**Sunday, September 9, 2012**

**Welcome** – Greg Snow

**Call to Worship –** *1 Chronicles 16:31-36*

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
 Let people from every nation say,

“The LORD reigns!”

Let the sea roar like thunder and the fields crescendo like a great orchestra!  
 Let the the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!  
 His faithful love endures forever.  
 We cry out, “Save us, O God of our salvation!

Gather and rescue us from among the nations,  
 so we can thank your holy name and rejoice and praise you.”

Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives from everlasting to everlasting!  
  
**Songs of Praise –** *For All You’ve Done/Lord I Lift Your Name On High*

**Christ Crucified** *(Source: Brian Hedges)*

The cross was more than just an execution of a Jewish prophet named Jesus. On the hill called Calvary, divine transaction between God the Father and God the Son occurred, where the Father laid on the Son the sins of unrighteous people, so as to punish those sins with all the fury of an eternal hell compressed into six hours. God was treating Jesus Christ as if He had committed every sin that I have committed. Every angry word, every bitter feeling, every lustful thought, every unholy action, every materialistic desire, every sin that I have ever committed in thought, word, or deed was being punished – in the body of Christ. My sins were the nails that held Him there. The 17th century Dutch artist Rembrandt is famous for a painting of the crucifixion, in which having painted several other characters around the cross, Rembrandt also painted himself in the picture. Perhaps he knew it was his sins that had crucified the Lord. As Martin Luther wrote,

*Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to sing to him, and say, "Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me what is yours. You have become what you were not so that I might become what I was not."*

**Song of Worship –** *The Look*

**The Power of God –** *1 Corinthians 1:18*

Hear the word of God from 1 Corinthians 1:18…

*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

**Song of Worship –** *The Old Rugged Cross*

**Offering *(“The Cross is a blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled, but we have to get near enough for its sparks to fall on us.”* John Stott; 1921-2011)**

**Sustaining Grace – *Hebrews 4:16*** *(Source: Gabe Tribbett)*

There’s a great old hymn entitled “I Need Thee Every Hour” that captures our need of God’s grace to sustain us. In fact, as the hymn suggests, God’s provision of grace comes chiefly through the presence of our Savior. There are times in our lives when we are more mindful of our need of grace than others. Sometimes our awareness is clothed in gratitude for our salvation and a desire for sanctification. And, sometimes it stems from feeling helpless as a result of our sin or the challenges of living in a fallen world with fallen people. That’s when desperation and despair drive us to desire grace. Whether we acknowledge it or not, we are always utterly dependent on God’s grace throughout each moment of every day. There is absolutely no hope apart from God’s grace, and there will be no spiritual growth without it. The more consistently we acknowledge this fact, the better off we will be and the more gloriously will God be reflected through us.

The late Puritan pastor, John Owen, had a keen understanding of this human condition. He acknowledged that the Holy Spirit uses means to deliver God’s grace to us when He initiates regeneration; He then excites that grace within us throughout our sanctification. It’s a beautiful mess as God takes graceless sinners and establishes His grace within them. Nothing could be more marvelous and mind-blowing than that.

Hebrews 4:16

*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.*

**Songs of Worship –** *I Need Thee Every Hour/Hide Away in the Love of Jesus*

**Message** – *“When You Fast”*   
 *Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:16-18*

**1. “Food”**

* Food is not the problem that Jesus is dealing with. Jesus is addressing the heart of man, as well as their actions and motives. Jesus is showing us our sin and our need for Him.
* Food is needed for us to live. The problem is our attitude about food.
* Cannibalism can be described as the worst problem with food.
* We must not forget that food was mans down fall in early days: 1) the garden (Adam/Eve and the apple), 2) Noah had problem with wine, 3) the children of Israel wandered and grumbled about their food in the wilderness, and 4) Corinth had trouble at the Lord’s Table.

**2. “Fasting”**

* The “Day of Atonement” is the Bible’s only required fast. That particular day was fulfilled with Jesus offering Himself on the cross.
* Fasting is now clearly seen as a voluntary act, not a spiritual duty. But in our text Jesus assumes that His children will fast at certain times. (WHEN you fast, not IF you fast.)
* In our text, Jesus is addressing the hypocrites and their pretentious fast..*.*they want to be seen as spiritual!
* Scripture gives guidelines to proper fasting: 1) Secretly and privately; 2) Jesus sees it as normal and acceptable practice for believers; 3) It is appropriate only as a response to special times of testing, trials, or struggles. (David during times of sorrow –*2 Samuel 12:16*; Times of grief during the loss of a loved one; overwhelming danger – *2 Chronicles 20:3, Esther 4:16*; penitence of personal sin or for the sin of others; receiving special revelation or proclaiming of God’s word; setting up a new ministry or minster – *Acts 13:2-3*)
* Fasting is always linked to prayer…it is never alone!
* Fasting always flows out of a pure heart or a desire to be purer and walk obediently.

**3. “Fruit of Fasting”**

* The fruit is God’s secret reward of Himself in His presence, power, clearer understanding, and more assurance of direction.

**Take-away’s**

1. Fasting is spontaneous! It flows out of a heart desiring more of God. It is a holy hunger that takes away our appetite for normal earthly food and leaves us desiring only holy manna from God (*John 4:34*)

2. Fasting from food is common but we can fast or abstain from other things that hinder our fellowship with God (TV, media, newspaper, magazines, etc)

3. Deuteronomy 32:15 is where most of us are. We are full of God’s blessings and we don’t desire Him as we should.

4. Caution of Isaiah 58 and Joel 2:12-13 needs to be heeded in our thoughts of fasting.

5. The Christians appearance is to be appropriate and joyous! (Matthew 6:17)

**Time of Prayer**