

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

December 27, 2015

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

Christ is Transcendent

Psalm 89:5-8a: "And the heavens will praise Thy wonders, O Lord; Thy faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies is comparable to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the Lord, a God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all those who are around Him? O Lord God of hosts, who is like Thee, O mighty Lord?"

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross Ps. 50:1-3a

+We Adore Him

Hymn #157, "None Other Lamb"

We Confess Our Sin

O Lord, Your eyes are on all our ways; our ways are not hidden from You, nor is our sin concealed from Your eyes. We acknowledge before You that we have not always lived according to Your ways. We have not completely put You first: in terms of our trust, our talents, and our time. Nor have we put others ahead of ourselves: in terms of commitment to family, love, purity, property, truth, contentment. For our failures and sins- both conscious and unconscious, we humbly ask for forgiveness. Let Your grace reign through righteousness in our lives, as Your Spirit continues to rebuild us in Your image. We thank You for the forgiveness you so richly impart- through Jesus Christ. Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #100, "Holy, Holy, Holy"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication Mt. 6:19-21

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #449, "We Rest On Thee"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship

Is. 12:3

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #618, "His Eye Is On The Sparrow"

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

When God's People Are Your Treasure, Pt. 4

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Study Notes for December 27, 2015

I. Introduction: The Mind of Christ, Phil. 2:5-7a...

II. When God's People Are Your Treasure, 1 Thes. 3:1-13.

E. The Crisis, v. 5.

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| A. The Sacrifice Willingly Endured, v. 1. |
| B. The Qualified Minister, v. 2a. |
| C. The Ministry, vv. 2b, 5b, 8b. |
| D. The Concern, vv. 3-4. |

This is the second time Paul expressed the emotional/spiritual struggle he currently was in. Both in v. 1 and here he says the same thing- except here he is speaking on behalf of himself...

In fact, the Greek construction in this verse indicates that Paul believed that the Thessalonians most likely had already begun to defect. Notice...

a. The statement, "...for fear that the tempter might have tempted you" is in the Indicative Mood...

b. And yet consider final statement, "...and our labor should be in vain" is in the Subjunctive Mood...

1. In the Kingdom of God/in Scripture, "Fear" is a Big Deal...

a. We serve a Being who is Transcendent- and so is above/beyond this world. Accordingly, the natural response of mortal man before the Lord is one of dread (Ex. 20:18; 34:8; Dan. 8:15b, 17; Ezk. 1:28b; Mk. 4:41; Lk. 5:8; Rev. 1:17a)...

John Calvin wrote, "Hence that dread and amazement with which, as Scripture uniformly relates, holy men were struck and overwhelmed whenever they beheld the presence of God... Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God." <i>(Institutes of the Christian Religion, John T. McNeil edition, pp. 38-39)</i>

R. C. Sproul wrote of this, "At that moment Peter realized that he was in the presence of the Holy Incarnate. He was desperately uncomfortable. His initial response was one of worship, he fell to his knees before Christ. Instead of saying something like, 'Lord, I adore thee, I magnify thee,' he said, 'Please go away. Please leave. I can't stand it.'... We notice that Jesus did not lecture Peter about his sins. There was no rebuke, no word of judgment. All Jesus did was to show Peter how to catch fish. But when the holy is manifest, no words are needed to express it. Peter got a message that was impossible to miss. The transcendent standard of all righteousness and all purity blazed before his eyes. Like Isaiah before him, Peter was undone." <i>(The Holiness of God, p. 86)</i>
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b. Coordinate with this therefore in Scripture is the call for those in Christ NOT to fear anything or anyone in this earth (cf. Josh. 1:9; Mt. 10:28a; Ps. 27:1; Is. 43:1b-3a)...

c. Accordingly as children of God who have been called by God's name with whom the Lord walks at all times, we are called to live our lives subject NOT to the whim and will of man, BUT in the reverence of the Lord (cf. Deut. 10:12a; Mt. 10:28b; 2 Cor. 7:1)...

*Point

(1) As children of the living God, we are to fear no man, no tragedy, no cataclysmic force! Our God reigns! As we have "...entrusted our souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (1 Pet. 4:19a) we therefore live in the reverence and in awe of God! AND SO IT WAS WITH PAUL (Gal. 2:6; Acts 23:3)...

(2) That is why when we read in the text before us that Paul acted out of "fear," we conclude EITHER that he was in sin OR that there was a weighty, legitimate concern which was driving him. Obviously in this context, it was the latter!

2. The “Weighty Concern” that Moved Paul to Fear...

V. 5a: “Therefore when we could endure it no longer...”: so what was it that Paul considered a sinking ship? What was it that caused Paul’s roof to leak? What is it that Paul could NOT endure?...

...based on our text, it was when the people of God were left to face persecution alone! It was when they were bereft of pastoral care and yet had a faith that was at risk! It was vulnerable Christians subject to the temptations and devices of Satan!...

V. 5c: “...for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain”- the idea behind “tempted” in Scripture is that of a test. For example...

V. 5b: “For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith...”- we’ve seen from the OT that Satan’s objective in his attack always revolves around the issue of “faith”! We learn the same thing from the NT as well. Notice...

1. Satan’s first assault against mankind is to prevent people from believing, 2 Cor. 4:4 (cf. also Mt. 13:19)...
2. Now if Satan cannot prevent the response of faith, his second tactic is to destroy someone’s initial interest in the gospel, Mt. 13:20-21...
3. Finally, if he cannot stop a person from embracing the gospel or rejecting it after it was embraced, Satan strives to weaken the faith of those who believe, 2 Cor. 11:3 (cf. also Mt. 13:22)...

3. A “Crisis” Defined

a. What is it that Paul would call A Crisis? From this passage it should be clear...

1. A crisis is when the child of God’s walk was compromised, when their faith was at risk of failing, when their affection for Christ was diverted, when their obligation to the Almighty went unfulfilled, or when their calling and service of the Lord was threatened!
2. This just wasn’t Paul’s standard... it is the standard found in Scripture (Ezk. 34:2-6; Heb. 10:35-36, 39)...

b. Accordingly, that which Constitutes a “Crisis” in God’s Kingdom...

1. **It will necessarily be something that God considers to be a crisis.**
2. **A crisis is not determined by how something makes us feel.**
 - a. Loss and deprivation is part and parcel of this state of sin and misery and ought to be grieved (Rom. 12:15; 1 Thes. 4:13; Is. 53:3b; Jn. 11:33-35)!...
 - b. Yet we must see that the presence of grief- serious pain- does NOT make something a Crisis from the perspective of the Kingdom of God (cf. Ps. 149:4; Lk. 23:43; Prov. 15:15)...
3. **A Crisis from the perspective of the Kingdom of God is nothing less than a clear and present danger when it comes a person’s soul!**

*Where We Live

1. If this morning finds you struggling with a burden that has moved you to tears and anguish of heart and yet would not be deemed a Crisis by this morning’s definition, your pain is NOT minimized NOR marginalized!...
2. And so, behold the transformation you can expect as you mature as a Christian...