

5/29/11

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 19

Lay Minister: 1 The heavens declare the glory of God;

People: the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Lay Minister: 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

People: 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Lay Minister: In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, 5 which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

People: 6 It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

Lay Minister: 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.

People: The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Lay Minister: 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.

People: The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Lay Minister: 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

People: 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Lay Minister: 12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

People: 13 Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

Lay Minister: 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

People: be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Lay Minister: We begin our worship seeking the guidance of the Lord, whose law is perfect, whose statutes are trustworthy, whose precepts are right, whose commands are radiant.

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.

Pastor: He is Risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!!

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O God, You are the giver of all that is good. Inspire us so that we may not only think those things that are right, but in response to your love we also obey Your commands. We pray 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 1 Peter 3:13-22

(We are called to be prepared to give a defense for the hope in us.)

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

17 It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-- with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 14:15-21

(Jesus calls us to obedience and promises the Holy Spirit.)

15 **"If you love me, you will obey what I command.** 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- 17 **the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But **you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.** 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. **Because I live, you also will live.** 20 **On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.** 21 **Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."**

INTRO - As I was leaving the wedding last night my wife warned me, "You'd better buckle your seat belt. Tickets are being given." Actually, I do buckle my seat belt, but not always right away. However, keeping the law has benefits, and one of those is we stay out of trouble.

- I. Jesus talks on a bigger scale today than just traffic laws.
 - A. He tells his disciples, 15 **"If you love me, you will obey what I command.**
 1. God has given us His law. Basically, we are to love God and love others.
 2. Jesus has taught us more about God's law.
 3. He calls us not just to know His law exists, but to actually follow what He says.
 - B. And, there are blessings when we do keep God's law
 1. Yes, we stay out of trouble. If a person obeys God's law they stay away from the anger of others that comes when we hurt them.
 2. But, there are blessings in keeping God's law, and blessings in following Jesus' teaching.
 - A. God created us. He knows how we are made.
 - B. God has given us His law for our good.
 - C. When we keep His law we are blessed, blessed with better relationships with others, blessed with a better relationship with our Lord, blessed with a better life.
- II. But, in all honesty, who has not struggled with obedience? We all have.
 - A. Paul said in Romans 7:19 **For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing.**
 - B. Somehow there is a pride in each of us that we want to do our own thing, and don't like it when it seems someone else is telling us what to do, even if they are trying to help us and give us directions for our own good. We all struggle.
- III. Look again at this verse
 - A. Jesus does not say, if you keep my commandments you love me, but, 15 **"If you love me, you will obey what I command.**
 1. The best way to do a difficult task is to have our heart into it.
 2. The best way to have our sinful and rebellious hearts into obedience is to change them, so we love God rather than loving ourselves.
 - B. Now, do you hear what Jesus said He was doing for us.
 1. In verses 16 and 17, Jesus says he is sending the Holy Spirit to help us, **16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth.**
 2. Jesus also tells us He is with us. In verse 18 we are told, **18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**
 3. Finally in verse 19, Jesus tells us of his victory over sin and death that becomes ours. **Because I live, you also will live.**
 - C. Remember, Jesus is loving failed sinners like this. Our love follows His love.

CONCLUSION - Yesterday I was at a wedding with many of you. In wedding tradition the groom gives the bride a DIAMOND ring, because diamonds last. In our lesson for today, speaking to disciples who had failed him and would fail him again, Jesus promises His eternal help. He gives the Spirit, who will be with them and us FOREVER. Jesus says he will be with us and he does not leave us alone. Finally, because Jesus lives, we live, we have eternal life.

Our verse says, **"If you love me, you will obey what I command.** But, we don't love Jesus first, he has loved us, eternally. The love of Jesus changes our hearts so we love him, and when we love him we want to obey him, not just because it is good for us, but also because we are responding to Jesus' love for us.