

## *Harvest at Home*

(things to think about, discuss with others, and act upon, in response to what we hear in worship)

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### *Harvest at Home, Morning Call to Worship, Hebrews 7:22-25*

Main ideas:

- 1) Jesus Christ is the church's single Great Priest.
- 2) God's approval of Jesus and power in Jesus are both shown by His resurrection, which guarantees that He will finally and totally save absolutely everyone who trusts in Him.
- 3) Jesus uses His resurrection life to continuously be our Go-between (Mediator) with God.
- 4) Jesus' work as our Go-between never stops, and it never will.

Questions for Application:

- 1) Do you trust in Jesus alone to be your go-between with God? (If so, the rest of these questions are for you)
- 2) Into what situations right now do you need to bring the truth of Jesus' resurrection as you face worry, or fear, or sadness?
- 3) Who are the people that you are tempted to treat as a go-between for you with God?
- 4) What does Jesus' activity now and forever tell you about His attitude toward you? What does God's giving His Son to do this for you tell you about His attitude toward you? In what situations are you tempted to forget—or even contradict!—the truths about God's love?
- 5) What do you think are some appropriate responses to God and Jesus for this gift and work of love?

Notes:

## *Harvest at Home, Morning Serial Reading, Mark 11:27-12:27*

Main ideas:

- 1) God sent His Son, Jesus, to get the "fruit" of people who have been saved and changed by Him.
- 2) God planned that Jesus would die to accomplish this, and even on earth Jesus was in complete control as He went to His death.
- 3) The resurrection is a true, future event.
- 4) Even now, believers who die still live.
- 5) The blessing that we receive in the resurrection is far better even than the blessing of marriage.

Questions for Application:

- 1) Is there any way in which you respond to Jesus as Someone to be resisted?
- 2) With what is Jesus competing to be the cornerstone of your life? Does anything else feel like a foundation to you—is there anything or anyone who, if you were to lose them, you would feel like just giving up on life (Health? Job? Relationship? Hobby? Feeling good about yourself?)?
- 3) Into what seemingly out of control situations of your life do you need to bring the truth that Jesus is always in control?
- 4) Do you think of the resurrection just as an idea, or especially as a coming event?
- 5) Is there anything that you look forward to more than the resurrection?
- 6) With marriage, all other earthly relationships and tasks must take a backseat if you are to be faithful to your wife and enjoy her properly. But the resurrection supersedes even marriage! What relationships, work, or hobbies need to decrease if your delight in Jesus is going to increase enough that the resurrection would be your most-looked-forward-to event?

Notes:

Main ideas:

- 1) God initiates our encounters with Him.
- 2) God's most important appearance is Jesus.
- 3) God's appearances always come with God's Word.
- 4) God's Word gives us truth to rest in, commands to obey, and promises to look forward to.
- 5) God appears to us and speaks to us and does good to us for the sake of Jesus.

Questions for application:

- 1) Do you treat Lord's Day gatherings as an encounter with God that He has initiated?
  - a. What needs to change about how you prepare for the Lord's Day gatherings?
  - b. What needs to change about what you do during the service?
  - c. What things have you said or thought that might show that you think of these services more as things that we initiate and set the agenda for, rather than God initiating and setting the agenda?
- 2) What "appearings" (miracles? signs? something else?) from God are you tempted to think would be more helpful to you than the fact that Jesus Himself has come?
- 3) What (special messages that you 'sense' from Him? special encounters that you think are Him? man-made events such as retreats or conferences? intense feelings?) would you be tempted to think of as a "deeper experience" of Jesus than Word and sacrament?
- 4) Is your attitude toward preaching closer to "here we go again" and "I wonder when it'll be over" or "thank You, God!" and "I just can't get enough!"? Does the amount of time you spend thinking about God's Word from the sermons back that answer up?
- 5) Is your attitude toward the Bible closer to "I pretty much know what's in there, so no point in 'vain repetitions'" or "What an amazing gift to have this in my own language, and do have my own copy!"? Does the amount of time you spend reading and thinking about the Bible back that answer up?
- 6) Do you think of Bible truths (theology, doctrine, catechism) as that priceless stuff that God uses to save us and grow us? To answer that question better:
  - a. How much of your "free" time do you put into learning theology?
  - b. How much effort do you put into learning theology?
  - c. Does the idea of theology, do you feel gratitude, joy, and desire? Or is it closer to boredom, preference for something else, suspicion, or even irritation?
- 7) Do you think of God's commands as pleasant provisions and pleasant protections?
- 8) Do you look forward to the things that God has promised? Do you look forward to them with certainty? Do you look forward to them with joy? Do you look forward to them more than anything else?
- 9) Do you see Jesus as God's greatest truth, command, and promise?
- 10) Are Jesus' obedience and blood your only hope of the blessing of God?

*Harvest at Home, Evening Call to Worship, Psalm 147:15-20*

Main ideas:

- 1) Everything happens by the will and word of Yahweh.
- 2) Weather and seasons, in particular, show the power of Yahweh's word.
- 3) Therefore it is a great gift to have the statutes (what to do in particular situations) and judgments (what to think of particular situations) of the Word of Yahweh.
- 4) God has not given this Word to everyone but only to the people He has saved into special relationship with Himself.
- 5) Yahweh's power, Word, and salvation together call for us to give Him great praise.

Questions for application:

- 1) Is it ever right to complain about the weather? Do you ever complain about the weather? Do you ever do so in your heart?
- 2) Do you ever let your grief over and opposition to sin slip into *grumbling* about particular situations? Into what situation of yours right now do you need to bring the truth that God has ordained them and holds them together by His Word?
- 3) Do you ever let your grief over and opposition to sin slip into *fear or worry* about particular situations? Into what situation of yours right now do you need to bring the truth that God has ordained them and holds them together by His Word?
- 4) Do you read and hear Bible words in a way appropriate to their power and their value?
- 5) Do you consider having statutes and rules from God to be a very special part of the relationship into which He has saved you?
- 6) Are you grateful for and glad about God's statutes and rules? Do you praise Him for them?

Notes:

*Harvest at Home, Evening Serial Reading, Jeremiah 22:11-30*

Main ideas:

- 1) God's condemning judgments of us are fair.
- 2) Greatness is found in good character, not nice stuff or fun times.
- 3) Knowing God means treasuring Him above all, and truly treasuring Him will always lead to valuing people more than stuff or fun, and treating fairly those people who can give us nothing in return.
- 4) Knowing God and treasuring Him above all means letting His Word determine how to respond to our hearts and *not letting* our hearts determine how to respond to His Word.
- 5) We will never escape the justice of God simply by belonging to a special group like the line of David or the tribe of Judah (or the congregation of Harvest!). Each of us must individually belong to God in a way that will also show up in how we worship and how we live.

Questions for application:

- 1) What sins of yours do you treat as if God would be unfair to punish you for them? What sins are you comfortable with, not fighting against, or even making excuses and arguments for?
- 2) Do you think of your salvation as something that God owes to you in order for Him to be loving? Do you ever go a day or an hour without being amazed that God would save instead of punish you? Do you ever think about God's judgment without thinking, "I deserve that"?
- 3) When someone ruins your stuff, does your response come from concern for them or concern for your stuff?
- 4) When someone gets in the way of your fun, does your response come from concern for them or concern for your fun?
- 5) What things do you say to or about others that show you care more about stuff and fun than for people?
- 6) What do your answers to the last three questions tell you about how much your heart actually belongs to God?
- 7) When you read or hear God's Word, do you let it judge your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions?
- 8) Which has more "say" in what you do: God's Word or your feelings and desires?
- 9) Do you find your only safety in belonging to God through Jesus, and does the way you worship and the way you live show that you *do belong* to Jesus?

Notes:

Main ideas:

- 1) The Old Testament is just as valuable for understanding Jesus as the New Testament.
- 2) Christians don't get saved through doing; they get saved through believing.
- 3) God does all the saving in history.
- 4) God does all the saving in our hearts.
- 5) No one who believes in Jesus can ever perish.
- 6) Believers don't get a bare salvation from Jesus but the very riches of God.
- 7) Everyone who believes in Jesus will surely be saved.

Questions for application:

- 1) Do you think of the Old Testament as being about Jesus? Do you read the Old Testament as being about Jesus? Do you hear the Old Testament as being about Jesus? Do you respond to the Old Testament as being about Jesus?
- 2) Do you treat the Old Testament as being on the same level as the New Testament?
- 3) Do you think about and rejoice in Jesus' law-keeping?
- 4) Do you ever think about "doing better" as a way to make God happier with you?
- 5) When you face your failure to keep God's law, do you make excuses? Do you deal with it first by determining to try harder? Or does your heart run to hide in the truths of Jesus' obedient life on earth, Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross, and Jesus' powerful resurrection from the grave?
- 6) Is this heart condition shown (imperfectly, but truly) by a life and especially a mouth over which Jesus is King and Master?
- 7) If the answer to the last two questions is "yes," then you are a believer, and so...
  - a. Do you think of how God has done all of the work in Jesus' incarnation and resurrection as a pattern for how your own heart has come alive?
  - b. Are you ever tempted to think of yourself as better than others because of what *God has done* in you?
  - c. Are you ever tempted to doubt whether you are in God's favor, *even though God Himself* has done all the work of putting you there?
  - d. Are you ever tempted to doubt whether you will be saved on the last day, *even though God Himself* has done all the work of saving you from His own wrath?
- 8) Do you tell others about Jesus' salvation through His life, death, and resurrection?
- 9) Do you confess Jesus as your Lord? What needs to change in your life and speech before others for this confession to carry more weight?
- 10) In what ways have you grown in grace since you were converted (or perhaps, in the last year or last few years)? As you think about them, is your response closer to "look what I have done!" or to "look what God has done!"?
- 11) Are you as sure that those who have Jesus receive the riches of God, as you are sure that they are credited with Jesus' righteousness?