

January 7, 2024 - Order of Worship

TIME OF REFLECTION

“[T]he moment you begin to have faith, you learn that all things in you are altogether blameworthy, sinful, and damnable. When you have learned this, you will know that you need Christ, who suffered and rose again for you, so that if you believe in him, you may, through faith become a new man... [Y]our sins are forgiven, and you are justified by the merits of another, namely of Christ alone.”

~Martin Luther (1483-1546) in *The Freedom of a Christian*

“If we do not know ourselves to be full of pride, ambition, lust, weakness, misery, and injustice, we are indeed blind. And if, knowing this, we do not desire deliverance, what can we say of a man...?”

~Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), French mathematician and thinker

“Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves, especially in self-righteousness, until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross, that we shrink to our true size.”

~John Stott (1921-2011), English theologian

“This bruising is required before conversion that so the Spirit may make way for himself into the heart by the leveling all proud, high thoughts, and that we may understand ourselves to be what indeed we are by nature. We love to wander from ourselves and to be strangers at home, till God bruises us by one cross or other, and then we ‘begin to think’ and come home to ourselves with the prodigal. It is very hard thing to bring a dull and an evasive heart to cry with feeling for mercy. Our hearts, like criminals, until they are beaten from all evasions, never cry for the mercy of the Judge.”

~Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) in *A Bruised Reed*

“He who thinks lightly of sin thinks lightly of the Savior.”

~C.H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), London preacher

“The dying Jesus is the evidence of God’s anger toward sin; but the living Jesus is the proof of God’s love and forgiveness.”

~Lorenz Eifert (1913-1986), pastor

SERMON – “The Covenant Promise of God” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Galatians 3:5-9, 15-26, 29 (ESV)*

⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith....

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes

by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.... ²⁹ And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.