

4/10/2011

**THE PSALM ANT THE CALL TO WORSHIP**                      **Psalm 111**

Lay Minister: 1 Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

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

Lay Minister: 3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds,

**People:**        **and his righteousness endures forever.**

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

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

Lay Minister: 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;

**People:**        **all his precepts are trustworthy. 8 They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.**

Lay Minister: 9 He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—

**People:**        **holy and awesome is his name.**

Lay Minister: 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;

**People:**        **all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.**

Lay Minister: We begin our worship in the Lord God who is faithful and just, trustworthy, steadfast, and upright.

**People:**        **We begin our worship, called to grace by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Lay Minister: Teach us, O Lord, to be faithful, just, trustworthy, and loving to others.

**People:**        **We trust your Help, O Lord, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**    Almighty and Everlasting God, you loved us eternally through the sacrifice of your Son.    Help us by your forgiving love to be willing to sacrifice to love others in your name.    Give us your grace not only to help others, but to let them help us, and thus serve You; We ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.    Amen.

**THE EPISTLE LESSON**    Romans 12:9-16 a

*(Through Paul, God calls for and describes Christian love for others.)*

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.** 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony

with one another..

### **THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 25:31-46,

*(Jesus says that faith will show in love for others.)*

**31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.**

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'** 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'**

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

### **THE SERMON HYMN**

#### **“Servant Song”**

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Brother, let me be your servant.<br/>me be as Christ to you.<br/>might have the grace<br/>servant, too.</b>      | <b>2. We are pilgrims on a journey.Let<br/>We are brothers on the road.Pray that I<br/>We are here to help each otherTo let you be my<br/>Walk the mile and bear the load.</b>                             |
| <b>3. I will hold the Christ-light for you<br/>the night time of your fear.<br/>hand out to you;<br/>long to hear.</b> | <b>4. I will weep when you are weeping.In the<br/>When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.I will hold my<br/>I will share your joy and sorrowSpeak the peace you<br/>Till we've seen this journey through.</b> |
| <b>5. When we sing to God in heaven,<br/>such harmonyBorn of all we've known together</b>                              | <b>6. (Repeat Verse #1)We shall find<br/>Of Christ's love and agony.</b>                                                                                                                                   |

### **THE SERMON “The Sacrifice of Love - Helping those in Need”**





Please look at this picture with me. What is the center of the picture and the area where light attracts your attention? It is a king, dressed in gold armor, on the horse at the middle of the picture. Not only does he draw our attention, but I count 1-6 ladies who seem to be falling before this man of good looks and power, offering him gifts. Of the gold armor he wears, the piece of gold that really sticks out is the **crown**. This man is obviously the king. But, while everyone is looking at the king he is looking elsewhere, almost with a look of wonder on his face. If you follow his eyes he is looking at a dark figure on a cross with . . . another crown. While everyone looks at the king in his golden crown, the king looks at another king, naked and suffering, wearing a costlier crown.

This picture is called "Two Crowns, by Sir Frank Dicksee." And while it is easy to be attracted to the gold in the center, the real message is the crown on the Savior. The king's eyes point to Jesus.

My job as pastor is . . . to point you to Jesus, the Lord and king with the golden crown yes, but also and especially the Savior, the one on the cross with the crown of thorns. How often do we get distracted by the gold, power, and excitement of the world, and miss the more costly crown.

Look with me please at today's lesson. Beginning with verse 31 we are told, **31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.** Jesus is the Son of Man. He is the king on the throne. He is the judge of the sheep and the goats. Jesus is calling everyone to love others, and care for those in need, the hungry, thirsty, ill, and imprisoned. But, in the parable there are sheep and goats. There is a whole group who ignored that call. They missed the fact that this king would also be their judge. They ignored His kingship. It is still common to miss Jesus' kingship today. How many people don't want any ruler in their lives but themselves? How many don't want to have to worry about others, just themselves? Haven't these people forgotten that Jesus really is king, if they ever knew it? Have we ever said, "*No one can tell me what to do or how to live. No one is my king.*" Jesus IS KING.

But, my job is to point you to Jesus. There is another way in which people miss Jesus, other than just rejecting him. If I only point to Jesus as Lord and as judge, I would be like the people looking at the king in gold, and missing the greater king on the cross. While in Jesus' parable he come in power as judge, do you hear who He also is? He is the one who came to the sheep and the goats being hungry, and thirsty, and naked, and ill, and in prison. Jesus the all powerful king, amazingly took on poverty and suffering for those gathered before him to be judged. In fact, He did not just do this for those who heard His call, denied themselves, and helped others. He also became hungry , thirsty, naked, imprisoned even for the goats, even for those who would not help others.

Do you see how we can be distracted. We can see Jesus the judge, and forget Jesus the Savior. But, my job is to point you to Jesus. And, Jesus is not only the powerful creator, king, and judge, He is also the one whose heart goes out to ALL his people so that the king is willing to

become poor and suffer for them. What love must cause the king to suffer in this way. When we see Jesus the savior, it is like the king who looks past the golden crown to see the love of the crown of thorns. Do you see who Jesus is, and what He does and how much He loves you?

Today we continue our series on the sacrifice of love. Jesus calls us in today's lesson beginning in verse **35, For I was hungry . . . , I was thirsty . . . , I was a stranger . . . , 36 I needed clothes . . . , I was sick . . . , I was in prison . . .** . And in verse 40 Jesus tells us, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.** It may cost us to help the needy, but if Jesus the king was hungry and naked and imprisoned for us, don't we want to return His love? If Jesus did that for us, don't we want to sacrifice to love others?

Today is also Stephen Ministry commissioning Sunday. I am thankful that these women and this man who are willing to give of their time, and give of their faith, and give of their resources to Jesus to serve Him and help others. This love is done confidentially and you don't hear about it. But, I encourage you to pray for them so they can help others in Jesus name, and in the name of St. John and in your name.

But, let's look at this picture again. Do you see what Jesus had to do to love the king? What do you think the king would have to do to serve and love His people? He will probably have to sacrifice and suffer too. Let's go back to the parable. Jesus loved others by being hungry, and naked, by suffering and dying. Sometimes we suffer so we can love others. Let me tell you that we are all called to serve Jesus by loving others in need. But, one of the troubles we have is that **sometimes, while people want to help others, and while people may be in some kind of trial or trouble, they don't necessarily want someone else to help or serve them.** *There are many who love to help others, but never want to be helped.* So, how can we serve Jesus in our midst, if people don't allow themselves to be helped? We serve Jesus and others not only by helping the needy, but also by allowing others to help us when we are needy.

On January 6 this year it was the first Thursday of January. Stephen Ministry meets the first and third Thursday of each month for supervision and continuing education, and I was the continuing education. I was going to present a power point class I had earlier received and studied and prepared and presented to a parish nursing class. I was in the church and got our screen set up and my computer set up and working. I went back to the office and my phone rang. It was 5:30, an hour before Stephen Ministry, my sister and dad were rushing back to the hospital. My mom had stopped breathing and was being put on a ventilator. At 6:30 I did not want to deal with that, or really talk about it. I just wanted to make my presentation and go home and figure out what to do. And I made the presentation. After all my whole life and job has been helping others. I could do this myself. Do you see how I was denying others the opportunity to care the hurting one in their midst, to care for Jesus? Thankfully, they loved me and helped me anyway. They put their hands on me and prayed for me. They helped me with my ticket problems and gave me air miles. They continued to pray for me. And as I finally allowed this to happen, the Stephen Ministers got to serve Jesus, by serving me, the one who was hurting.

Look at Jesus. Do you see how much he loves you to go to the cross. He calls you to sacrifice

to love others. Sometimes that even means letting others help you.