

Sunday, April 7, 2013

Welcome – Greg Snow

Call to Worship - Exodus 20:8-11 (Source: Thomas Watson; Puritan Prayer: The Lord's Day)

Good Morning! Today is Sunday, the Lord's Day, a holy day unlike any other day of the week. It is a day for Christian pilgrims who wander in the wilderness of this world to come together in corporate worship as an oasis. Here is where sinners who have been made into citizens of heaven taste of the powers of the age to come.

The fourth commandment was engraved in stone by God's own finger—and it will be our comfort to have it engraved in our hearts! Hear the word of the Lord from Exodus 20:8-11:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Let's take the next few moments to silently pray to God, asking Him to forgive us for sinning against Him and for not making this day a special day, a holy day. Let's also ask God to open our heart, soul, and mind as we prepare to enter into a sacred time of worship. Let's pray.

O Lord my Lord

This is thy day, the heavenly ordinance of rest, the open door of worship, the record of Jesus' resurrection, the seal of the Sabbath to come, the day when saints militant and triumphant unite in endless song.

I bless thee for the throne of grace, that here free favor reigns; that open access to it is through the blood of Jesus; that the veil is torn aside and I can enter the holiest and find thee ready to hear, waiting to be gracious, inviting me to pour out my needs, encouraging in my desires, promising to give more than I ask or think.

But while I bless thee, shame and confusion are mine: I remember my past misuse of sacred things, my irreverent worship, my base ingratitude, my cold dull praise.

Sprinkle all my past Sabbaths with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may this day witness deep improvement in me.

Give me in rich abundance the blessings the Lord's Day was designed to impart; May my heart be fast bound against worldly thoughts or cares;

Flood my mind with peace beyond understanding; may my meditations be sweet; my acts of worship life, liberty, joy; my drink the streams that flow from thy throne; my food the precious Word; my defense the shield of faith; and may my heart be more knit to Jesus.

As we consecrate and dedicate this day to the "service of the high God," let's stand and sing praises unto His holy name!

Song of Praise – *Brethren We Have Met To Worship*

Be Strong in the Lord – *Ephesians 6:10-12*

It's time for the church of God to arise and take a stand!

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Song of Worship – *O Church Arise*

Prayer for Guidance

O God of all creation, you alone are God. And you alone can satisfy our longing for a support that earth cannot give and that heaven will not take away. Help us, in recognition of our common dependence on you, to acknowledge our need of one another. Let the oneness of our worship make us one in love and service. Amen.

Song of Worship – *Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God*

Words of Assurance – *Lamentation 3:22-23*

Speak with me the word of the Lord from Lamentation 3:22-23 and be assured of your salvation through Christ!

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Song of Worship – *Great Is thy Faithfulness*

Offering - "We keep the Sabbath-day holy, by "consecrating and dedicating" this day to the "service of the high God." It is good to rest on the Sabbath-day from the works of our vocation...we must dedicate the day to God; we must not only "keep a Sabbath," but "sanctify" a Sabbath." Thomas Watson, 1620-1686

All of Grace– *Ephesians 2:8; Job 33:27-28; Psalm 116:8 (Source: Charles Haden Spurgeon)*

Hear the word of the Lord...

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. I have sinned and perverted what was right; yet I did not get what I deserved. He redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit, and I will continue to see the light. You, LORD, rescued me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

Grace is one of God's most amazing gifts. Because God is gracious, sinful men are forgiven, converted, purified, and saved. It is not because of anything in them, or that ever can be in them, that they are saved; but because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy, and grace of God.

What an abyss is the grace of God! Who can measure its breadth? Who can fathom its depth? Like all the rest of the divine attributes, it is infinite. God is full of love, for "God is love." God is full of goodness; the very name "God" is short for "good." Unbounded goodness and love enter into the very essence of the Godhead. It is because "his mercy endureth forever" that men are not destroyed; because "his compassions fail not" that sinners are brought to Him and forgiven.

The Lord's salvation can come to us though we have only faith as a grain of mustard seed. The power lies in the grace of God, and not in our faith. Great messages can be sent along slender wires, and the peace-giving witness of the Holy Spirit can reach the heart by means of a thread-like faith which seems almost unable to sustain its own weight. Think more of Him to whom you look than of the look itself. You must look away even from your own looking, and see nothing but Jesus, and the grace of God revealed in Him.

Gracious God,

Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exceeding righteousness of salvation, the exceeding glory of Christ, the exceeding beauty of holiness, and the exceeding wonder of Thy grace.
Amen

Songs of Worship – *Grace, Greater Than Our Sin/Jesus Paid It All*

Message – *“Understanding the Sabbath”*

Scripture Reference: Matthew 12:1-14

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *How Deep the Father's Love*

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

Benediction

Loving and faithful God, we bless you for calling us to be a holy people, living for you in service to each other for the sake of your world. We pray that our congregation will experience a rich and free sharing of the gifts you have generously given us. Knowing that we are called to be saints, we humbly ask that you will work powerfully through us to accomplish your purposes in the world. We pray for the courage, the patience, and the generosity of spirit that comes from imitating the love you have shown us in Christ. We long for your Spirit's power to make us more Christlike in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Help us to think of others and their needs even now as we pray for creation, in its groaning . . . the world, in its suffering . . . our nation and city, in their need of healing . . .

We pray in the name of Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.