

Sermon October 16, 2016 - Pentecost 22

HEALING WORSHIP

Prayer and Promise

Various Texts



Dear Friends in Christ

Welcome back to our Healing Worship series!

Last week we took a break as we observed Thanksgiving Sunday, but today we return to our meditations on worship, on our liturgical worship services, its components, and why we do them. On the first week we learned that Worship begins with God, it begins with his actions as he comes to us bringing healing of the soul. Worship is not something we initiate but it is our response to God's goodness.

And because it begins with God worship is a mountain top experience. For this we have been reading Hebrews chapter 12, (Hebrews 12:22-24) which I would like to ask that somebody read please,

Hebrews chapter 12, verses 22 to 24: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."

Now, as we have said before, this text refers to God's kingdom as a whole, but then again it is here in Church, in spirit and truth, that God's Kingdom reveals itself and comes to each one of us, which in turn enables us to live our lives in Christ, in faith and victory. Therefore this text in a way summarizes what we do here in Worship services every time we gather with one another.

Now as God brings us to the mountain top, a process develops and forms what we know as the liturgy, the order of worship, liturgy literally means "the works of the people" it is an order or process that moves us to respond to God's gifts and grace.

So far we have meditated on the invocation, the confession and absolution, the introit, the Kyrie and the hymn of praise which is a time for us to praise God for the miraculous things He has done for us. A time to celebrate God's mighty Acts!

But today we do meditate on Prayer. There are several times that we pray in church, but if we follow the liturgy, after the Hymn of praise comes the collect, then after the Creed or the sermon, we have the prayers of the Church, or the prayers of God's people.

The Collect: A Special Prayer Form

Now, what is the Collect of the Day? Why do we call it a Collect? Why not just a prayer? And why of the day? The Collect for the Day is a special form of prayer that collects two things, first the theme of the day.

For example today, we prayed “Loving Father, You always delight to hear and answer the prayers of Your people. Grant that we may persist in crying out to You in prayer, always trusting in Your goodness and in Your gracious promises...” As you see the central thought of our prayer, is prayer. That’s the theme of the day.

Second it collects the desire of God’s people and submits the desire to God’s nature and power. Today for example, we know and submit to the fact that God always answers prayers, so we ask that he would “Grant that we may persist in crying out to” him in prayer. And we do so in the name of Jesus, for it is through him that we go to the Father.

As you see it’s called the Collect because it collects, or sums up in one pointed request, the petitions of all worshipers. Although often voiced and prayed by one person, the pastor, it is the prayer of all those who are gathered to worship.

The Prayer of the Church

In a few moments we should join one another in singing a hymn that is a favorite to many: “What a Friend we have in Jesus.” He is a friend who knows us intimately, a friend who listens to our prayers, and because this Friend, we have a great “privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!”

Confident that there is strength in numbers and trusting God to hear and answer prayer, we Christians who are gathered in worship bring our concerns and our cries to God.

We know that God has gathered us in his name, and so in his name we cry to him. We lay before him our concerns, and we praise him for his gifts

The Prayer of the Church is that time and opportunity to pray for our individual needs. It is an important moment in the service as we pray for the church, for the world, and for the special needs of each other.

In this prayer, we God’s redeemed people, cry to God for first for spiritual concerns, that God’s Spirit would work among us and everywhere Christians gather. We pray that God’s message be clear and powerful and would touch us deeply. We cry to God that he would God to bless the church and the workers and that more would work for the Kingdom.

Then, because we know Christ, we pray for the world. They pray that God would rule everywhere and to make all things work toward good, especially for those who love him. We pray for salvation of those who don’t know Christ, and we pray that God would empower us to be what we are supposed to be, evangelist.

We pray for justice in the world today as well. We pray for the sick, for the grieving, we pray for our needs.

And we pray that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. It is what the Scriptures teach us to do. Let’s turn to (1 Timothy 2:1–4) 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 1-2, and would somebody else please read: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Now, this time of prayer is a time for the congregation to pray. Although is presented before God in a priestly manner by the pastor, these are the prayer of the

congregation. That's why we respond with sentences like "Lord in your mercy" and the congregation answers "Hear our prayer," and what is more special is you the members would pray each of your concerns, that you would pray for each one of our needs.

The Need for Prayer

Praying is great, it a privilege we have as God's children, as Jesus friends. We ought to take advantage of that, because we need to pray. God's children should be people of prayer, don't you think so?

Why is it that we neglect prayer? That we don't gather for prayer, not in worship, and not in groups for prayer either?

And more why is it that we are at times intimidated when asked to pray in public or in front of a group of people? Well, sometimes we are afraid of saying the wrong words, or looking foolish. Or we prefer a silent prayer, right!? That might be so, but really we don't need to be afraid to pray because when we are in worship, we are in God's presence and when you are in his presence nothing bad can happen. Just as we are not afraid to worship, we shouldn't be afraid to pray.

I like what the Palmist says, (Psalm 116:12-14) if somebody would please read Psalm chapter one hundred sixteen and verses 12 to 14: "¹² What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? ¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, ¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people."

Then a little later in the same chapter he adds these words, would somebody else please read verse (Psalm 116:17-19) 17-19: "I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD. ¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, ¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!"

Prayer is the forth element of worship that is mentioned in the Scriptures as Dr. Luke tells us in the book of Acts (Acts 2:42), would somebody please read Acts chapter 2 verse 42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Prayer is an important aspect of our faith, here in worship and in our private lives. Prayer is God's invitation to come and speak to him and with him. And as Prosper of Aquitaine would say: "The standard of prayer is the standard of faith."

In other words, the amount and frequency of our prayer goes in hand with the faith we profess, confess and practice.

And we do confess a great God, a God of love, mercy and justice, as our the gospel reading for today tells us. Did you hear it? (Luke 18:7-8) Would anybody please read Luke 18:7-8: "And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Conclusion

Jesus words need to speak to ask and we need to answer the question personally? "Will he find faith on earth?"

Prayer and faith go hand in hand. It is time for us to wake up in prayer. Prayer in worship and everywhere, anywhere and at any time!

Thanks be to God for the opportunity we have to bring our prayer and petitions to God through Jesus Christ our friend, through the Collect and through the general prayers.

And as we pray we do have the confidence that God the righteous Judge, will answer our prayers. The righteous Judge listens to our cry's, to our prayers, and gives not what we deserve but what he in his great love gives, greater things according to his will. So, let us keep on praying!

In his name, amen.