

Harvest at Home

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

Harvest at Home, **Morning Call to Worship, Hebrews 7:26-29**

Main ideas:

- 1) As the High Priest of Christian worship, Jesus is holy (completely-set-apart) and pure—He offers our worship with the very perfection of God.
- 2) Jesus leads our worship from “above the heavens”—He leads our worship with the very power of God.
- 3) Jesus leads our worship through His cross, which never loses its effectiveness—He never needs to offer another sacrifice
- 4) Jesus doesn’t just lead our worship as a man, but as God the Son, the God-man.
- 5) Jesus doesn’t lead our worship in weakness, but in eternal power.

Questions for Application:

- 1) Do you ever think about how it is Jesus who personally leads our worship services in heaven?
- 2) What do these verses say to you when you feel like our worship was more acceptable because of how well we did, or less acceptable because of how poorly we did?
- 3) What do these verses say to you when you feel like our worship was more effective because of how well we did, or less effective because of how poorly we did?
- 4) If how acceptable our worship is, and how powerful our worship is, come from Jesus’ leading it, does it make sense to measure our worship services by what we want out of worship?
- 5) If how acceptable our worship is, and how powerful our worship is, come from Jesus’ leading it, does it make sense to add to Scripture’s direction for worship things that we think would make it more acceptable or more powerful?
- 6) What is the *right* way to *feel* about Christian worship that is according to Bible instructions, if we know that this particular worship of Jesus’ church is actually offered by Jesus Himself?

Notes:

Harvest at Home, **Morning Serial Reading, Mark 12:28-13:2**

Main ideas:

- 1) Even understanding and agreeing with the heart of the Bible’s teaching about religion and salvation doesn’t save you, if you don’t realize that Jesus is God.
- 2) Our heart toward God is the most important part of all of our worship practices.
- 3) Our heart toward others is the most important part of how we relate with them.
- 4) Those things that impress men will be destroyed; but, those things that are significant with God will remain.

Questions for Application:

- 1) Do you look to Jesus first and foremost as God whom you must worship, God who will judge you, and God who alone can save you? Or, do you think of Him first as the great Rabbi who is teaching and training you to be great like He is?
- 2) Which would bother you more in worship: if you messed up a note in a song, or if you sing great but realize that you didn’t really mean what you sang? If the prayer went longer than you expected, or if there was a short prayer that you didn’t sincerely join your heart in? If someone saw you being distracted once during the sermon, or if you looked to everyone else like you were paying attention but God knew that your mind was mostly a million miles away?
- 3) Which would bother you more in a relationship: if you said and did the right thing but were treated as an enemy, or if you were received well but realized that what you really wanted was to be praised by others? If you encouraged someone to do something painful and it seems that they didn’t grow, or if you encouraged someone to do something painful and it seems that they didn’t give you credit? If you lost money because of a friend’s integrity, or if you gained money through a friend’s shady dealing?
- 4) Are you more impressed by a giant congregation where everyone looks righteous, or by a small congregation of people who obviously know that Jesus alone is their righteousness?
- 5) What is a specific way in which you have tried to impress others with yourself, instead of trying to show them how great Jesus is?

Notes:

Main ideas:

- 1) God's appearances always come with God's Word.
- 2) God's Word gives us truth to rest in.
- 3) God's Word gives us commands to obey. These commands always rest upon His truth.
- 4) God's Word gives us 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) Which way do you, personally, have greater need (we all need both) for thinking about God's active Word: (a) by having more comfort and confidence in the fact that it is God who is working in us with His Word; or, (b) by seeing that you are helpless *unless* God does this work in you with His Word?
- 2) What truth about who God is has meant the most to you?
- 3) Of the truths that we heard this morning about who God is, which one have you thought about the least?
- 4) What, specifically, do you do to keep up remembrance of the amazing things that God has done in:
 - a. Jesus' miraculous birth from God's love?
 - b. Jesus' perfectly obedient life to earn heaven for sinners?
 - c. Jesus' willing and excruciating death to endure on the cross the Hell that sinners deserve?
 - d. Jesus' powerful and decisive resurrection through which He gives believers spiritual life?
- 5) Do you look back on the events of your family's history, and of your own life, as amazing works of God? What, specifically, do you do to keep up the remembrance of these things?
- 6) If you do #5, is #4 far and away the more important of the two to you? What, specifically, can you do to keep #4 in its proper place on top?
- 7) Do you think of God's commands as good?
- 8) Do you obey God's commands first because of who He is and what He has done—or, more because you hope to gain something for yourself (safety, pleasure, comfort, praise, reward)?
- 9) Of what were you most afraid of this past week? Of what are you most afraid for this coming week? What does God's command, *do not fear*, mean for those situations?
- 10) Do you find God's promises comforting—are you more likely to give a relaxing exhale when you hear that a situation has been resolved, or when you remember how the history of the world will be resolved?!
- 11) Plan ahead: what are the specific situations, *this week*, in which you will have to remember who God is, and in which you ought to *look forward to the resurrection*, in order to have a *Biblical* hope?
- 12) What are the specific situations, *this week*, in which you must hope that *for Jesus' sake alone*, God will do good to you?

Harvest at Home, Evening Call to Worship, Psalm 148:1-6

Main ideas:

- 1) Everything exists to glorify God.
- 2) There are many creatures, both things and beings, that are more impressive than we are.
- 3) Even the most impressive creatures exist to glorify God.
- 4) Every creature owes its existence to the direct command of God.
- 5) God's method of creating was by commanding.
- 6) What God commands will always happen.

Questions for application:

- 1) How, specifically, can you use the heavens as a reminder that you are not as impressive as you think you are?
- 2) In what worship situations (congregation? family? private?) will you be this week, in which you need to remember that *God doesn't need you* to worship Him?
- 3) In what worship situations (congregation? family? private?) will you be this week, in which you need to remember to count it a privilege?
- 4) Have you been struggling with a sense of purpose? What do these verses teach you about your personal, individual purpose?
- 5) How do alternative explanations of *the method* of God's creating diminish His *authority*?
- 6) How do alternative explanations of *the method* of God's creating downplay His *power*?
- 7) How do alternative explanations of *what causes history to unfold as it does* diminish God's authority and downplay His power?
- 8) How does it help you to remember that everything you see exists by God's command?
- 9) How does it help you be humble in *successes* to know that God ordains what happens?
- 10) How does it help you be courageous in *difficulties* to know that God ordains what happens?

Notes:

Harvest at Home, Evening Serial Reading, Jeremiah 23:1-8

Main ideas:

- 1) All human rulers and teachers are accountable for how they manage the people whom God has entrusted into their care
- 2) God cares for His flock by judging and punishing those who lead them astray.
- 3) God cares for His flock by bringing them in and making them fruitful.
- 4) God cares for His flock by giving them human rulers and teachers who pursue and perform this task.
- 5) The great example of this is God's own Son, the God-man, the Forever-king from David, Jesus!
- 6) Jesus doesn't just govern us righteously, or help us become righteous: Jesus is Yahweh's righteousness *for our own!*
- 7) God's salvation in Jesus is the greatest saving event of all history, making even the Exodus seem small by comparison

Questions for application:

- 1) For what people has God made you responsible in this world?
- 2) As you make decisions as a parent/teacher/elder/boss/governor, do you think of God as your boss?
- 3) What decisions do you have to make on a regular basis? How will you answer to God for how you have been making them?
- 4) What decisions are coming up this week? How will you specifically remind yourself that you are accountable to God for those decisions?
- 5) How does Jesus' name here, "Yahweh our righteousness," keep you from thinking of your performance as what makes you pleasing to God?
- 6) Whose performance makes you pleasing to God? How does this humble you? How does this encourage you?
- 7) What event does God want you to keep in mind as His single greatest saving act in all of history? *Do you* keep it always in mind?
- 8) What events in your life are you tempted to see as being bigger? Whenever one of those events starts to seem big to you, remind yourself of Christ's cross and resurrection!

Notes:

Main ideas:

- 1) Faith is a gift from God.
- 2) God uses means to give this gift.
- 3) We must neither ignore the means, nor trust in the means themselves.
- 4) God sends gospel preachers as a beautiful gift to dead sinners.
- 5) The gospel is something to be *obeyed* by believing it as God's own words.
- 6) Two eternally fatal errors are: to miss that Christ is God, to hear Scriptural preaching as the words of a man instead of the words of Christ.

Questions for application:

- 1) If you are not yet a believer, do you still think that you will be able to believe by trying harder? How does this passage tell you that faith will come.
- 2) If you are not a believer, how are you commanded to obey the gospel? Just believe!
- 3) If you are a believer, do you think of your faith as something that you did by your own goodness or strength? If your faith came as a miracle of blessing for you as a hell-deserving sinner and as a miracle of strength for you as spiritually dead sinner, what word describes how it came?
- 4) In light of these verses, how should you think of your elders? Do you ever complain in a way that shows that you don't think your elders' feet are beautiful?
- 5) Whose words should you come to hear in the sermons on the Lord's Day?
- 6) Does the way that you think about the preaching in worship show that you come to hear the very words of Christ?
- 7) How does this very high view of preaching show up in:
 - a. Your body posture during preaching
 - b. Where you have your eyes during preaching
 - c. Upon what you keep your mind during preaching
 - d. How often you look at your Bible during preaching
 - e. Your feelings about preaching
 - f. What you do with what the sermon shows that Christ wants you to believe
 - g. What you do with what the sermon shows that Christ wants you to do
 - h. How you talk about sermons
 - i. How you talk about preachers
 - j. What you find most disappointing in a sermon (is it if Christ's words in the text are unclear?)
 - k. What you find most satisfying in a sermon (is it if Christ's words in the Scripture text are clear?)
 - l. How (if?!) you talk to your children about 'a' through 'k' above
- 8) Do you ever slip into thinking of Christ more as a teacher, coach, or example ('rabbi') than as God? If Christ were not God, what would this mean about the righteousness that believers receive from Him? If Christ were not God, what would this mean about His words that we hear in preaching?