

Leaders Notes Week of February 6-7

Please note that Jim's original working title for this sermon was "Where is God When It Hurts." He was going to use Psalm 27. Thus the video is around that theme. The theme and the video still work in fact Phil Cross did not pick up that C.S. Cowles was using a different Psalm when he wrote the below.

Because of this change, I have switched the study and video section. Please make sure you have enough time for the video. It really is powerful and does fit in well.

As I wrote these I noticed that I wrote some similar questions in different portions of our study. Use the questions that seem appropriate at the time. I believe three things are important during this study:

1. That you discuss communion, your understanding, and questions. Any questions the group has, e-mail me and I will answer them for the coming week.
2. That you discuss how God wants to bring freedom into our lives because of His great love and through His omnipotent power. Communion is a celebration of this occurring again and again looking both back and forward.
3. That if anyone has a need for release from guilt or any other bondage the group take time to lay hands on and pray for that individual.
4. In the end you might answer the question: Where is God when it hurts, right in our midst working towards our freedom.

Phil Cross prepared the following notes concerning this study. Below Phil's comments I have copied and pasted the portion of the Presbyterian Book of Order that talks about communion to give you some resources. These comments from the Book of Order are not exhaustive, or particularly better than some other resource they were just brief and easily available.

From Phil:

Initial Observations:

"כי לעולם חסדו" Transliteration: For His love is of (or to) forever (everlasting).

Translation: For His love is forever.

NIV: His love endures forever.

Initial Exegesis: לעולם *to forever* is a demonstration of the lamed being used as a locative; thus, the action of the clause חסדו *His love* is heading towards forever. In other words, His love is on the direction of lasting forever. His love is on a path and that path leads to everlasting.

Psalm 118:1 starts with "Give thanks to the Lord" then transitions to why we should give thanks to Him. The following verses, 2-14, emphasize why one should "give thanks" to the Lord.

The Psalm reveals to us God's everlasting faithfulness. The famous "His love endures forever" depicts God as one who stops at nothing to claim us as His own. For, these verses reveal God as one we can take refuge in, one we can trust when all the world collapses, one who gives us strength, and the one who is due praise when we are victorious.

Jim is interpreting this verse through the lens of Israel's victory. He first speaks of how communion has divided the church, and then transitions to the message of communion itself. Communion, as he depicts it, is about us rejoicing a freedom, as the Israel's rejoiced God's victory in this Psalm.

How does Jim's sermon speak about this Psalm? Jim specifically talks about Israel praising God as the march through the gates of Jerusalem and in vs. 19 it speaks with this same language. In this way, all vs. preceding 19 depict a time when Israel was abandoned, but it all comes down to the present moment, of the Psalmist, where God's love has proved to endure forever.

C.S. takes a different slant than Jim for he exegetes this verse to be about finding God in the midst of our pains and worries. C.S. specifically pulls on vs. 5-14 where it talks about God being the only one we can trust.

How does C.S.'s story about him on the mountain and him almost losing his job relate to this Psalm? This Psalm speaks of a time where all else fails, where we are "about to fall" (vs 13) and God is the one who "helped" us.

From the Book of Order:

W-2.4000* [TOP](#) **4. The Lord's Supper**

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| W-2.4001*
Jesus and
the Supper | a. The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of eating and drinking in communion with the crucified and risen Lord. During his earthly ministry Jesus shared meals with his followers as a sign of community and acceptance and as an occasion for his own ministry. He celebrated Israel's feasts of covenant commemoration. |
| Last Supper | b. In his last meal before his death, Jesus took and shared with his disciples the bread and wine, speaking of them as his body and blood, signs of the new covenant. He commended breaking bread and sharing a cup to remember and proclaim his death. |
| Resurrection | c. On the day of his resurrection, the risen Jesus made himself known to his followers in the breaking of bread. He continued to show himself to believers, by blessing and breaking bread, by preparing, serving, and sharing common meals. (W-1.3033) |

W-2.4002* Church in the New Testament The Church in the New Testament devoted itself to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to prayers, and to the common meal. The apostle Paul delivered to the Church the tradition he had received from the risen Lord, who commanded that his followers share the bread and cup as a remembrance and a showing forth of his death until he comes. The New Testament describes the meal as a participation in Christ and with one another in the expectation of the Kingdom and as a foretaste of the messianic banquet.

W-2.4003 Thanksgiving In the Lord's Supper the Church, gathered for worship,

- a. blesses God for all that God has done through creation, redemption, and sanctification;
- b. gives thanks that God is working in the world and in the Church in spite of human sin;
- c. gratefully anticipates the fulfillment of the Kingdom Christ proclaimed, and offers itself in obedient service to God's reign.

W-2.4004 Remembering At the Lord's Table, the Church is

- a. renewed and empowered by the memory of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and promise to return;
- b. sustained by Christ's pledge of undying love and continuing presence with God's people;
- c. sealed in God's covenant of grace through partaking of Christ's self-offering.

In remembering, believers receive and trust the love of Christ present to them and to the world; they manifest the reality of the covenant of grace in reconciling and being reconciled; and they proclaim the power of Christ's reign for the renewal of the world in justice and in peace.

W-2.4005* Invocation As the people of God bless and thank God the Father and remember Jesus Christ the Son, they call upon the Holy Spirit

- a. to lift them into Christ's presence;
- b. to accept their offering of bread and wine;
- c. to make breaking bread and sharing the cup a participation in the body and blood of Christ;
- d. to bind them with Christ and with one another;
- e. to unite them in communion with all the faithful in heaven and on earth;
- f. to nourish them with Christ's body and blood that they may mature into the

fullness of Christ;

- g. to keep them faithful as Christ's body, representing Christ and doing God's work in the world.

W-2.4006* Around the Table of the Lord, God's people are in communion with Christ and with all
Communion who belong to Christ. Reconciliation with Christ compels reconciliation with one
of the Faithful another. All the baptized faithful are to be welcomed to the Table, and none shall be
excluded because of race, sex, age, economic status, social class, handicapping
condition, difference of culture or language, or any barrier created by human injustice.
Coming to the Lord's Table the faithful are actively to seek reconciliation in every
instance of conflict or division between them and their neighbors. Each time they
gather at the Table the believing community

- a. are united with the Church in every place, and the whole Church is present;
- b. join with all the faithful in heaven and on earth in offering thanksgiving to the triune God;
- c. renew the vows taken at Baptism;

and they commit themselves afresh to love and serve God, one another, and their neighbors in the world.

W-2.4007* In this meal the Church celebrates the joyful feast of the people of God, and
Foretaste of anticipates the great banquet and marriage supper of the Lamb. Brought by the Holy
the Spirit into Christ's presence, the Church eagerly expects and prays for the day when
Kingdom Meal Christ shall come in glory and God be all in all. Nourished by this hope, the Church rises
from the Table and is sent by the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's
mission to the world, to proclaim the gospel, to exercise compassion, to work for
justice and peace until Christ's Kingdom shall come at last.

W-2.4008 In the life of the worshiping congregation, Word and Sacrament have an integral
Word and relationship. Whenever the Lord's Supper is observed, it shall be preceded by the
Sacrament reading and the proclamation of the Word. (W-1.1005)
Together