

Sunday, August 4, 2013

Welcome – Greg Snow

Call to Worship – *With Joy We Praise You*

Please stand and magnify the Lord with me!

With joy we praise you, gracious God, for you created heaven and earth, made us in your image, and kept covenant with us— even when we fell into sin.

We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord, who by his life, death, and resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of your name.

People of God, worship the living God today!

Song of Praise – *See What A Morning*

Confession & Assurance of Salvation (*1 Peter 2:24/Acts 4:12; Source: Dr. Jerry Winfield*)

In his book *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*, Charles Swindoll relates the story of an eight year- old Kenyan girl, Monica, who fell into a pit and broke her leg. Mama Njeri, an older woman, seeing what had happened, climbed into the pit to rescue Monica. In the pit a black mamba, the most poisonous snake in Africa, bit both Monica and Mama Njeri. Both ladies were rushed to a medical center; Monica improved, but tragically, Mama Njeri died. A nurse missionary explained to Monica that Mama Njeri was bitten first and thus received all of the mamba's poison. When the snake bit Monica, it had no poison left. The nurse went on to explain that Jesus had similarly taken the poison of our sin so that we can live. Monica understood and readily received Christ.

The word of the Lord in 1 Peter 2:24 says this:

"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

Scripture teaches us that Christ bore our sins. He didn't just carry them; he suffered the penalty we deserved. His anguish was our healing. His suffering was our righteousness. How can we ever think of going back to sin after he suffered so much to bear its penalty?

Let's take the next few moments to silently pray to God, asking Him to forgive us of our dark sins and wickedness. Be reminded of Acts 4:12: Salvation is found in no one else. It is found only in Christ alone.

Let us also take a moment to silently thank Him for the good news...His wonderful gift of salvation where by his wounds we have been healed. Let's pray.

-Silent Prayer-

Mount of Calvary (Source: Charles H. Spurgeon)

This morning we turn our face to the Mount of Calvary. We shall not be merely spectators of the fearful tragedy of our Savior's death: we shall dart our eyes to that place which is the focus of heaven's joy and delight, the cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we sing the next three songs, let us keep our mind and thoughts on Christ, the one who died in our place, so that we may inherit eternal life.

Song of Worship – *When I Survey The Wondrous Cross/I Will Sing Of My Redeemer/My Jesus, I Love Thee*

Offering - *"The benefit of the Lord's Supper depends entirely on the spirit and frame of mind in which we receive it. The bread which we eat, and the juice which we drink, have no power to do good to our souls, as medicine does good to our bodies, without the co-operation of our hearts and wills."* J.C. Ryle

Lord, Why Was I A Guest – (Source: Cary Cox)

In the early 1700's Isaac Watts wrote a hymn called *How Sweet And Aweful Is The Place*. Many of you have probably never heard of it. It is a rare blend of rich theology and heart for missions!

The hymn begins with a description of Christians gathered at the amazing feast prepared by God. Our hearts and songs are admiring the feast, i.e. enjoying God's presence and his "everlasting love." But as the believers enjoy God at the banquet, a question develops in each one's mind: "Lord, why was I a guest? Why was I made to hear Thy voice, and enter while there's room, when thousands make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come?"

A good question. Why me, Lord? Why do many despise the invitation to the feast? Aren't all invited to come? Was I just smarter or better than others who received the same invitation?

Thy hymn answers the question, taking its theology to an even higher level: "'Twas the same love that spread the feast that sweetly drew us in; else we had still refused to taste, and perished in our sin." Wow! Amazing. God not only "spread the feast," but was intimately involved in drawing us in! The Father spread the feast, the Son made us able to come (by removing our sin with his sacrifice at the cross), and the Holy Spirit (the often forgotten member of the Trinity) did his work in our hearts, the wind blowing where it wills, until we willingly came into the pleasures of God. God not only sends out the invitation, he draws his people to himself! "No one can come to me unless the Father draws him" (John 6:44). "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37). If left to ourselves, slaves to sin that we are - ruined and depraved and given to unceasing wickedness and idolatry - blind and deaf to God and dead in our trespasses and sins - we would never heed his beautiful invitation. Thank God for his sweetly drawing us in!

So the hymn is thus far celebrating the theology of God's saints enjoying him forever, and the sovereign grace of God in calling his people into his feast. But now the missional heart of compassion for the lost comes into view: "Pity the nations, O our God; constrain the earth come; Send thy victorious word abroad, and bring the strangers home. We long to see thy churches full, that all the chosen race may with one voice and heart and soul, sing Thy redeeming grace!"

In the hymn's title and first line ('How sweet and awful'), 'awful' is used in the old sense of "awe inducing," as in our modern word, 'awesome.' How sweet and, yet, awesome is the place of our enjoying

God: sweet and beautiful fellowship indeed! But 'awful' in the sense that we are humbled to think that, apart from God's sweet wooing of our hearts by his Spirit, we would have rejected God's feast like so many others. A truly humbling truth.

May we learn a lesson from this old hymn. May God put in us a joyful heart of celebration - we are welcomed to the table of the King! But may we also be humbled by the fact that we are only at the table by God's grace. Many will reject the invitation and perish in their sins. This would have been our terrible fate if the Spirit of God had not acted powerfully in our hearts. Glory to God!

Song of Worship – *How Sweet and Aweful*

The Lord's Supper: A Puritan Prayer

God of all good,

I bless thee for the means of grace; teach me to see in them thy loving purposes and the joy and strength of my soul.

Thou hast prepared for me a feast; and though I am unworthy to sit down as guest, I wholly rest on the merits of Jesus, and hide myself beneath his righteousness;

When I hear his tender invitation and see his wondrous grace, I cannot hesitate, but must come to thee in love. By thy spirit enliven my faith rightly to discern and spiritually to apprehend the Saviour.

While I gaze upon the emblems of my Saviour's death, may I ponder why he died, and hear him say,

'I gave my life to purchase yours, presented myself an offering to expiate your sin, shed my blood to blot out your guilt, opened my side to make you clean, endured your curses to set you free, bore your condemnation to satisfy divine justice.'

Oh may I rightly grasp the breadth and length of this design, draw near, obey, extend the hand, take the bread, receive the cup, eat and drink, testify before all men that I do for myself, gladly, in faith, reverence and love, receive my Lord, to be my life, strength, nourishment, joy, delight.

In the supper I remember his eternal love, boundless grace, infinite compassion, agony, cross, redemption, and receive assurance of pardon, adoption, life, glory.

As the outward elements nourish my body, so may thy indwelling Spirit invigorate my soul, until that day when I hunger and thirst no more, and sit with Jesus at his heavenly feast.

Song of Worship – *Behold the Lamb*

Reading of Scripture: *(1 Corinthians 11:23-34)*

Message – *"The Lord's Supper"*

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 11:23-24

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

Observance of the Lord's Supper

Blessing of the Bread (*Source: Douglas B. Skinner*)

God, our Rock, it is in the shadow of Christ's cross that we make our home. It is here that we find the rest and shade that we need from the glare of the searching sun at noonday. Exposed, we need to be shielded; weary, we need to be relieved. And these things we find beneath the cross of Jesus. Today as we break the bread in remembrance of and thanksgiving for what you did for us in Jesus Christ on Calvary, teach us how to abide always in you and to find our glory in the cross. Feed us by this bread and sustain us by your Spirit, we pray.

Prayer – Jason Barnett

Passing of the Bread

Partaking of the Bread – *Luke 22:19*

Blessing of the Cup (*Source: Douglas B. Skinner*)

We bless and share this cup, Abiding God, so that our eyes can focus more clearly on the very dying form of one who suffered on the cross for us. But it's more than a history lesson that we need here today. And so touch our hearts in their depths by this powerful remembrance of Christ's death on Calvary's cross. By your Spirit, in this moment of communion, break our hearts with the knowledge of our unworthiness, and then startle us again with the wonder of your redeeming love so that beneath Christ's cross we would forever take our stand.

Prayer – Mike Holland

Passing of the Cup

Partaking of the Cup – *Luke 22:20*

Proclaiming the Lord's Death – *1 Corinthians 11:26*

Benediction