

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

March 5, 2017

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 Humble

Isaiah 53:2-3: "For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross Ps. 34:1-3

+We Adore Him

Hymn #169, "My Heart Doth Overflow" *f. Ps.45:1-10*

We Confess Our Sin

We confess to You, Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that we have grievously sinned in thought, word, and deed. Forgive us through Christ Jesus. Make us truly contrite. Fill us with holy fear.

We ask You to restore our souls in Jesus Christ, that we may be merciful and kind, even as You are. Let your forgiveness make us willing to forgive, all wrong which we have suffered. Give us the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, who dwelt among men, and yet was meek and lowly of heart.

Let the same mind be in us, which was also in Him. Grant that our hearts may be tender to all need, and our hands give freely for Your sake. That being rooted and grounded, in the mystery of the Son of God, being made flesh for us, we may receive power to overcome the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #308, "Jesus Paid It All"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication Mt. 18:1-4

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #574, "Christian, Dost Thou See Them"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship Mt. 11:28-30

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #580, "Lead On, O King Eternal"

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.

The Forging of a Servant of God, Pt. 3b
Ezekiel 1-4
March 5, 2017

I. Introduction: Calling vs. Commissioning

- A. Calling and Commissioning in the Military

- B. Calling and Commissioning in the Kingdom of God

II. The Forging of a Servant of God, Ezk. 1-4.

- A. His Audience, Ezk. 1:4-28; 2:6; 3:22-23.
- B. His Strength, Ezk. 2:1-2, 8-10; 3:22-24.

C. His Commission, Ezk. 2:3-4, 7; 3:16-21.

1. Service in the Kingdom of God means Ministering to Sinners, Ezk. 2:3-4.

2. Service in the Kingdom of God Includes the Call NOT to Fear Man, Ezk. 2:6.

3. Service in the Kingdom of God Involves the Exercise of our Gifts without a View to the Results, Ezk. 2:7.

The Calling of a Prophet

His Ministry

His Ministry Unqualified, "whether they listen or not..."

Lamar Cooper wrote, "The measure of success in God's work is not always in terms of the amount and frequency of visible response. Success is to be measured in terms of our obedience to the words, commands, and will of God regardless of the visible results." (*Ezekiel*, NAC, p. 77)

The Calling Behind All Ministry, 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10!

It is quite healthy and natural to have an "otherness" when it comes to ministry in the Kingdom of God...

Yet what happens when our good intentions and efforts are NOT received with grace (which, as we have seen, they will not)?...

All of this ignores Our Commission! Our ministry is to be done "as unto the Lord" (Col. 3:23-24)!

Do you remember Paul's exhortation inspired by the Roman Triumph (2 Cor. 2:14-15)?

When Rome sought to honor a victorious General, the Senate authorized a Triumph...

This is how it worked...

In this context therefore what would the heavy scent emanating from the priest's urns represent to the soldiers? To the defeated army, the scent would be the scent of death. To the victorious army, it would be the scent of life, victory, and celebration!

If that is all that we get from this passage, we've missed an important statement in the verse. Notice v. 15... OUR service in Christ is a fragrant aroma to whom?

John Calvin put it this way, "We must bear in mind, then, this principle: when God wishes to stir us up to obedience, he does not always promise a happy result of our labour: but sometimes he so puts our obedience to the test, that he wishes us to be content with his command, even if our labour should be deemed ridiculous before men... God sometimes so wishes his servants to acquiesce in his government, that they should labour even without any hope of fruit: and this must be diligently marked. For as often as we are called upon by God before we apply ourselves to our work, these thoughts come into the mind: 'What will be the result of this?' and 'What shall I obtain by my labour?' And, then, when the event does not turn out according to our wish, we despond in our minds... Let us learn to leave the event in the hand of God when he enjoins anything upon us; and although the whole world should deride us, and despair itself should render us inactive, yet let us be of good cheer and strive to the utmost, because it ought to suffice us that our obedience is pleasing to God." (*Commentary on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, pp. 111-112)

Christ embodied this in His life!

Christ lived a perfect life... which means He executed His ministry flawlessly...

What happened? What did Christ have to show after 3 years of ministry? Cf. Is. 49:4; 1 Pet. 2:21-23...

Ministry is ever and always offered before the Lord and to the Lord unto the Lord's honor and glory. If God's people are benefited as a result, praise God! But our service- all service- is executed as unto the Lord! In light of this, how did Christ glorify God in His ministry? What primarily was He was after? Cf. Jn. 17:4!

***Where We Live**

1. This is not a call for you to be a bull in a china shop or never to evaluate your work (we are sinners; we could always do better)! This however is a call for you and me to (a) take our focus off of the fruit when it comes to our labors in Christ's Kingdom and (b) place it simply on being faithful to the Lord!
2. So where does evaluation/feedback begin when it comes to our ministry? Where ought it to end?
3. How do we cultivate a perspective which in all things enables us to fulfill our ministry "unto the Lord"?