



Community CRC

Oakdale

PALM SUNDAY
THE STONES WILL CRY OUT
LUKE 19:28-40
03-28-21

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

NOTE: Please have a white candle ready to light.

Affirmation #1

Because **we exist to glorify God by delighting in Him**, we are committed to meeting for worship regularly and learning to see work, play, education, child-rearing, involvement with local and world politics, (i.e. all of life) as acts of worship.

Welcome

Good Morning! What a joy and delight to worship today! However, some of may not feel this right now for any number of reasons. While we seek to live our lives from the posture of “I get to” and delight, we instead find ourselves in seasons of “I have to” and duty. C.S. Lewis refers to “duty” as a crutch that is necessary and helpful for us to move around when are own legs and feet are unable to do it on their own. However, as soon as they get healthy again, the crutch is put away and we utilize our own legs again. Likewise, duty is a crutch that helps us to things that we know we should or ought to but don’t feel like it. And like the crutch, we put duty aside as soon as we can to utilize our own legs and feet of joy and delight. So, wherever you are today, if from a sense of duty – know that we are grateful for your participation and pray that you will soon move from duty to delight – maybe even during this time engaging with the liturgy. And if you are in a place of delight, don’t hold back! Express your joy and delight in through the reading and singing and praying and learning.

May the love and joy of the Father, the grace and peace of the Son and the courage and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ours in abundance today!

Call to Worship – **Psalm 57** TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO DO NOT DESTROY. A MIKTAM OF DAVID, WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL, IN THE CAVE.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.

I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!

My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts— the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down. They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves. My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody!



Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.

For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

Song – All Glory, Laud, and Honor -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHLZJBq-cE8>

*All glory, laud, and honor
To thee, Redeemer, King
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring
Thou art the King of Israel
Thou David's royal Son
Who in the Lord's name comest
The King and Blessed One
The company of angels
Are praising Thee on high
And we with all creation
In chorus make reply
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went
Our prayer and praise and anthems
Before Thee we present
To Thee, before Thy passion
They sang their hymns of praise
To Thee, now high exalted
Our melody we raise
Thou didst accept their praises
Accept the love we bring
Who in all good delightest
Thou good and gracious King
Thou didst accept their praises
Accept the love we bring
Who in all good delightest
Thou good and gracious King*

Song – Good And Gracious King -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMPV7UABJm8>

*I approach the throne of glory
Nothing in my hands I bring
But the promise of acceptance
From a good and gracious King
I will give to You my burden
As You give to me Your strength
Come and fill me with Your Spirit*



*As I sing to You this praise
You deserve the greater glory
Overcome, I lift my voice
To the King in need of nothing
Empty handed I rejoice
You deserve the greater glory
Overcome with joy I sing
By Your love I am accepted
You're a good and gracious King
O what grace that You would see me
As Your child and as Your friend
Safe, secure in You forever
I pour out my praise again
You deserve the greater glory
Overcome, I lift my voice
To the King in need of nothing
Empty handed I rejoice
You deserve the greater glory
Overcome with joy I sing
By Your love I am accepted
You're a good and gracious King
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty
Good and gracious
Good and gracious
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty
Good and gracious King
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty
Good and gracious
Good and gracious
Holy, holy, Lord Almighty
Good and gracious King
You deserve the greater glory
Overcome, I lift my voice
To the King in need of nothing
Empty handed I rejoice
You deserve the greater glory
Overcome with joy I sing
By Your love I am accepted
You're a good and gracious King
You're a good and gracious King*

Christ Candle – Tunisia



We light the Christ candle as a visible sign of God's presence with us; that he has come as light into a world of darkness. We light the Christ candle to remind ourselves that Jesus is the light and that in him we become light too. We are never a light on our own. The light we have and can offer to others is the light of Jesus of Nazareth. May we be God's light in 2021.

Jesus of Nazareth said that to be a Christian means to be maltreated for his name's sake (Matthew 5:11) and the apostle Paul said that "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). Mistreatment as a disciple of Jesus is not a matter of *if* but a matter of *when* and a matter of *degree*. Hope is a vital aspect of being a disciple of Jesus. This is especially true under heavy persecution. In America, the land of religious freedom, we have it pretty easy in that there is minimal outright persecution against Christians. **May we make the most of our religious freedom to honor Christ and give credible and coherent witness to him! At the same time, may we be aware of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who don't share the same freedom that we do. The 34th place that is most challenging to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is Tunisia.**

Of the 12 million people living in Tunisia, 23 thousand are disciples of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. For Christians in Tunisia, persecution comes in various forms, including targeted discrimination that is often hidden from public view yet affects believers' daily lives. Many Christians face job insecurity, family abandonment and verbal, mental and physical abuse – making it dangerous to share their faith with family members, neighbors, friends or colleagues. As a result, most converts to Christianity choose to hide their faith and cannot openly worship and live their lives as Christians.

Prayer Points: Pray that persecuted believers will sense God's presence in their daily lives as they navigate Islamic society. Pray for Christian converts to grow in their faith. Ask God to raise up leaders who will teach the Bible and plant underground churches. Pray for persecuted Christian youth, especially those who face pressure from non-believing family members when they want to marry.

Jesus is the Light. We are a light. Shine His light!

Light the Christ candle at this time

Song – Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1rXneeti9s>

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount, I'm fixed up, on it
Mount of Thy redeeming love*

*I was lost in utter darkness 'til You came and rescued me
I was bound by all my sin when Your love came and set me free
Now my soul can sing a new song, now my heart has found a home
Now Your grace is always with me
And I'll never be alone*

*Come, Thou Fount, come, Thou King; Come, Thou precious Prince of Peace
Hear Your bride, to You we sing, come, Thou Fount of our blessing
Come, Thou Fount, come, Thou King; Come, Thou precious Prince of Peace
Hear Your bride, to You we sing, come, Thou Fount of our blessing
O, to grace, how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be*



*Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts a-bove*

*Come, Thou Fount, come, Thou King; Come, Thou precious Prince of Peace
Hear Your bride, to You we sing, come, Thou Fount of our blessing
Come, Thou Fount, come, Thou King; Come, Thou precious Prince of Peace
Hear Your bride, to You we sing, come, Thou Fount of our blessing*

Song – Sing To The King -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnFVXnXWSU>

*Sing to the King who is coming to reign
Glory to Jesus the Lamb that was slain
Life and salvation, His empire shall bring
Joy to the nations when Jesus is King*

*Come let us sing a song
A song declaring we belong to Jesus
He is all we need
Lift up a heart of praise
Sing now with voices raised to Jesus
Sing to the King*

*For his returning we watch and we pray
We will be ready the dawn of that day
We'll join in singing with all the redeemed
Satan is vanquished and Jesus is King!*

*Come let us sing a song
A song declaring we belong to Jesus
He is all we need
Lift up a heart of praise
Sing now with voices raised to Jesus
Sing to the King*

Offering – Oakdale Rescue Mission

Oakdale Rescuer Mission (ORM) reaches out to transform lives and provide hope in Oakdale by reaching out to the homeless and others in need. Outreach includes meals, clothing, other humane support, resources and referrals. ORM's desire is to enhance the lives of the entire community of Oakdale. ORM is a faith-based Christian non-profit organization whose purpose and heart is to serve others, which includes our entire community.

We remember that giving is an act of faith, a practice of hope and an expression of love.

(You can give by sending your offering to the church, P.O. Box 217, Oakdale Ca 95361 or consider giving online through your bank. Our deacons can help you with this if necessary.)

Scripture Reading – Luke 19:28-40

This week is Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week. The season of Lent is coming to its



conclusion – the death of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Since we are studying the book of Acts this year, written by doctor Luke, I thought it would be good to hear his version of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem less than a week before he would be executed. Jesus Christ has recently raised Lazarus, his friend back to life after being dead for four days. Jesus’ fame and popularity for the miraculous feats he was doing was growing rapidly. While some were legitimately genuine disciples of his, many more were likely not. Yet, disciple or not, this scene images brilliantly our design and purpose and the way things are supposed to be. It is a powerful illustration of a key aspect of our identity as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. More clearly, it is a powerful illustration of our identity as new creations in Jesus Christ by grace through faith and our lifelong response to him.

With this in mind, please read Luke 19:28-40.

Gospel Message – The Stones Will Cry Out

How do you measure the worth and excellency of a soul? What a profound question (and might I add a deeply important one)! How would you answer that? Henry Scougal posed that question and answered it 370 years ago. Now Henry was quite the remarkable young man. At age 15 he came to Aberdeen University in Scotland and by age 19 he was appointed professor of philosophy. After four years, he pastored a church for one year before being called to Kings College to teach divinity and then died of Tuberculosis on June 13, 1678 at the age of 27 years old. Shortly before his death, Henry had written a letter to a friend to stimulate his spiritual life as it had grown quite stagnant. After his death, the friend began to circulate it privately until a Bishop got a hold of it and officially published it and has been republished continuously for over 300 years now. A hundred years after the Bishop published it, Charles Wesley (of the Methodist branch of Christianity) sent a copy of it to a lost friend of his, George Whitefield which was instrumental to his conversion to Christianity. If you are familiar with church history, you recognize those names as Wesley led the Methodist revival of Britain and Whitefield led the Great Awakening in America. Thus, his letter/book provided much of the stimulation behind a massive spiritual revival in two countries! His letter/book speaks to the four essentials of the divine life (life as a disciple of Jesus Christ of Nazareth). The first contains the answer to the question posed above. So, how would you answer it? Well, Henry answered it this way, “The worth and excellency of a soul is measured by the object of its love.” Wow! Read that a couple of times and let it sink in a bit more. It is important and profound because it speaks to the heart of what it means to be human.

I submit to you that our passage today addresses this question and answer quite directly. The worth and excellency of a soul is measured by the object of its love. The following pages will unpack this and show that the praise of the people for Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the zenith and the nadir, the beginning and the end that defines the worth of a human’s soul to be excellent and worthy. It is not the mind or thought or what one thinks. John Piper says, “Clear and accurate thought is beautiful only in the service of right affections. The devil himself is quite an able intellect. But he loves all the wrong things. Therefore, his thinking serves evil and his soul is squalid.” Exactly! And it is not our wills that determines the worth and excellency of a person’s soul (their essence) although they are important. Will can be led by duty or be half-hearted. Again, John Piper says, “To know a soul’s proportions you need to know its passions. The true dimensions of a soul are seen in its delights.” That is, what is loves. James K. Smith, professor at Calvin University agrees and has written an entire book on this entitled “We Are What We Love.” I aim to show you that it is at the center of human experience to want and



strive to be happy and that this is not a bad thing (although it can and used in all kinds of evil ways). Second, this desire for happiness that goes awry is not because it is too strong but because it is too weak! It needs to grow, not be reduced and squelched. Third, we praise what we prize (and we prize that which we love.) Thus, a sign of what we love is given by noticing what we praise or make much of. Fourth, praise for what we prize is made complete when it is shared with others. I submit to you again; this is exactly what is happening in the scene of Jesus of Nazareth’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

So, what is going on in our passage? What is happening? Jesus is near the end of his ministry; his time on earth is drawing to a close. He has recently raised Lazarus from the dead (Gospel of John, chapter 11) and the jealousy and envy and anger and hatred of the religious elite are reaching a breaking point. Jesus is in the region of his good friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany, a couple of miles east of Jerusalem. He had “gone on ahead” of the disciples, maybe to be alone to think and pray about his last week before he is crucified. Whatever the reason, when he arrives near Jerusalem, his disciples are now with him and he has clear intentions of entering Jerusalem on a donkey. To show once again that there is more to Jesus of Nazareth than meets the eye, he tells two of his disciples when they were at Mount Olivet, directly across from the temple, to go into a nearby village to procure a colt that will be there. Take it and if anyone asks you why they were doing this they were to reply, “The Lord has need of it.” (This is not completely unusual as there was a custom in which dignitaries could procure property for personal reasons.) And it happens exactly this way! Jesus is more than meets the eye!



They then bring it back to Jesus and put cloaks on it and Jesus gets on and they head towards Jerusalem, down the Mount of Olives (pic left), across the Kidron valley (pic right) and up the slopes of the hills of Jerusalem and the temple mount. This undoubtedly would have sparked images that Zechariah prophesied about hundreds of years before:



Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

So what we see here is that Jesus knows who he is and he knows the future that is heading his way. In essence, he is directing the events that will lead to his death. Make no mistake, Jesus is God and as such he is in full control of his destiny!

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? He is the King of glory! He is the King of kings! He is the One to whom we are to bend the knee and to whom we are to praise and glorify for who he is and for what he has done! They are praising him for the miracles he has done. They are praising him just like Zechariah prophesied they would and should. We praise him for the miracles he has done as well but they include his perfect life, his sacrificial and substitutionary death and resurrection to life after life after death. We also praise him for his ascension to heaven as the One and Only Lord and Savior who has conquered sin and death so that we might experience the freedom of the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting in him! Multitudes of people arrive and join in the praise and worship to him saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” This is from Psalm 118:26 and it is beautiful and completely appropriate! This is a picture of humanity at its finest! Acknowledging their Creator and King and Savior and Lord and praising him and



worshipping him with beautiful words of adoration. This image of the way things are supposed to be – people happily praising their King is juxtaposed against the contrary response of the way things are not supposed to be but are – the response of the Pharisees. They disapprove and are not praising or worshipping or quoting and singing Psalm 118 to Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, they command Jesus to rebuke the people! Okay, we need to pause a moment at the irony and deep sadness of this scene. There is a crowd acting and responding to Jesus the way they were meant to; the way that we are designed to and the Pharisees go straight to God, straight to the King, straight to the Messiah and tell him to make the crowds stop! Are you kidding me! The contrast could not be any starker (however, keep this scene in mind as the praise and worship of Jesus will heighten the contrast with the crowds shouting for his crucifixion less than a week later.

The picture of the crowds going nuts over Jesus stirs my heart! I long to be able to worship Jesus like that more consistently than I do now. I long to express my delight more fully and more deeply as the most profound expression of a heart of love for God. This scene stirs our hearts because it is what we are designed to do. It stirs our hearts because it taps into the recesses of our heart and soul and exposes how much we miss the mark on this; how often we end up praising lesser, created things than the Supreme One who is the Creator of all things! Jesus himself confirms all this when he says to the Pharisees that if these people remain silent, the stones would cry out! We were meant to praise Jesus of Nazareth, Immanuel – God with us! And if we don't do it – creation will – the very stones do what we are supposed to do because it is the fitting response to God. Praise and worship are by definition something that we enjoy doing – it is a delight when it comes from the heart and from love. Let's explore this longing to praise and worship and delight a bit more for it gets at the core of who we are and how we are to respond to Jesus of Nazareth and glorify and make much of him. Happiness and prizing and desiring praising are all connected with one another.

Let's walk through these four things. First, all people seek happiness. Blaise Pascal articulated this well when he said, "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves."¹ I so deeply connect with this and have seen it so consistently in others for so long that I don't even question it. If you can show me otherwise, I am completely open to it. Now, a quick qualification. Some folks immediately think of selfish happiness and how can that be good. You are right but that is not what I am getting at here nor is Pascal (nor John Piper for whom I am indebted for pulling all this together in the introduction of his book, *Desiring God*.) What we are getting at is the root desire for happiness, not the way that is attempted to be filled. We'll get to that next. One thing at a time and this is at the very center. God created us to be happy – happy in and with him; happy with each other (all others – imagine that!) and happy with the created natural order. This is God's fundamental design and that is something I deeply appreciate and love about the Biblical God. We are repeatedly called to delight in God and that at his right hand are pleasures forever more. In fact, the commands to love God and to love each other as we love ourselves is itself rooted in happiness. Love is happy. It is sin that mucks things up. It is sin that disorients us. It is sin that cheapens the worth and excellency of our souls.

¹ Blaise Pascal, *Pascal's Pensees*, trans. W. F. Trotter (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), 113, thought #425.



Sin and our sinful desires, they tend to seem so strong. We all fight temptation...and we all give in far too many times. We know the lure and power of temptation to lust, to envy, to be greedy, to be slothful, to be wrongly angry, to be gluttonous. We fight but go back for that fifth piece of pizza or seconds on dessert. We fight but end up on a website we know we should not be on. We fight but we covet and are envious of what our neighbors have. We fight but we just can't seem to get up and get to church or finish the project around the house or be there for our kids. We fight to be less angry but a single car cutting us off sends us into a rage. We fight and we fight yet we seem to continually be overpowered. Or are we? Is our sinful desires too strong for us? Do we need to temper them and reduce them and put them on a shorter leash? CS Lewis would say no. Listen to these insightful words from him regarding our desires (remember, every desire is rooted in the motive to be happy), "If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."² Our desires are too weak, not too strong!! Apart for Christ, our desires for earthly things are feeble. Compared to a desire for finding our happiness in God, finding our happiness in the things of this world is thin and fragile and easily disrupted and frustrated.

When sports or ag or money or clothes or children or success or material things become our main source of happiness then we are half-hearted creatures making mud pies in the slums instead of fully alive creatures making sand castles on the beach. None of the things listed are bad, far from it – they are all good. But when they move from good to god, the problem arises. When they are placed in a position to do what only God could do, they will fail and we will reduce our capacity and experience of true joy and delight and happiness (BTW – the word "blessed" means to be happy!). All these things are to be enjoyed in their proper place in the world and that is all subordinate to Jesus Christ. We see and understand and experience our children and sports and cows and so on through our relationship with God. He is our comfort and security, not money. He is our joy and delight, not the pleasures of the world – they are meant to point to the ultimate source of joy and delight and pleasure – God himself. When we lose sight of God, when our eyes drift away and fixate on the things of this world, we are like ignorant children who have settled for a far lesser experience of life. Jesus says that he came to give us life and life abundantly while the thief comes to steal and destroy and take away. We need to strengthen our desires by orientating them to God, to Jesus Christ. We need to find the ultimate fulfilment of our desires in him. He is the beach. He is the glorious sand.

However, this does not mean we are to be happy-clappy Christians faking a smile and putting on a fake mask of phony happiness. This is important: we can worship and praise God even in lament and mourning. Joy runs deep in Christ. In fact, it is bottomless. The same hands that are lifted up to Jesus praising him as the King of kings can be the same hands that are lifted up in despair and sorrow and

² C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1965), 1–2.



mourning crying out, “Why?” and “How long?” These are hands of praise because they are turned to Jesus Christ of Nazareth; they are turned to God. Like the Psalmist facing adversity of all kinds turns to God and reminds himself that He is with us and for us and ultimately, he is victorious and will have the final say in all things. He is our comfort. He is our Rock. He is our strength. He is our peace. He is our righteousness. He is our love. Love is strong. And not just any love but the pure love of loving as God intends us to love, according to his design and desires. A right ordered love is strong and not weak, powerful and not feeble, solid and not hollow. And a right ordered love praises God precisely because it is an orientation and posture of delight in God for who he is and what he has done and what he promises to do no matter what is going on around us or in us. I know, that is far easier said than done but the great fight of faith is to keep turning our eyes to Jesus as the fulfillment of all our desires.

So we are designed for happiness and this desire is not too strong but too weak when it is not orientated and situated in loving God and each other as ourselves. But how do we know where are desires our orientated and situated in? Look at what you praise; what you speak most passionately about; what you speak most about; what you spend most of your time thinking about; what you spend most of your money and resources on. C.S. Lewis says that we praise what we prize. This is not hard to see or understand. The things we love and delight in we talk about and hold in high esteem. We speak well of them to others (evangelists of??? sports, ag, children, toys, success...). I delight in baseball and will often speak of it in favorable and passionate ways with others. But, if I am not careful, this enjoyment can become too much of an end in itself apart from God who is the God who designed us to have the capacity to play and compete in ways that honor him and find their ultimate fulfillment in. Here is the full quote from C.S. Lewis on praising what we prize, “But the most obvious fact about praise – whether of God or anything – strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that *all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless . . . shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game – praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. . . . I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: 'Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?' My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value. . I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.”⁴*

Indeed, we praise what we prize and we prize most that which we love most. Notice the last sentence of the quote. Praise not only expresses happiness and enjoyment but it completes it! That is, it is an important part of enjoyment. This is the fourth and final thing. Think about it. When I see a magnificent sunset and my heart and emotions are stirred at its beauty, I can hardly stand still and keep quiet and keep it to myself. Immediately I look around and see who I can share this with. I'll run into the house and get Char or Caleb or Camryn to come out, “Drop what you are doing! Come out here! You gotta see this! It's absolutely amazing!” These are not suggestions but commands!! Why do we do this!

⁴ C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958), 94–5.



Because sharing praise with others fulfills the enjoyment; brings it to its completion. It is satisfying to enjoy something with another. And that is what these people are doing in our passage. They are finding great delight and enjoyment in Jesus of Nazareth for who he is and what he has done (they don't know what he is about to do!). They are praising what they prize; they are expressing their love for him and they are doing it together! It is a magnificent scene – a scene of how things are supposed to be. Because, if they remain silent in this moment of his obvious revelation and declaration of being the Messiah King; if they remain silent, the inert stones will cry out in praise! That is not a good thing! We are not to be silent people about Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We are to verbally make much of him through song and words of adoration and praise and yes, even lament and mourning as we turn to him for our comfort and support. Pray that the stones don't start crying out – that would be a terrible sign as it means that we are not doing what we were designed and saved to do – praise and glorify God forever. What is the chief end of humanity? What is your chief end? What is my chief end? What is our chief end? Answer: To glorify God by enjoying him forever! When the object of our love is the living, triune God the worth and excellency of our soul is priceless.

What is the worth and excellency of your soul?

Take a moment and reread our affirmation at the beginning of this liturgy. How has this message changed or deepened your understanding of it? Why do you think we have it as our number one affirmation? How would a prolonged experience of discipleship as duty and not delight affect us? How is duty like a crutch and delight like our natural legs?

Communion Meditation

Professing: (Apostles Creed)

**We believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose and ascended to heaven
Where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Proclaiming: 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25 (Paraphrased)

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it saying, "this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the meal he took the cup of wine and pouring it out said, "this wine is my blood, a new covenant of grace poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

Remember and believe that the body & blood of Jesus was given & shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Song – Ancient of Days -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJUtaW21qAM>

*Though the nations rage, kingdoms rise and fall
There is still one King reigning over all*



*So I will not fear for this truth remains
That my God is, the Ancient of Days
None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days
Though the dread of night overwhelms my soul
He is here with me, I am not alone
O His love is sure, and He knows my name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days
None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days
Though I may not see what the future brings
I will watch and wait for the Savior King
Then my joy complete, standing face to face
In the presence of the Ancient of Days
None above Him, none before Him
All of time in His hands
For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
All the power, all the glory
I will trust in His name
For my God is, the Ancient of Days
For my God is, the Ancient of Days*

Sending as Disciples of Jesus

Friends in Christ. We are designed and saved so that we no longer act like ignorant children making mud pies in the slum because we cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. May we, in the person and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit find our greatest joy in Jesus Christ, our Creator and Savior and Lord and King and friend. May we sing his praises as his disciples in times of celebration and in times of lamentation wherever we find ourselves. May we not remain silent. May the stones never have to cry out around us!

We are sent out by God into the world as his witnesses. As we go, may we know with our minds and believe with our hearts and confess with our mouths the gospel of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. And may we live in a manner worthy of that Good News at work, at home, at school and in our neighborhood to the glory of God and through the person and power of the Holy Spirit.