

9/26/2010

**THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Psalm 8**

Lay Minister: 1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**People: You have set your glory above the heavens.**

Lay Minister: 2 From the lips of children and infants

**People: you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.**

Lay Minister: 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

**People: 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?**

Lay Minister: 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

**People: 6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.**

Lay Minister: 9 O LORD, our Lord,

**People: how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

Lay Minister: We begin our work, called by the care and love of the majestic and Almighty God.

**People: We begin in the name of God the Father, and in the name of God the Son, and in the name of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O Lord, guide us by your Holy Spirit in faith that finds treasure in you and your kingdom, and sees the things of this world only as tools and gifts to serve you. We come to you in prayer through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Amos 6:1-7**

*(Amos warns Israel of God's Judgment because of their rebellion.)*

1 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! 2 Go to Calneh and look at it; go from there to great Hamath, and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours?

3 You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror. 4 You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. 5 You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. 6 You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. 7 Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

**THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 Timothy 6:6-19**

*(Paul urges Timothy to fight the good fight of faith and resist making money his god.)*

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

**9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith**

**and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called** when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14 to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which God will bring about in his own time-- God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

#### **THE GOSPEL LESSON**      Luke 16:19-31

*(Jesus teaches a lesson with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.)*

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' 27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

#### **THE SERMON**

#### **“Worshiping the Creator, not His Creation”**

**1 Timothy 6**

Thank you! Thank you for the privilege of serving you and serving God. Together we have faced experienced births and baptisms, deaths and funerals. We have experienced weddings and confirmations. We have faced trials, and sought to follow the call of God. All of this was done pursuing God in faith, seeking to treat treating others in love, and seeking God’s guidance and will. Thank you for letting me bring God into the very personal times of your life. Thank you, we have experienced the adventure of what life is really about!

Yet, sometimes we are distracted. People worry about money and possessions. People get their feelings hurt and carry a grudge. People, even God’s people, get wrapped up in their own

dreams, and forget the one who has given them life. Today's Epistle lesson from 1 Timothy 6 gives us a warning about these distractions. **"9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."** America is a very wealthy country, and in many ways has turned away from God as we pursue wealth. Unfortunately, even God's people who are Americans can get distracted by pursuing wealth, and turn from God.

In his devotion yesterday Ken Klaus told a story. He was at a retirement party and the thought came to him, "No one at their retirement ever says, 'I should have worked harder, and longer hours.' Everyone says, 'I should have spent more time with my wife and my kids.'" Klaus, said, "Put first things first." That also reflects the positive encouragement God gives in today's epistle, **11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. . . .** In other words, don't get distracted by possessions and concerns of this world, but pursue the important things. In other words, *WORSHIP THE CREATOR, NOT THE CREATION!* That is God's call to us today in all our readings, but especially bluntly in the letter to Timothy.

If you read my e-mail this week you heard me write of how beautiful it was outdoors this week. The drive home from hunting was just gorgeous. The pond where we hunt was clothed in the beauty of God. But the most spectacular day seems to have been Wednesday. At Long Lake, as I wrote, "the sun was warm, the breeze was cool, the mountains were capped in new white snow, and the hills covered with the golden leaves of birch trees in the fall." It was gorgeous. It would be easy to concentrate on the details of the beauty of God's creation, and perhaps forget the source of beauty, the Creator. But, the beauty of the day pointed to the wisdom and love of the one who created the world, and the day I was experiencing. God warns us, **Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."** But, God also gives us direction for living as His child. **pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called**

Real life is experienced, the important things in life are received when we worship our Creator and Savior, and when we accept the beauty of life as a gift that points us to Him.

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**"Time Spent"**September 26, 2010

*(Jesus said) "But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33* A month ago or so, I went to a retirement dinner for an old friend. Between the salad and the main course, the thought occurred to me that I had never heard any retiree say, "If I had to live my life over, I think I'd stay later at work and keep on going until I drop." On the contrary, most of the time people say, "If I had to do it over, I'd spend more time with my family. I'd get to know my kids better. I'd court my spouse more." It's a shame that this kind of wisdom seems to come only with age. All too often those who are younger end up putting the really important things to the side as they chase after that which is less significant. Well, maybe "less significant" is too strong. After all, we do have to work, and we have to eat, and we need to provide shelter for ourselves and those entrusted to our care. But if I could give you a thought for today, it would be to keep first things first in your lives. That is what Jesus did. He never forgot, not for a moment, that His job here on earth was saving souls from hell. Because of His commitment to the important, we are saved. This is why I encourage you to hold fast and first to that which is foremost: our Lord, our family, and our country. If we do that, then everything else will fall into place. If we do that, it seems to me we may not have many regrets when it comes time for *our* retirement party. *From a devotion originally written for "By the Way"* **THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord and Savior, I give thanks that You kept doing the Father's will, that You kept on the path leading to salvation. Now may I, as best as I am able, live my life to glorify You and witness to others. In Your Name. Amen.