

Home Service for 8/15/2021

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

Call to Worship:

Welcome to worship! We come seeking healing and hope. We have come to the right place. God awaits you. Even though we have not always followed the ways God would have us go; God loves, forgives and awaits us. Praise be to the patient, steadfast love of God. AMEN.

Opening Prayer:

Lord of life and hope, we gather this day seeking nourishment for our souls and healing for our spirits. Give to us your living bread, that having been nourished in soul and spirit, we may be witnesses to your transforming love. Through the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, we offer this prayer. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

Gracious and Merciful Lord, you have offered to us food for the journey. You remind us that your very life will sustain us as we witness to your love. But sometimes we let those reminders slip from our consciousness. We wallow in our difficulty; make excuses for not living the kind of life that you would have us live; treat others in ways which are not healthy or loving. Please forgive us, Lord. Stop us in our tracks and help us to examine the many ways in which we have not served you well and the callous things we have done to others. Cleanse our spirits and our souls from these unrighteous acts, and cause us to follow you more closely. Remind us again that you are the Bread of Life, having given yourself for us. Sustain us and encourage us in our service. These things we ask in Jesus' Name. AMEN

Words of Assurance

Even though we turn our backs on God, God is ready to forgive and heal our spirits. God's love never fails, and we can rejoice in the power of that eternal love. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are healed and forgiven. AMEN.

Read Psalm 111

Praise the LORD.^[b]

I will extol the LORD with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

² Great are the works of the LORD;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.

³ Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.

⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
giving them the lands of other nations.

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

⁸ They are established for ever and ever,
enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.

⁹ He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever—
holy and awesome is his name.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.

Prayers of the People:

We like directions, Lord. We want an owner's manual; a guidebook; a how-to guide for our faith. Rules and regulations, time constraints seem to dominate our lives and we forget the most basic understanding for our faith; that is our relationship to God through you. God has drawn us here this day, to be healed, to listen, to be encouraged in our service to God's world. We have lifted up names of dear ones who struggle with a host of issues and situations over which we feel powerless. Remind us again that your power is sufficient for their needs. They are all in your loving care. Help us to place our trust and confidence in you. Let us feast on the Bread of Life who has given to us the best example of what it means to truly serve you and witness to your love. Encourage us to serve you more fully. For we ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is The kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Lesson: 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

¹⁰ Then David rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. ¹¹ He had reigned forty years over Israel—seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. ¹² So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.

³ Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

⁶ Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

⁷ “Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning

heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³ Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴ And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 5:15-20

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Read the Gospel Lesson: John 6:51-58

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

⁵² Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

⁵³ Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

Bible:

Basic

Instructions

Before

Leaving

Earth

Message

In our society many people want to live the good life. They want to have a full life. Today, God is reminding us there is more to this life on earth than just a good life or a full life. There is the wise life. We are privileged once again to gather together today to look at God's how to manual, how to live the wise life. In our day and age and society there are lots of how to manuals: how to eat the right food, how to stay healthy, how to fix and repair just about anything. Today we again turn to the Bible (*look above the beginning of the message.*) Our Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth, the only perfect how to manual on how to live wisely.

Today's scriptures deal explicitly with wisdom and the benefits of wise behavior. In 1 Kings, Solomon inherits the throne from his father, David, and instead of asking God for riches, success in battle, or long life, Solomon asks God for the understanding and wisdom to lead God's people. The psalmist advises that wisdom begins with awe and reverence for God, remember: "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" in verse 10. Paul advocates wisdom and being filled with the Holy Spirit, and warns against foolish behavior, drunkenness, and depravity. In John, Jesus makes clear the wisdom of partaking of his body and blood to attain eternal life.

Solomon's prayer shows a preoccupation with faithfulness, obedience and fellowship with God. I would like to take a look at his prayer. The first thing that came to my mind while reading the scripture from 1 Kings was that it is a prayer of praise. Life is lived to the fullest when we remember God is in charge, Solomon had not lost sight of this yet. Our praise reaches God's heart as we reach out in

availability to Him. True praise goes to God for who He is, not because of what He gives us materially. He must be the object of our adoration, reverence and awe. Praise glorifies God. Richard Lee once said, “Oh, for a heart that is fixed on God, no matter what happens. Oh for a devotion to Him that is steadfast, for lips that will praise His unchanging love and faithfulness, though the entire world crumbles around our feet. This is the praise that pleases the Father and brings glory to His name.” This is what Solomon’s praise was to God.

His prayer was also a prayer of submission. Honest submission understands where life and power originate. This prayer waits on God. Solomon solicits God’s power and submits to it. When we submit to God for all of life, it is to avoid a head-on collision with God’s will for our lives. We need to remember that submission is what puts God’s plan in charge of our lives.

Submission is the secret power.

Submission is the source of praise.

Submission is the stream of purpose.

Submission is the satisfaction of planning with God in the lead.

It is said that life holds nothing within it which Christ has not conquered and Solomon would have understood that perfectly. His prayer was also a prayer of concern. Solomon wanted a listening heart to hear God speak. He wanted to be able to hear God, so he would have the wisdom to lead. This demonstrates a compassion and concern for the people he ruled. For wisdom knows the difference between compassion and pity. Finally his prayer was a prayer that God answers. The miracle of this prayer rests on God. He answered the king in a way that far exceeded Solomon’s hopes or dreams. God surpasses the minimal heart requests and gives him that for which he does not ask—riches and honor. When we submit ourselves in faith and obedience, God will provide blessings for us beyond anything we anticipate, too.

The apostle Paul gives us some instructions for living the Christian life. We should read carefully and follow the directions completely. There are three clear directives in this passage to remember.

1. Walk Wisely
2. Understand the Will of the Lord
3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit

Man has two great spiritual needs. They are the forgiveness of sin that reconciles us to God and the ability to lead a victorious life that glorifies God. God met our need for forgiveness by sending His only begotten Son into the world to die for our sins on Calvary. His forgiveness is available to everyone who truly admits his or her sin and turns to God in repentance believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God also met our need to live a victorious life by giving us His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Although the Spirit, which is the Spirit of grace, is present in every believer He is far too gracious to impose Himself on the believer or force Himself into any area of the person's personality where the Spirit is not welcome. The Holy Spirit will control and direct the believer only to the extent to which that person voluntarily yields and accepts His control and direction.

We are to be always thankful that Christ through His sacrifice has revealed to us the wisdom of God. His sacrifice has led to the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit who enables the believer to understand God's revelations and live according to God's revealed will. It is unwise for us to focus on what can be seen and relying on our own wisdom. The wise way is to focus on God and rely on His wisdom. It is important to know and do the will of God in obedience to the Holy Spirit. The Christian life or walk demands a reliance on the Holy Spirit for each step we take. For even in our prayers the Spirit should be guiding us so our prayers will be according to God's will as Jesus taught us when He taught us the Lord's Prayer. The wisest thing in life is to know and do the will of God. We must remember that a believer, who does not set aside time daily to study and meditate on God's word along with taking time to listen to what God is saying, is not living wisely and cannot sustain a Spirit-filled life.

The presence of the Holy Spirit will always result in thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a celebration and a boasting in the Lord and the Spirit-filled believer has a song in their heart even when going through extremely difficult circumstances. For the believer knows they are not alone and God's love is surrounding them. When filled with the spirit we will always have something to be thankful for and circumstances cannot rob us of our joy. We need to offer praise and thanksgiving in both the good times and the bad times. We need to do this when everything is fine and when everything is going wrong.

God wants us to sustain a spirit filled life by partaking of the Holy Communion. God wants us to be always reminded of His presence and the Eucharist is a reminder and memorial of Jesus's perfect life on earth and of His death on the cross. It is a means of grace to receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. Christ died to provide forgiveness, give us victory over sin and strength to live a new life. The Eucharist is a touching memorial that should fill our hearts with gratitude as we partake of it with other believers. It is a participation in spiritual realities. It is having a fellowship with a living Savior and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as our hearts reach out in faith. It is the way Christians express their unity with each other and their mutual loyalty to and love for Jesus Christ. We need to hear the Word and to fellowship with Jesus in order to receive peace, insight and encouragement. The Eucharist is a family meal, and the Lord of the family desires that His children love one another and care for one another. It is impossible for a true Christian to get closer to the Lord while at the same time remain separated from his fellow believers, for whom Christ also died. The Christian life is a Spirit-filled life. It would be impossible to be a Christian let alone to live and grow as a Christian without being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom belongs to our God and God grants us wisdom. Understanding belongs to our God and God grants us understanding. Life belongs to our God and God grants us life. Amen.

Benediction:

Filled to the brim with the goodness of God; the nourishment of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, and the power of the Holy Spirit, go now in peace to serve God in all that you think, do and say. God's peace will always be with you. AMEN.