**Sunday, March 18, 2012**

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**Welcome** – Greg Snow

**Praise Ye the Lord –** Psalm 135:1 (*Charles Spurgeon*)

*Psalm 135:1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD.

If others are silent, you must not be; you must be the first to celebrate his praises. You are “servants,” and this is part of your service; his “name” is named upon you, therefore celebrate his name with praises; you know what a blessed Master he is, therefore speak well of him. Those who shun his service are sure to neglect his praise; but as grace has made you his own personal servants, let your hearts make you his court-musicians. Here we see the servant of the Lord arousing his fellow-servants by three times calling upon them to praise. Are we then, so slow in such a sweet employ? Or is it that when we do our utmost it is all too little for such a Lord? Both are true. We do not praise enough; we cannot praise too much. We ought to be always at it; answering to the command here given - Praise, Praise, Praise. Let the three-in-one have the praises of our spirit, soul, and body. For the past, the present, and the future, let us render three-fold hallelujahs.*

*Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD.*

 **Song of Praise** – *Doxology*

**The Depth of Christ’s Love** –*Excerpt from a sermon preached by John Piper on March 26, 1995*

*Chuck Colson told the story of a group of American prisoners of war during the Second World War, who were made to do hard labor in a prison camp. Each had a shovel and would dig all day, then come in and give an account of his tool in the evening. One evening 20 prisoners were lined up by the guard and the shovels were counted. The guard counted nineteen shovels and turned in rage on the 20 prisoners demanding to know which one did not bring his shovel back. No one responded. The guard took out his gun and said that he would shoot five men if the guilty prisoner did not step forward. After a moment of tense silence, a 19-year-old soldier stepped forward with his head bowed down. The guard grabbed him, took him to the side and shot him in the head, and turned to warn the others that they better be more careful than he was. When he left, the men counted the shovels and there were 20. The guard had miscounted. And the boy had given his life for his friends.*

*Suppose that 19-year-old prisoner of war was the son of the President of the United States—and he knew that there were powers available to him to escape not only the death he died but also the prison camp—and suppose that you find out that his father, the President, not only had a massive love for the boy, but also approved of his dying for you, and wanted to meet those of you for whom he died, and give you some of the boy's inheritance. Would not the worth of that life be so unspeakably precious as to make you feel absolutely overwhelmed with love?*

*And consider now not only the life that Jesus sacrificed for us, but consider also what the sacrifice involved. To get to the point where he could die, Jesus had to plan for it. He left the glory of heaven and took on human nature so that he could hunger and get weary and in the end suffer and die. The incarnation was the preparation of nerve endings for the nails of the cross. Jesus needed a broad human back for a place to be scourged. He needed a brow and skull as a place for the thorns. He needed cheeks for Judas' kiss and soldiers' spit. He needed hands and feet for spikes. He needed a side as a place for the sword to pierce. And he needed a brain and a spinal cord, with no vinegar and no gall, so that he could feel the entire excruciating death—for you.*

*The 19-year-old boy was a wonderful picture of love. But compared to Jesus he was only a picture. His death was quick and relatively painless. Jesus' death was one of the worst kinds of torture devised for human pain. So when Ephesians 5:2 says, "Christ loved you and gave himself up for us," don't breeze over the words: "gave himself up." His love is great in proportion to the costliness of his sacrifice. And his sacrifice was horrendous.*

*How personally should we take this demonstration of love? Should you feel personally loved this way this morning and later on today and tomorrow morning? Or should it remain a kind of general, great, historic wonder that you look at from a distance with admiration—like the depths of the Grand Canyon? The answer is given by the testimony of the same writer, Paul, in Galatians 2:20,*

*The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.*

*This is what the apostle and the Lord himself are calling you to this morning. To see the depths of the love of Christ for you. To believe the love that he has for you. And to send the roots of your life down, down, down into this bottomless love. And say with Paul,*

*The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me [me, personally], and gave himself for me.*

**Song of Worship** – *Here Is Love Vast As the Ocean*

**The Beauty of Holiness** –*Hebrews 12:14*

*God is love and He has demonstrated that love in everything that he does, but another highly important attribute of Jesus is holiness; the Bible says we are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, to praise the beauty of holiness, we are to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness, walk on the highway of holiness, and be working to bring our holiness to a more complete place. God’s all-encompassing attribute, the one from which all the others flow, and flow perfectly, is His holiness. It is what makes everything else in perfect proportion. That is why we can trust His justice, His goodness, His mercy, His love, and so on, because He is holy.*

*May we long to live holy lives, for scripture says in Hebrews 12:14, without holiness, no one will see the Lord.*

**Song of Worship** – *Take My Life*

***The Potter & the Clay*** *– Isaiah 64:8*

 *You, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

***Song of Worship*** *– The Potter’s Hand*

**Offering**

**The Sermon on the Mount *– Ligon Duncan***

*Today as we begin our study of the Sermon on the Mount, it is important to understand that the Jesus who stands before us to teach us the way of life, and the way of holiness, is not merely a great teacher, He is our Savior, He is our Redeemer. And at every point that He instructs us in the way of life, He continues to be the One who died for us, that we might enter in to the way of life. Jesus is not telling us, in the Sermon on the Mount, the way that we can earn ourselves into His favor. We cannot earn ourselves into His kingdom. The kingdom is something that we cannot earn. It is something that we will never deserve. In fact, Jesus is going to argue in very shocking language, that until we understand that we cannot earn it, and that we do not deserve it, we are not citizens of His kingdom. But our Lord stands before us as Savior, and Redeemer and Teacher. He gives us this true teaching for living. It was once said of Jonathan Edwards that his doctrine was all application, and his application was all doctrine. Well, he must have learned from His Lord, because that is what we find in this great sermon of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*I want to say simply, that this sermon is not about ‘pie in the sky by and by.’ It is not about an ideal life in an ideal world. It is not about ‘there and then,’ it is about here and now. It is not about a Christian living an ideal life in an ideal world. It is about a Christian living a kingdom life in a fallen world.*

**Songs of Worship –** *I Will Sing of My Redeemer/Speak, O Lord*

*(After second verse of Speak, O Lord)

Our Lord and our God, we need spiritual sight to apprehend these truths. We do not, O Lord, simply desire to outline the teaching. We desire, O Lord, to embrace the glory of this truth. We desire to be built up in it, to be instructed in it, to be encouraged by it, to walk in Your ways and to be a witness to the glory of Christ in our own experience as we apprehend this truth. And so we need the Spirit. By the Spirit apply this truth to our hearts that we might be pleasing unto Thee. We ask it for our good and Your glory all in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

**Message** – *“Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount”*

*Scripture Reference: Matthew 5:1-2*

 *1.* ***Outline***

* *Introduction – Matthew 5:2-12*
* *Citizens of the Kingdom – Matthew 5: 13-16*
	+ *Wherever we go, we shall be the light of the world*
* *Proper way to act – Matthew 5:17-7:12*
* *Exhort hearers to come to the Kingdom – Matthew 7:13-27*
	+ *Enter by the narrow gate*

*2.* ***Authority***

* *Matthew 7:28-29*
	+ *Jesus spoke with absolute authority. He quoted no other sources, but rather “…but I say to you…”*
	+ *The crowd was astonished for He was as one who had authority.*

*3.* ***You***

* *Matthew 5:21-22*
	+ *Christ is talking to you/me*

*4.* ***Context***

* *Who was listening to this sermon?*

*5.* ***Externals***

* *Jesus message strips away all efforts of trying to be found righteous by our religion, social, political, or external righteous acts.*

*6.* ***New Birth***

* *Matthew 5:20*
	+ *This message leads us to absolute hopelessness.*
	+ *You will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless you come to Christ in total hopelessness.*

*7.* ***Root & Fruit***

* *This message will make us examine the true root & fruit of our lives.*
* *If the fruit of your life is bitter, examine the root.*

*8.* ***Danger***

* *It is dangerous to blindly see this sermon as another moral code.*
* *It is a danger to see it, have an intellectual sight, and yet not put the sermon into practice.*

**Time of Prayer**