

Liberty Corner Bible Church

Worship at a Distance

May 17, 2020

Call to Worship

Prayer

How Great Thou Art

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on a Cross, my burdens gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Chorus

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

Chorus

Stuart K Kline, 1949

Swedish folk melody; arr. Stuart K Kline, 1949

Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord

Teach me thy way, O Lord; teach me thy way!
Thy guiding grace afford; teach me thy way!
Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight;
lead me with heav'nly light; teach me thy way!

When I am sad at heart, teach me thy way!
When earthly joys depart, teach me thy way!
In hours of loneliness, in times of dire distress,
in failure or success, teach me thy way!

When doubts and fears arise, teach me thy way!
When storms o'erspread the skies, teach me thy way!
Shine thro' the cloud and rain, thro' sorrow, toil, and pain;
make thou my pathway plain; teach me thy way!

Long as my life shall last, teach me thy way!
Where'er my lot be cast, teach me thy way!
Until the race is run, until the journey's done,
until the crown is won, teach me thy way!

B Mansell Ramsey, 1919

Announcements

Norman Dietsch's Birthday: May 31

Change in login information coming for 5/31 service

Offer of Ecclesiastes Sunday School class beginning May 24

Prayer Needs

Reinhard Fabiunke

Bruno & Iris Schwaigert

Those affected by COVID-19

Susan working today

Russell's summer work

John Carpinski & the homeless

Johanna Majorana's family

The Sisters' health issues

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Reading

Job 6 & 7 (ESV)

6:¹Then Job answered and said: ²"Oh that my vexation were weighed, and all my calamity laid in the balances! ³For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore my words have been rash. ⁴For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me. ⁵Does the wild donkey bray when he has grass, or the ox low over his fodder? ⁶Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt, or is there any taste in the juice of the mallow? ⁷My appetite refuses to touch them; they are as food that is loathsome to me.

⁸"Oh that I might have my request, and that God would fulfill my hope, ⁹that it would please God to crush me, that he would let loose his hand and cut me off! ¹⁰This would be my comfort; I would even exult in pain unsparing, for I have not denied the words of the Holy One. ¹¹What is my strength, that I should wait? And what is my end, that I should be patient? ¹²Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh bronze? ¹³Have I any help in me, when resource is driven from me?

¹⁴"He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. ¹⁵My brothers are treacherous as a torrent-bed, as torrential streams that pass away, ¹⁶which are dark with ice, and where the snow hides itself. ¹⁷When they melt, they disappear; when it is hot, they vanish from their place. ¹⁸The caravans turn aside from their course; they go up into the waste and perish. ¹⁹The caravans of Tema look, the travelers of Sheba hope. ²⁰They are ashamed because they were confident; they come there and are disappointed. ²¹For you have now become nothing; you see my calamity and are afraid. ²²Have I said, 'Make me a gift'? Or, 'From your wealth offer a bribe for me'? ²³Or, 'Deliver me from the adversary's hand'? Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the ruthless'?

²⁴"Teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have gone astray. ²⁵How forceful are upright words! But what does reproof from you reprove? ²⁶Do you think that you can reprove words, when the speech of a despairing man is wind? ²⁷You would even cast lots over the fatherless, and bargain over your friend.

²⁸"But now, be pleased to look at me, for I will not lie to your face. ²⁹Please turn; let no injustice be done. Turn now; my vindication is at stake. ³⁰Is there any injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern the cause of calamity?

7¹"Has not man a hard service on earth, and are not his days like the days of a hired hand? ²Like a slave who longs for the shadow, and like a hired hand who looks for his wages, ³so I am allotted months of emptiness, and nights of misery are apportioned to me. ⁴When I lie down I say, 'When shall I arise?' But the night is long, and I am full of tossing till the dawn. ⁵My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt; my skin hardens, then breaks out afresh. ⁶My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and come to their end without hope.

7"Remember that my life is a breath; my eye will never again see good. ⁸The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more; while your eyes are on me, I shall be gone. ⁹As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up; ¹⁰he returns no more to his house, nor does his place know him anymore.

¹¹"Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. ¹²Am I the sea, or a sea monster, that you set a guard over me? ¹³When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,' ¹⁴then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, ¹⁵so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones. ¹⁶I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath. ¹⁷What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him, ¹⁸visit him every morning and test him every moment? ¹⁹How long will you not look away from me, nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit? ²⁰If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of mankind? Why have you made me your mark? Why have I become a burden to you? ²¹Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I shall lie in the earth; you will seek me, but I shall not be."

Sermon

Why Are You Out to Get Me?

Why have you made me your mark? Job 7.20

Have you ever had that horrible experience that no one really understood what you were going through? Over the years I have heard a number of stories of what people have gone through—for many of you, it was WWII and the aftermath. The bombings, the hunger, the not knowing what would happen next—whether you, or your family would make it through the night. And in the middle of it you had no idea when it would be over. Tomorrow?

Next week? Next month? Next year?

For others it is long-term health issues. Some of you remember Bruce Grosvenor in his wheel chair, paralyzed from the neck down in a diving accident. You may not have known that he experienced burning pain every day—phantom pain that his body told him was there, yet there was no external cause—it was all neurological. I remember when he asked a group of us to pray for him before a surgical procedure that was successful for 98% of the people who had it. He was one of the 2%, and not only lost more physical movement, and still had the pain.

Perhaps for others the pain is deeper than just in body, and the torment of mind and soul continues with little relief.

For you, and people like Bruce, and those who experienced for a time the horrors of war, you have a sense of what Job was going through. But his friends do not get it. And so Job replies to Eliphaz's mechanical theology.

1. What Is On Job's Heart, 6.1-7

Words are not heavy enough—if only what I feel can be translated into tangible mass, it would be most weight. Job calls for his friends to look and see what he is really enduring—they do not see all of the situation—that's why he wants his suffering to be a weighty thing. They don't get it.

And so his words seem rash to them.

The pain of God's terrors is like a poisonous arrow—"terrors", dreadful assaults—the expression is used one other time—Psalm 88.17.

His complaint is like that of a hungry donkey or ox (4) that only cries out when the hunger pains set in. It is not for nothing, yet the intensity and immediacy escapes them. The wimpiness of words is like the blandness of the white of an egg—the "mallow" here in this translation. How palatable is an egg white?

Why does he say this? Because apparently Eliphaz does not get what Job said in his first open-heart speech. Job's words to them are like an egg white for Job. Tasteless. Valueless. Meaningless.

Which leads him to his only possible conclusion.

2. Just End It All, 6.8-13

Job opens his heart again and states his wish is for this to be over—that God would just finish it. Job's pain is shaping his whole outlook—which is not taking any longer view than just to end the pain. And if you have known pain anything like Job's, you get it. Eliphaz doesn't.

But note that in spite of the pain, he has no intention of ending his own life. Suicide is not his way out. "Death by God", yes. "Death by Job", no.

He knows that ultimately all that has happened has come from God, and so his deep desire is to have God finish what he started.

All the strength that he has is gone—11-13—all the resources, all the wisdom: all gone. So now with nothing left, he is to be patient?? There is nothing left in him.

3. To His Friends, 6.14-21

You are withholding kindness from me—you have left off fearing God! To show kindness—mercy—*hesed*—is what those who fear God do. Job is laying the groundwork for *Micah 6.8: And what does God require by to do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with y our God.* Job's friends, however, have only been moralizing for him.

"You are showing me no sympathy", he says. "You are like the temporary streams that come from melting snows—there in the spring, but gone in the summer when the water is needed. Caravans traveling through the wilderness look for water, but find none." So his friends who only give him moralizing in their mechanical theology are empty streams in the desert.

4. To His Friends, 6.22-30

"What did I ask for? Did I ask for a bribe to get God to change the situation? I'm not asking for anything great. I'm not asking you to fix this. I don't want you to pay my debts to God."

"If you really want to help me, tell me what I am missing, what I am getting wrong. Your reproof isn't really reproofing me—you are not helping me. Your reproof of my words is like reproofing the wind—I need something substantial, real help for me to see what I am doing wrong."

Look at me—really see who I am.

See what I am going through.

Listen to what I am saying—what am I getting wrong?

5. What Life is Like for Job—Ecclesiastes on Steroids, 7.1-10

Hard! Like a laborer in hard service, like a slave who can't wait to get out of the hot sun and into some shade. Like a laborer waiting for his pay at the end of the day.

Futile! Months of emptiness, nights of misery. Think of those in prison, in prison camps, trapped in life situations with no hope of change.

He lies to sleep, then waits for the next day, and tosses all night. His body has maggots and dirt; the wounds scab over, then burst open again.

And again.

And again.

The days speed by, but with no hope of change

“My friends are not going to see me again. You see me now, but, like Enoch (Genesis 5.24), ‘I am not.’” Life is that short—and it is all gone. Life is miserable, and then it is over. No coming back, and home doesn't know you if you did.

And now Job shifts his focus from his friends, to the One who does understand.

6. To God, 7.11-21

No restraints! I am going to tell you what is really on my heart, in my spirit, in my soul.

Who am I that you pick on me? Am I the sea that destroys ships, the sea monster who needs to be monitored?

I lay down in bed for rest, for relief—and then you send terrors in the night—so bad that I chose to die rather than to live.

The confession—I loathe my life. Take your hand off me and let me die.

Pick on someone else!

What he says next is similar to Psalm 8, but with the opposite intent. Instead of pondering man's exalted position in the universe as the psalm does, the question is why consider man since he is *not* so great—why pick on him?

If he is really that insignificant—if *I* am so insignificant, why do you watch me so closely, to destroy me? Why the test? Why watch me so carefully I cannot even swallow my own spit in private?

Is it that big a deal to you if I, the insignificant one sins? Why am I your target? Why am I your big problem that needs to be hit so hard?

Can't you just pardon my transgression, remove my iniquity, take away my sin?

Once I die, I'll be in the earth. I'll be free from all this.

Job opened his heart—to his friends, to God.

So what are we to make of this?

1. Dealing with suffering means grappling with pain and discontent: “I don't get it!” Job says this to God and friends—not just the friends.

Job's friends just give moralizing philosophy—Job needs more than that.

And so do the people that we meet who are suffering. When it comes down to it, what seems to bite the hardest is the futility of his experience—it is unending, and without purpose. And this is what brings Job to the place of asking God to end it for him. Not the suffering, but his life.

What Job needs is a “why”. Victor Frankl observed this while a prisoner in the Nazi death camps. Some prisoners died from the simplest infection, the lightest cold. Others survived great hardships. Frankl the psychiatrist observed that the difference between the two groups was that one had a purpose for living, a goal, a plan for when “this” is all over. Here I recommend his little book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

In our present situation we probably encounter people who have been thrown for a loop with this lockdown.

“When will it end?”

“How can I regain my former life? Look at what I have lost!”

“What’s going to happen to me?”

“Why is this happening—who did what wrong?”

From the psychiatrist’s point of view, they have no lasting purpose for life—or at least have forgotten what it is.

And maybe have forgotten *who* they are—from the Creator’s perspective. And especially for the Christian—*whose* they are.

Yet we dare not minimize the pain they are experiencing as did Eliphaz and the other 2 friends—which we will see in coming weeks.

If we, as God’s “little lower than the angels” of Psalm 8—his ministers in this life are to truly minister, we are to lay aside the moralizing mechanical theology, and truly listen.

Hear what they are saying. Yes, really feel their pain.

We will be only dry stream beds in the heat of summer if we don’t give real answers to their very real struggles.

2. Realize that Job knows who the ultimate source of all this is—and so do you. “I know who you really are”—I know that they are your arrows, I know that your eye is on me.

Job knows who God is better than his friends—he knows that there is much more than to this master of the universe—and so he asks why.

Our danger—and that of Job’s friends—is to think too little of God. To create an image of God that is incomplete, and is an image of our limited imagination. At this point I recommend J. B Phillips’ little book *Your God Is Too Small*.

3. One last point. Job raises a question at the end of his speech, and it is a good one. Remember that Job and his 3 friends are working with the wrong understanding of the Retribution Principle—that good things happen to good people, bad things happen to bad people, and if bad things are happening, you must be bad. Bad things have happened to Job, so he must be bad. And so he asks the question:

Why not just pardon my transgression, take away my iniquity? Job gets who God is, understands holiness, understands who he-*Job*-really is in all this. Yes, he may be good compared to others, but he is not perfectly good. He, like everyone else, has fallen short—all have sinned.

Job will later speak of his Redeemer, the One who will buy him out of his troubles. Does Job understand who Jesus is at this point? Certainly not in a New Testament sense. But maybe we don’t quite understand his Redeemer has he understands. He is looking for a Redeemer who will buy him back—not his stuff, not his former life. Just him.

Do you realize that is exactly what Jesus did on the cross? He doesn't redeem our stuff, our way of life, all of our luxuries.

He buys us. He redeems us.

The answer to Job's question has not been given to him in this chapter.

But the answer is given to you and me.

"Why do you not pardon my transgression, take away my iniquity?"

The answer from God is, "I have."

Look to him. Not to redeem your stuff, your pleasures. Look to him to redeem you. Look to him in this present trouble. For he is here now.

Prayer

Why Should Cross or Trial Grieve Me?

Why should cross and trial grieve me?

Christ is near with his cheer; never will he leave me.

Who can rob me of the heaven

that God's Son for my own to my faith hath given?

God oft gives me days of gladness;

shall I grieve if he give seasons, too, of sadness?

God is good and tempers ever

all my ill, and he will wholly leave me never.

Death cannot destroy forever;

from our fears, cares, and tears it will us deliver.

It will close life's mournful story;

make a way that we may enter heav'nly glory.

Lord, my Shepherd, take me to thee.

Thou art mine; I was thine, even ere I knew thee.

I am thine, for thou hast bought me;

lost I stood, but thy blood free salvation brought me.

Thou art mine; I love and own thee.

Light of joy, ne'er shall I from my heart dethrone thee.

Savior, let me soon behold thee

face to face; may thy grace evermore enfold me.

Paul Gerhardt, 1653

Johann G Ebeling, 1666

Praise My Soul, The King of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven, to his feet your tribute bring;

ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,

who like you his praise should sing?

Alleluia, alleluia! Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favor to our fathers in distress;

praise him, still the same as ever,

slow to blame and swift to bless;

Alleluia, alleluia! Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us, all our hopes and fears he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:

Alleluia, alleluia! Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him; you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
praise him all in time and space.

Alleluia, alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace.

Henry F Lyte, 1834

Mark Andrews, 1930

Benediction