

Worship Service

BY KYLE MATTHEWS

Prelude

Preparation for Worship:

Whoever loves money never has money enough;
 whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.
 This too, is meaningless.

As goods increase,
 so do those who consume them.
And what benefits are they to the owner
 except to feast his eyes on them?

The sleep of the laborer is sweet
 whether he eats little or much,
but the abundance of a rich man
 permits him no sleep.

I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:
wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner,
 or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when he has a son
 there is nothing left for him.

Naked a man comes from his mother's womb,
 and as he comes, so he departs.
He takes nothing from his labor
 that he can carry in his hand.

This too is a grievous evil:
as a man comes, so he departs,
 and what does he gain,
 since he toils for the wind?

All his days he eats in darkness,
 with great frustration, affliction and anger.

Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink,
and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the

few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20 NIV¹

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV

Call to Worship:

“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear your voice, O Son of Man.

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
on shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
from paths where hide the lures of greed,
we catch the vision of your tears.

From tender childhood’s helplessness,
from woman’s grief, man’s burdened toil,
from famished souls, from sorrow’s stress,
your heart has never known recoil.

O Master, from the mountainside
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city’s streets again.

Till sons of men shall learn your love
and follow where your feet have trod,
till, glorious from your heaven above,
shall come the city of our God!

Frank M. North (1903), alt.

Suggested Tune: GERMANY

Word of Welcome

Silent Meditation:

Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice “out there” calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice “in here” calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.

Parker Palmer²

Rabbi Zusya, when he was an old man, said, “In the coming world, they will not ask me: ‘Why were you not Moses?’ They will ask me: ‘Why were you not Zusya?’”

Parker Palmer³

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.

Frederick Buechner⁴

Old Testament Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-15

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Confession:

We come before you today, O God,
torn among our many responsibilities,
the varied roles we play in our careers and relationships,
and the desires of our hearts.

So often we have identified ourselves too closely with our jobs
and responsibilities,
forgetting that we are much more in your sight.
Broaden our vision and our self-understanding.

Forgive us where we have allowed ourselves to compromise
our convictions
on the altar of convenience.

Open our eyes to the ways we foolishly allow the ends to justify
the means.

Forgive us for treating things like treasures and people like things.
Make us sensitive to the people with whom we work and live.
Call our priorities back into order.

Forgive us for insisting upon our own way out of fear and insecurity.
Teach us to listen to others
and to your spirit as we go about our duties.

Forgive us for choosing security over the kind of risk-taking
that benefits others
and furthers your kingdom at the expense of our own prospects.

Remind us that we are, first of all, your children,
uniquely gifted to do what you have called each of us to do,
not only for ourselves,
but in order that your will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Restore to us our sense of place and purpose in your grand design,
through obedience to your commands. Amen.

Hymn:

“May the Mind of Christ, My Savior”

May the mind of Christ, my Savior,
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

May the Word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in everything,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self abasing,
this is victory.

May His beauty rest upon me,
as I seek the lost to win,
and may they forget the channel,
seeing only him.

Kate B. Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Suggested Tune: ST. LEONARDS

New Testament Readings: 2 Corinthians 8:12-15 and 1 Peter 4:10-12

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Responsive Reading:

O God, we are not all the same with regard to our work.

**Some of us cannot find the work we need
to provide for ourselves and our families.**

**We turn to you for help and for hope;
lead us to your provision.**

Some of us have work that is demeaning or ill-suited to our gifts.

**Help us to endure while we must
and to see every opportunity to serve others
as an opportunity to serve you.**

Lead us to new possibilities.

Some of us have work that we take for granted.

Forgive our idleness and teach us discipline.

**Make us stewards of our opportunities
and challenge us to invest ourselves more fully.**

**Lead us to become productive members of our communities
and witnesses to your own excellence.**

Some of us have fulfilling or rewarding work.

**Teach us gratitude,
reminding us that to whom much is given, much is required.**

**Lead us to opportunities for ministry within our work
and inspire us to provide opportunities for others.**

But all of us seek the purpose and fulfillment
of discovering and using the gifts you have given us.

We confess our dependence upon you
to show us who we truly are
and what we are uniquely suited to do.

**All: Lead us to make our work an expression of the ministry
you have given us**

**to feed, clothe, shelter, help, serve,
liberate, and redeem those you love,
that we might truly be your disciples. Amen.**

Hymn:

“Voice That Calls Us Each by Name” (pp. 47-49 of this issue)

Anthem:

“Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace” (Lindh)⁵

*Sermon**Hymn of Response:*

“Father, Bless the Gifts We Bring You”

Fa - ther, bless the gifts we bring you; give them some - thing
kind to do. May they help some - one to love you:
Fa - ther, may we love you, too.

Words: Anonymous

Tune: WEBSTER by C. David Bolin © 2001 The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University

Offertory Prayer:

Giver of every good and perfect gift,
we, who consume more than we need and own more than we can use,
come before you today to confront the truth that our deepest need
is not met by possessing something, but by being a part of
something,
something bigger than ourselves,
something noble,
something beyond the borders of our little worlds,
and beyond the reach of our control.
Take these gifts from our hands
and do with them what we cannot do alone.
Transform our material offerings into spiritual things.
Move them from our unworthiness toward your worthiness.
Allow us to be a part of making
the crooked straight, the blind to see,
the lame to walk, the lost found,
and the dead alive again. Amen.

Doxology

Prayer:

O God, in the life of your son, Jesus,
and countless followers throughout the ages,
we see that your call to love and serve others
can be lived out through virtually any task,
if we are spirit-led and kingdom-focused.

Teach us to hear that still small voice
that knows us better than we know ourselves,
prompting us to be who you created us to be
and to use the gifts you have given us to use.

May we never forget that what we do, or fail to do,
for even the least of our brothers and sisters,
we have done unto you,
so that every hour of every day might become sacred to us.

Thank you, Lord,
that you are as close to us as we will allow you to be,
redeeming all our work for your higher purposes.

Send us out a people inspired
and impassioned by the good news we have heard! Amen.

Closing Hymn:

“Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak” (verses 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7)

Lord, speak to me that I may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek
your erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
the wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
your hungering ones with manna sweet.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
the precious things you do impart;
and wing my words, that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.

O fill me with your fullness, Lord,
until my very heart o'erflow
in kindling thought and glowing word,
your love to tell, your praise to show.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
just as you will, and when, and where,
until your blessed face I see,
your rest, your joy, your glory share.

Frances R. Havergal (1872), alt.
Suggested Tune: CANONBURY

Benediction:

Go now, and make this sabbath day
a day of rest and worship,
so that tomorrow you may allow Christ in you
to make the crucial difference in the good work you do,
for that is our true vocation,
to the glory of God, our true Master. Amen.

NOTES

1 Scripture passages marked NIV are from THE HOLY BIBLE: TODAY'S NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ®. Copyright © 2002 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

2 Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 10

3 Parker J. Palmer, "On Minding Your Call—When No One is Calling," *Weavings* (May-June 1996), 15-22

4 Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 118.

5 "Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace" (SATB) Words and Music by Jody W. Lindh. Copyright © 1992 The Chorister's Guild, distributed by Lorenz. Cat. # CG612.



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