We join together today, from young to old, each as a child of God, unified in our purpose of coming to lift our voices together in the worship of God. Hear, O Crestview, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love Him with all your heart, soul and strength!

Leader: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

People: **We praise you, God for ancient words of worship that resound across the centuries.**

Leader: Along with all who fear you, we reverently add our voices to these timeless words, affirming that you are the mighty One.

People: **May we never forget, and may our children always remember, that you are the God above all gods, and that you deserve our love above all other loves.**

Hymn of Praise: Today’s worship begins with a familiar traditional hymn of the church: *Come, Thou Almighty King.* The text praises God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, with the final verse praising God as Three in One, as the eternal God who we will in glory see, and to love and adore in eternity.

vs1

**Come, thou Almighty King, help us thy name to sing, help us to praise:
Father, all glorious, o’er all victorious, come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.**

vs2

Come, thou Incarnate Word, gird on thy mighty sword, our prayer attend:
come, and thy people bless, and give thy word success: Spirit of holiness, on us
descend.

vs3

Come, Holy Comforter, thy sacred witness bear in this glad hour:
thou who almighty art, now rule in every heart, and ne'er from us depart, Spirit of
power.

vs4

To thee, great One in Three, eternal praises be hence, evermore!
Thy sovereign majesty may we in glory see, and to eternity love and adore!

Confession and Pardon: How well are we doing in knowing and living God's promises to us as found in his word? As we dust off the unopened Bibles on our tables, Jesus offers us forgiveness and grace, and as well the power of the Spirit to prompt us towards renewed enthusiasm for his word to us.

Leader: Lord, we have sinned, without considering how much you love us. You see our sins more clearly than we can ourselves.

People: Lord, you know when we are indifferent to your Word, the Bible; how often we forget to pray; the times we come unwillingly to worship; and yet we turn to you when we are in trouble.

Leader: Lord, you know when we are untruthful and when we think evil of others. You see our anger and unfairness to our friends. You know how hard it is for us to forgive.

People: Forgive us and make us clean, so that we can obey your call to take up your cross and follow you.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Hear these comforting words: If you repent and believe in God's redeeming mercy, your sins are forgiven. Trust in God's promises and begin anew your life with God and all people in the name of Jesus Christ.

People: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

Scripture/Sermon: Take time before Sunday to read: Psalm 119: 97-104. God's Word makes us wise---wiser than our enemies, wiser than any teachers who ignore it. True wisdom is not amassing knowledge, but applying knowledge in a life-changing way. Wisdom comes from allowing what God teaches to make a difference in our lives.

Closing Song: These closing words are set to a familiar melody and emphasize today's theme of the importance of God's word in our lives. The final line is like a benediction to us today: For God speaks still---his word is clear, so let us hear and do his will.

vs1

How sure the Scriptures are! God's vital, urgent word,
as true as steel, and far more sharp than any sword!
so deep and fine, at his control they pierce where soul and spirit join.

vs2

They test each human thought, refining like a fire;
they measure what we ought to do and to desire:
For God knows all---exposed it lies before his eyes to whom we call.

vs3

Let those who hear his voice confronting them today,
reject the tempting choice of doubting or delay:
For God speaks still---his word is clear, so let us hear and do his will

See you in Worship this Sunday!