

Sunday, February 9, 2014

Welcome – Greg Snow

Our Hope and Expectation

Hear the word of the Lord:

All the hopes and expectations of Christians are realized in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, which is why our worship services should be a time of joy, celebration, and renewal. Our lives should daily reflect the full joy of the victorious Christian faith because of Christ's resurrection.

Let us spend the next few moments in silent prayer as we prepare our hearts to worship God. May each of us here sense the power of the gospel today and be drawn closer to God, by the power of His Spirit. Let's pray.

Call to Worship – *Psalm 118:1, 5, 14, 17, 22-24*

Here these words of encouragement and joy found in the book of Psalms...

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

His love endures forever.

In our anguish we cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting us free. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

His love endures forever.

The LORD is our strength and our song; he has become our salvation. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

His love endures forever.

We will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

His love endures forever.

The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;

The LORD has done this; and it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made;

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Songs of Worship – *See What A Morning/Lord, I Lift Your Name On High*

Confession of Sin & Prayer

When our Almighty God raised Jesus from the grave, He shattered the power of sin and death and crowned Jesus Lord of all. But as His selfish and sinful children, we have not bowed before him or acknowledged his rule in our lives. We have gone along with the way of the world and failed to give him the glory he is so deserving of.

Over the next few moments let's spend some time confessing our sin before God. May we trust his power to change our lives and make us new, so that we may know the joy of life abundant given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. Let's pray.

Assurance of Salvation – Ephesians 2:4-7

Hear these words of assurance and encouragement found in Ephesians 2:4-7:

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Songs of Praise – Here Is Love/How Deep the Father's Love For Us

Offering - *"Whom should we love, if not Him who loved us, and gave himself for us?"* Augustus Toplady

Why Do We Love Him? – *1 John 4:19 (Source: Charles Spurgeon, "The Church's Love To Her Loving Lord," Tim Challies, Center for Church Music)*

Why do we love Him? The answer to that question is found in 1 John 4:19: *"We love Him because He first loved us."*

Before this round earth ever was fashioned
between the palms of the great Creator-
before he had painted the rainbow,
or hung out the lights of the sun and moon,
Christ's delights were with us.
He foresaw us and he knew what we should be-
and as he looked upon us, the glance was love.

He delighted to sit upon the throne of glory,
and to remember his dear ones who were yet to be born.
It was the great prospect which his mighty and infinite spirit had
a joy that was set before him,
that he should see a multitude that no man
could number who should be his beloved forever!

Oh, if you know that Jesus had loved you
from before all worlds, you must love him.
At least you will grant there cannot be a better reason for love than love.

Love demands; no, it does not demand-
it takes by almighty force, by irresistible energy,
that heart captive, upon whom it thus sets itself.

It must have been thoughts of love for the Savior, much similar to those of C.H. Spurgeon's, that drove a newly converted, sixteen year old boy to write a devotional love poem titled, "My Jesus, I Love Thee." The love that William Ralph Featherston had for Christ was deep and true, even at the young age of sixteen. This young lad must have had a strong, deep appreciation to Jesus for the love that the Father had bestowed upon him. Young William had been confronted by his sin and an eternity separated from God. In a life changing moment, he had trusted Jesus to forgive His sin.

William had been transformed into a "new creation", a child of God. Sinfulness had given way to repentance. He experienced the incredible joy of a life purchased by the blood of Jesus. Earlier, Jesus had been just a name, but now Jesus was William's 'Redeemer'. So loved by God, William could write these beautiful words expressing his love for Jesus.

Though William lived only ten years after writing this hymn, perhaps, instinctively, he knew that his destiny was "endless delight", that he would sing an unending song of adoration to his Lord:

*In mansions of glory and endless delight
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright,
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.'*

Do you belong to Jesus? Are you a "new creation"? If so, then with praise and adoration, sing this 'love song to Jesus'. Let these words express your devotion for Christ's sacrificial death on 'Calvary's tree'.

But if you're not a child of God, why not acknowledge your need of a Savior and tell Jesus that you are coming to Him as a repentant sinner, trusting only Him to save you and cleanse you of your sin. Tell Him that you believe in Him and His Word, and that you want Him to take control of your life, to come into your heart and be your Savior and Redeemer.

Like William Featherston, it will be the greatest decision you will ever make.

Songs of Worship – *My Jesus, I Love Thee/O How I Love Jesus*

Message – *"The Parable of the Wedding Feast"*

Scripture Reference: Matthew 22:1-14

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *Hide Away in the Love of Jesus*

Benediction