

Sunday, January 6, 2013

Welcome – Greg Snow

Call to Worship – *Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 19:1-4/ Wes Hamilton/Charles Spurgeon*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He alone is the Lord. He made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. He gives life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship Him.

Albert Einstein once said:

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.”

One of the tragedies of modern man is the loss of mystery. We have grown so accustomed to breakthroughs, discoveries and technology that we have become perpetually unimpressed. Startling new advances barely capture our attention. Mystery has become something of an endangered animal in our world. And the tragic result is that we have become inoculated against awe and resistant to a sense of wonder.

Think about it. When was the last time you took time to pause in wonder, and stand in rapt awe as you stared into the night sky? I am not talking about just a fleeting glance. I am talking about a long lingering look into the heavens.

Charles Spurgeon described the heavens in this manner,

“It is not merely glory that the heavens declare, but the *“glory of God,”* for they deliver to us such unanswerable arguments for a conscious, intelligent, planning, controlling, and presiding Creator, that no unprejudiced person can remain unconvinced by them. The testimony given by the heavens is no mere hint, but a plain, unmistakable declaration; and it is a declaration of the most constant and abiding kind. Yet for all this, to what avail is the loudest declaration to a deaf man, or the clearest showing to one spiritually blind? God the Holy Ghost must illuminate us, or all the suns in the milky way never will.”

*The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
The glory of God echoes throughout the world.
Let us praise the name of the Lord.*

Songs of Praise – *God of Wonders/Great In Power*

Prayer of Confession

God of grace, you have given us Jesus, the light of the world, but we choose darkness and cling to things that hide the brightness of your love. Immersed in ourselves, we have not risen to new life. Our witness – good or bad – is the overflow of our lives and is what people see. Father, forgive us and renew us with your love, May we have a burning to share your Word to the nations and to tell all mankind of your glory, which shines in the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our light forever.

Song of Worship – *The Love of God*

Assurance of Forgiveness – *1 John 1:5-7*

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,
God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.
If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness,
we lie and do not do what is true;
but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Father, we rejoice in the fact that Your word tells us that the souls of men can be rescued by your Son's cleansing blood. You are truly the hope that our souls are longing for. Let us always hold fast to the promises of Your word.

Offering (*Prayer is an acknowledgment that our need of God's help is not partial but total.*" Alistair Begg)

He Is Mighty To Save – *Matthew 9:9-13 (Source: Ligonier Ministries)*

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

We are all recovering Pharisees who must get over our tendency to frown only upon certain sins. John Calvin comments that we must "never think it strange that he should gather to salvation those who have been the worst of men, and who have been covered with a mass of crimes."

God is mighty to save those whom you least expect to be saved. The ones who show no sign and no desire for the things of heaven! He's mighty to save the prostitute, the drunkard, the adulterer, the murderer even. And He's mighty to save the most hardcore of Atheists. He is mighty to save!

He is mighty to save that co-worker whom you think will never hear anything of Christ. He's mighty to save the student reading that newspaper as you walk around campus evangelizing. He's mighty to save the family member who is so opposed to your church going and Christ-loving. He is mighty to save that friend who seems to have the hardest of hearts against God. And He's mighty to save that small group member at church who seems to be so apathetic to all that the preacher says.

He's mighty to save the North Korean and the Chinese people who have never heard of Christ! He's mighty to save the Ugandan , the Japanese, the Nicaraguan, and the Indian in whom is seen not even a glimmer of light.

I think that sometimes we forget that we preach the Word of God. And that this word of God is truly living and active! That it is truly sharper than any two-edged sword. That it really pierces to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

All people are without excuse before God. The knowledge that apart from Jesus Christ there can be no salvation ought to motivate us strongly to lift up lost sinners in prayer, asking God to do a work in their souls. I challenge you, from this day forward, to pray for the lost on a daily basis. Let us spend the next few moments in silent prayer as we pray for the lost to be saved. Let us also examine our Christian walk and ask Him to purify our hearts so that those we come in contact with may see the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray.

Songs of Worship – *All I Have Is Christ/Grace, Greater Than Our Sin*

Message – *“Saving Sinners”*

Scripture Reference: Matthew 9:9-17

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *My Savior's Love*

Observance of the Lord's Supper – *Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26*

Closing Prayer