

Sunday, October 20, 2013

Welcome – Greg Snow

Call to Worship – 2 Corinthians 13:13/Psalm 84/Psalm 34:3

Good Morning! On this blessed Lord's Day He has called us to worship and now greets us.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Hear the word of God found in Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!

My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere;

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.

O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.

O magnify the LORD with me. Let us exalt God's name together!

Song of Praise – *Better Is One Day*

Thankfulness to the Father

We give thanks to you, God our Father, for mercy that reaches out, for patience that waits our returning, for your love that is ever ready to welcome sinners.

We praise you that in Jesus Christ you came to us with forgiveness, and that, by your Holy Spirit, you move us to repent and receive your love.

Though we are sinners, you are faithful and worthy of all praise.

We praise you, great God, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Songs of Worship – *How Great Is Our God/How Great Thou Art*

Confession of Sin & Prayer (*Puritan Prayer: Consecration and Worship*)

Even though we experience the greatness of our God the circle of love is repeatedly broken because of our sin. However, we can receive restoration with Christ when we exhibit true repentance. Hear the words of the Puritan prayer, *Consecration and Worship*, as the sinner acknowledges his sin before our great and mighty God:

My God, I feel it is heaven to please Thee, and to be what Thou wouldst have me be. O that I were holy as Thou art holy, pure as Christ is pure, perfect as Thy Spirit is perfect! These, I feel, are the best commands in Thy Book, and shall I break them? must I break them? am I under such a necessity as long as I live here?

Woe, woe is me that I am a sinner, that I grieve this blessed God, who is infinite in goodness and grace! O if He would punish me for my sins, it would not wound my heart so deep to offend Him; But though I sin continually, He continually repeats His kindness to me.

At times I feel I could bear any suffering, but how can I dishonor this glorious God? What shall I do to glorify and worship this best of beings? O that I could consecrate my soul and body to His service, without restraint, for ever! O that I could give myself up to Him, so as never more to attempt to be my own! or have any will or affections that are not perfectly conformed to His will and His love! But, alas, I cannot live and not sin.

O may angels glorify Him incessantly, and, if possible, prostrate themselves lower before the blessed King of heaven! I long to bear a part with them in ceaseless praise; but when I have done all I can to eternity I shall not be able to offer more than a small fraction of the homage that the glorious God deserves. Give me a heart full of divine, heavenly love.

Over the next few moments I encourage you to silently pray, examining your own heart and seeking true repentance from our God. Let's pray.

Assurance of Salvation – *Exodus 34:6-7; Romans 8:1*

Hear these comforting words:

God is slow to anger and full of compassion. He forgives all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Song of Worship – *Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*

Offering “*What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together because they have all been loved by Jesus himself. They are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake.*”

D.A. Carson

Christ Forsaken – *Matthew 27:46* (Source: Joel Beeke)

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46).

It is noon, and Jesus has been on the cross for three pain-filled hours. Suddenly, darkness falls on Calvary and “over all the land.” By a miraculous act of Almighty God, midday becomes midnight.

This supernatural darkness is a symbol of God’s judgment on sin. The physical darkness signals a deeper and more fearsome darkness.

The great High Priest enters Golgotha’s Holy of Holies without friends or enemies. The Son of God is alone on the cross for three final hours, enduring what defies our imagination. Experiencing the full brunt of His Father’s wrath, Jesus cannot stay silent. He cries out: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

This phrase represents the lowest point of Jesus’ sufferings. Here Jesus descends into the essence of hell, the most extreme suffering ever experienced. It is a time so compacted, so infinite, so horrendous as to be incomprehensible and, seemingly, unsustainable.

Jesus’ cry does not in any way diminish His deity. Jesus does not cease being God before, during, or after this. Jesus’ cry does not divide His human nature from His divine person or destroy the Trinity. Nor does it detach Him from the Holy Spirit. The Son lacks the comforts of the Spirit, but He does not lose the holiness of the Spirit. And finally, it does not cause Him to disavow His mission. Both the Father and Son knew from all eternity that Jesus would become the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. It is unthinkable that the Son of God might question what is happening or be perplexed when His Father’s loving presence departs.

But why would God bruise His own Son? The Father is not capricious, or malicious. The real purpose is correction; it is the just punishment for the sin of Christ’s people. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

Christ was made sin for us, dear believers. Among all the mysteries of salvation, this little word “for” exceeds all. This small word illuminates our darkness and unites Jesus Christ with sinners. Christ was acting on behalf of His people as their representative and for their benefit.

With Jesus as our substitute, God’s wrath is satisfied and God can justify those who believe in Jesus. Christ’s corrective suffering, therefore, is vicarious — He suffered on our behalf. He did not simply *share* our forsakenness, *but He saved us from it*. He endured it for us, *not with us*. You are immune to condemnation and to God’s hate because Christ bore it for you in that outer darkness. Golgotha secured our immunity, not mere sympathy.

This explains the hours of darkness and the roar of forsakenness. God’s people experience just a taste of this when they are brought by the Holy Spirit before the Judge of heaven and earth, only to experience that they are not consumed for Christ’s sake. They come out of darkness, confessing, “Because Immanuel has descended into the lowest hell for us, God is with us *in* the darkness, *under* the darkness, *through* the darkness — and we are not consumed!”

How stupendous is the love of God! Indeed, our hearts so overflow with love that we respond with 1 John 4:19, *“We love him, because he first loved us.”*

Songs of Worship – *Once Again/When I survey the Wondrous Cross*

Message – *“It Matters How We Treat One Another”*

Scripture Reference: Matthew 18:5-9

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *Oh, How Good It Is*

Benediction