

Sunday, April 6, 2014

Welcome – Greg Snow

God Centered Worship – *John 4:21-24*

Hear the word of God found in John 4:21-24

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Within a worship service all that takes place must have a God-ward devotional quality. God must be at the center of the whole. He must be the hub, and all else must revolve around Him. Everything in worship must be God-centered and God-directed. Worship that is centered on something other than God is not worship. It may be a religious gathering, it may be exciting, it may be informative, but it is not, by definition, worship.

Listen to the words of this prayer, asking that everything we do during this sacred hour, God might be the center of our Worship...

Lord God, words are not enough to express Your awesomeness, Your majesty, Your holiness. Our highest expressions of theology are but baby talk next to You. Make us aware, through Your Holy Spirit, that You are here among us. May this awareness lead us to approach this hour more carefully. The words we speak, the tunes we sing, the thoughts we think, the joy and sadness we feel, may these be pleasing to You. For in spite of the inadequacy of our words, this worship is addressed to You. Make it complete, whole, full to overflowing, O God, our rock, and our redeemer.

Let's take the next few moments in silent prayer directing our thoughts and attention to God, placing Him in the center of our worship service, in order that we will be pleasing and bring Him glory, honor, and praise. Let's pray.

Call to Worship – *Psalms 103:1-2, 20-22*

Hallelujah! Servants of God, praise, praise the name of the Lord. Bless the Lord's name now and always. Praise the Lord's name here and in every place from east to west.

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Song of Worship – To God Be the Glory

Continuation of Praise

The Lord is to be the center of worship! So, let's take this opportunity to join the heavenly beings, and echo from the earth a mighty sound of worship and praise to Him who's both worthy and wonderful! Let us sing with a heartfelt shout of joy and adoration!

Songs of Praise – How Great Is Our God/How Great Thou Art

Confession of Sin & Prayer (Source: Charles Swindoll)

Father, you are so worthy of praise and adoration, yet we get caught up in our daily living and fail to give you the glory you are so deserving of. We are a sinful people, in that we pretend to put you first in our lives but we do not reflect that in our daily living.

Lord God, we thank You for the model of Jesus Christ our Savior who, when He walked this earth, dripped with authenticity. We long to be authentic as our Savior was—not phony and proud and faking our commitment to You but people who have a faith that's genuine, not counterfeit. That takes courage. It takes guts to live the real life before a world that's lost its way, where hypocrisy is so often modeled and comes across as religious piety.

Forgive us, Father, for the way we have subtly sought the applause of others, hoping they'd be impressed with our humility or our generosity or even our authenticity, which wasn't authenticity at all. We pray that we'll be more effective in secret than we ever could be in public and that, as a result of Your seeing us in secret, You'll be honored and the rewards will come at a time when it's just between You and us.

Father, we pray that You will turn reproof into restoration and thereby change us so that we become like Christ—and unlike the Pharisees who were so impressed with themselves. May we instead be so impressed with You that we lose sight of ourselves. And in that self-forgetful state, may we give You all the glory that You deserve.

Throughout the next few moments, let's spend time in silent prayer asking our Father to forgive us of our hypocritical ways, all the while confessing our sins and asking him to restore our broken heart. Let's pray.

Assurance of Salvation – Ezekiel 36:25-26

Hear these words of assurance found in Ezekiel 36:25-26

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Arise, my soul, rejoice in your salvation. Shake off your guilty fears, for God owns you as His child.

Song of Praise – O My Soul, Arise

Offering – *“You can operate your business without Christ. You can make it run well. You can raise your family without Christ. You can even pastor a church without Christ. But if you do, you will find that there will be no fruit, no Christlikeness, no manifestation of that beautiful character which arrests the attention of others. Instead there will be a sham, a phony imitation of the real thing, which will drive people away from Christ and will produce nothing but a dull, mechanical religiosity.”*

Ray Stedman

Overcoming Hypocrisy (Source: Warren Wiersbe & Charles Spurgeon)

This age is full of imitations. Pretending never stood in such a high position as it does at this present hour. This is not only prevalent in worldly matters, but unfortunately, it is prevalent in Christian matters, as well. We pretend to love God and His laws. We pretend to love other fellow Christians, when all we really want is just to make ourselves look good. We are much like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time. The scribes and Pharisees were enemies to the gospel of Christ, and therefore were damaging to the salvation of the souls of men. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was like the ornaments of a grave, or dressing up a dead body, only for show. We are really, what we are inwardly. Outward motives may keep the outside clean, while the inside is filthy; but if the heart and spirit be made new, there will be newness of life; here we must begin with ourselves.

“George McDonald wrote, ‘Half the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not.’ The name that Jesus gave to this practice was ‘hypocrisy,’ which simply means ‘wearing a mask, playing the actor.’ We must not think that failure to reach our ideals is hypocrisy, because no believer lives up to all that he or she knows or has in the Lord. Hypocrisy is deliberate deception, trying to make people think we are more spiritual than we really are.”

What shall we do to cure ourselves of any hypocrisy that may exist among us? Let us recollect that we cannot do anything in secret even if we try. The all-seeing God, apprehended in the conscience, must be the death of hypocrisy. I cannot try to deceive when I know that God is looking at me.

You may deceive men, and deceive yourselves, but God you cannot, God you shall not. Ye may die with the name of Christ upon your lips, and men may bury you in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, but God shall not be deceived neither by your profession nor by men's opinion. He shall put you in the scales, and if you be found wanting, he shall cry, "Away with him." He shall ring you, and if you have not the ring of the pure coin of grace, he shall nail you down for ever as a counterfeit. He shall strip the mask off you.

The all-seeing God shall read your soul, shall discover your secret, shall reveal your hidden things, and tell the world that, though you did eat and drink in his streets, though you preached his name, yet he never knew you, you were still a worker of iniquity, and must be driven away forever.

Come let us just for one second reflect, that we shall soon lie upon our death bed. A short time, and you and I shall face the cruel tyrant, death. It will be hard work to play the hypocrite then; when the pulse is faint and few, when the eye-strings break, when the tongue is cleaving to the roof of your mouth, it will be in vain to try hypocrisy then. O may God make you sincere; for if you die with an empty profession, you die indeed. Of all deaths, I think the most awful is that of the hypocrite, and after death, for him to lift up his eyes and find himself lost— forever! O make sure work of it. Trust in Christ and receive the gift of eternal life that was sealed at the cross! May God give you true grace and true faith, and may we all meet in heaven. This is our earnest prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Songs of Worship – *Holy Spirit/Speak, O Lord*

Message – *“The Last Public Message of Jesus – Part 2”*

Scripture Reference: Matthew 23:13-14

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

Benediction