**Sunday, April 29, 2012**

**Welcome** – Greg Snow

**Exalted and Praised Forever –**Psalms 18:46; 21:13; 34:3; 35:18; 57:11; 97:9; 99:2; 138:6; 145:1

 The LORD lives – may my rock be praised! The God of my salvation is exalted.

Be exalted, Lord, in Your strength; we will sing and praise Your might.

Proclaim with me the LORD’s greatness; let us exalt His name together.

I will praise You in the great congregation; I will exalt You among many people. God, be exalted above the heavens; let Your glory be over the whole earth.

Though the LORD is exalted, He takes note of the humble; but He knows the haughty from afar.

For You, Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; You are exalted above all the gods.

The LORD is great in Zion; He is exalted above all the peoples.

I exalt You, my God the King, and praise Your name forever and ever.

**Song of Praise** – *All Hail the Power of Jesus Name*

**The Great High Priest –** (Source: Ligonier.org)

Praise be the name of Jesus. He is Son of God, born in a manger, died on the Roman cross, and rose from the dead. Even now, Jesus is seated on the throne of His father David at the right hand of God. This means that He is ruler over all and that the kings of the earth rule only according to His sovereign permission. Our great High Priest can identify and empathize with us in our needs. He is not off in some remote distant space, but is ever present with us. "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age," He promised us. Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Song of Worship** – *Before the Throne of God Above*

**How Beautiful is the Lord’s Grace** –2 Timothy 2:1, 8-13

How beautiful is the Lord’s grace upon us! Us, who murder Him with every sin. As I grow in the Lord, the more I become aware and awed at this fact! With every sin, I see how amazing and incomprehensible it is that Christ would love me. It is this constant realization that keeps our love for our beautiful Savior strong, even through trials.

During imprisonment and shortly before his death, the apostle Paul wrote a letter of encouragement to Timothy. Listen to these words from 2 Timothy, Chapter 2:

*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus…Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for:*

 *If we have died with him, we will also live with him;*

 *if we endure, we will also reign with him;*

 *if we deny him, he also will deny us;*

 *if we are faithless, he remains faithful—*

 *for he cannot deny himself.*

**Songs of Worship** – *Wonderful, Merciful Savior/My Jesus, I Love Thee*

**Offering**

**Meditating on God’s Word *–*** John Piper/Charles H. Spurgeon

*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. I have treasured Your word in my heart so that I may not sin against You. I will delight in Your statutes. LORD, Your word is forever; it is firmly fixed in heaven.*

 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping Your word. Happy are those who keep His decrees and seek Him with all their heart. For every one of God’s promises is “Yes” in Him.*

 *I will not forget Your word. I put my hope in Your word. I rise before dawn and cry out for help; I put my hope in Your word. Let my cry reach You, LORD; give me understanding according to Your word. The entirety of Your word is truth, and all Your righteous judgments endure forever.*

 *I will meditate on Your precepts and think about Your ways. Open my eyes so that I may see wonderful things in Your law. But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

(Psalms 119:2, 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 81, 105, 147, 160, 169; 2 Corinthians 1:20; James 1:22)

A tree has roots. The most important part of your life is your "root system." Don't be like the ungodly, who are like chaff. Chaff doesn't have roots. It is blown away by every wind that comes along. Your root system is important because it determines your nourishment. It also determines your stability and your strength when the storm comes and the wind starts to blow.

People can't see your root system, but God can. Praying and meditating on the Word of God will cause your roots to go down deep into His love.

God delights in blessing His children. But we must prepare ourselves for His blessings by first appropriating the resources He has given us. Delight in the Word of God and feed on it. But do more than occasionally read the Word; meditate on it constantly. Make it your source of spiritual nourishment, and God will bless you with strength and stability

Charles Spurgeon emphasized the importance of meditating on God’s Word in this way:

“There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. . . . Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord. . . .”

**Songs of Worship –** *Ancient Words/Speak, O Lord*

**Message** – *“Blessed are the Merciful”*
 *Scripture Reference: Matthew 5:7*

 *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”*

* Mercy is not a characteristic of those who are proud, self-righteous, and judgmental.
* The church, as well as professing Christians are proud & self-centered, taking credit for all that belong to God & His glory.
* To show mercy to those who are merciful to you, or to show mercy just to get mercy from others, is self-seeking & the practice is condemned by Jesus.
* Abortion is a merciless act & is a reflection of our nation. This act speaks of our self-centeredness.
1. **Meaning of Mercy**
	* To be merciful is to be charitable in meeting a need.
	* Comparison of words
		1. Mercy vs. Forgiveness: Mercy is bigger than forgiveness because Forgiveness forgives the/our transgression but Mercy reaches to our need & our weakness.
		2. Mercy vs. Grace: Both flow from love but are also different. Mercy says, “No Hell,” & Grace says “Welcome to Heaven.”
		3. Mercy vs. Justice: Justice gives exactly what we deserve, whereas Mercy gives us less than we deserve.
	* Mercy that ignores sin is a false mercy. God always deals with sin – God always satisfies both mercy & justice. For God to extend His mercy, He must justly punish sin. Jesus Christ bore our sin so that God’s justice was satisfied so we could (& do) receive His mercy.
	* The typical American church today practices a false mercy. It never confronts sin, which leads the individual to be comfortable, conformed, & confined to their sin.
2. **Source of Mercy**
	* Jesus is the source of both redeeming & sustaining mercy.
		1. This mercy is a supernatural gift given to us in the New Birth.
		2. The fountain head & source of this mercy is God’s absolute attribute of love, truth, & holiness, which in our fallen state flows & we receive His relative attributes such as mercy, justice, & grace.
	* We can only reflect God’s mercy if we have received His mercy ourselves!
3. **Practice of Mercy**
	* In Luke 10, the Good Samaritan is a great picture of mercy & grace.
	* Mercy should be seen in both our attitude & action.
		1. Attitude that doesn’t hold grudges or harbor resentment; doesn’t capitalize on failures of others; doesn’t publicize the sin of others.
		2. Action, such as Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25:41-45 & James 2.
			1. Pity on lost souls.
			2. Confront sin courageously & compassionately.
			3. Pray for others.
			4. Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.
4. **Results of Mercy**
	* God’s cycle of mercy is seen in us…as we have received His mercy in the salvation of our souls we are merciful to others. In His sanctifying process, God pours out more mercy & blessings for our needs, as well as withholds severe chastening for our sins.
	* This Beatitude teaches us that mercy to others does not bring mercy from others…but, rather mercy to others is a mark that we have received His great salvation of our souls. It brings more mercy from God.

**Time of Prayer**