



Family Worship May 14, 2017

Preparation for Worship

Gather in a quiet place, free of distraction (put silenced cellphones in another room)

Decide who will lead the various parts. A family worship experience should involve everyone, *especially* children! This Family Worship Guide can be adapted by families of 1 or 2 people.

Here are the parts:

- Reading the Call to Worship
- Reading the Scripture
- Reading the Pastor's Devotional and Our Offering to God sections
- Leading the Prayer (your own words, from notes)
- Playing the songs (if you use them) on a laptop, tablet, or phone (Just listen to the songs if you prefer not to sing☺) You can copy and paste the links or find them with Google (skip the commercials!)

Discuss who and what you should include in your prayer. In addition to people within the church family, also discuss friends, co-workers, and neighbors for whom you want to pray. Consider what local, national, or international concern you should include (Whoever is to lead the prayer can take notes—it's OK to look at notes when praying). A simple way to pray is to go by ACTS:

Adoration: giving God praise by naming God's beautiful qualities (Almighty, loving, etc.)

Confession: pausing for a minute for everyone to acknowledge their sin silently & privately

Thanksgiving: naming specific ways God has provided for needs or has answered prayers

Supplication: ask God to help or provide for specific people or situations

Suggested Order of Worship

Call to Worship

Psalm 40:1-3

Song of Praise

Bless The Lord O My Soul (10,000 Reasons)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_IRI0E

Scripture

2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Pastor's Devotional (on next page)

Our Offering to God

When we hear the word "offering," we naturally think of giving money to finance God's work. We also think of the time that we volunteer to bless other people. Yet our "offering" also includes how we choose to live as "sent people" in the places where we live, work, and play.

- Did you learn something new? Does it excite you?
- How might your ordinariness or brokenness be used by God to show "that this all-surpassing power comes from God, and not from us"?

Prayer (from your notes)

Song of Faith (optional)

Trading My Sorrows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KsfwvpcQhY>

Pastor's Devotional

Let's wrap up our series of messages on what it means to be God's covenant people. Last Sunday we celebrated the Apostle Paul's incredible assurance—we who seek to share Jesus can have great confidence, for “God has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant” (2 Corinthians 3:6). Through the grace of Christ, God not only makes us His people, in the process God gives us confidence and competence. This happens quite naturally, as we will muster up trust (the “faith of a mustard seed”) to take small but significant steps to follow Jesus. As we imitate Jesus by making sacrifices to serve others, God uses us to “spread the aroma of Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:15).

Today we read from the next section. Paul continues to defend himself against attacks from false teachers. Elsewhere in the letter, we learn that these false teachers have ridiculed Paul's physical weaknesses, his unimpressive appearance, his need to provide his own income, and his suffering from persecutions. They've sought to discredit Paul with the Corinthian church, suggesting that if he were God's truthful apostle, he would be healthy, wealthy, and popular.

Paul defends himself by asserting that authentic Christ-followers will often look “weak.” He won't twist the Gospel into a false message that tells sinners what they want to hear. Instead, Paul says “we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God” (Are you listening, health and wealth preachers?). Instead of trying to dazzle listeners, Paul insists that “setting forth the truth plainly,” and preaching “not ourselves but Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake” has more integrity.

Surprisingly, looking weak can serve to highlight the power of Jesus! Verse 7 declares: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” More than 30 years ago, I claimed this as my “life verse.” Like jars of clay, we are ordinary...and breakable! We might feel totally incapable of carrying God's awesome message of grace and power. We aspire to be attractive and effective vessels for the Gospel. Yet it's when we let God work through our weakness that our lives give credibility to the message of Jesus. That's why, if you're in a conflict, having the humility to say that you were wrong can be more persuasive than trying to prove that you were right.

Verses 8-12 illustrated vividly the many ways God's all-surpassing can be evident in earthen vessels: “we are hard pressed from every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” As with Jesus, we struggle, we suffer, and we face death “so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.”

Church in the Wild often has guests from other churches who worship with us to celebrate what God is doing and provide warm encouragement. Last Sunday Scott, Karin, and Anthony Cerasale were our guests. Anthony is now in college, remarkable because several years ago he was hit by a car and sustained severe head injuries. For weeks, he lay in a coma at Holmes Hospital, fighting for his life. Family and friends virtually camped out in the ICU Waiting Room. A refrigerator and coolers were hauled up to hold food and drinks. That waiting room became a haven of Gospel hospitality. People of faith and unfaith spoke openly with gentleness. Authentic prayer flowed naturally. The Holy Spirit's peace shone brightly through Scott and Karin's simple faith that God would take care of their son.

We are jars of clay that bear the grace and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's not be hindered by concern that our lives aren't together enough, that we aren't spiritual enough, or that we don't know the Bible well enough. God makes us competent! Don't be held back by the fear that your brokenness will show if you let down your guard. If you are asking God to heal you, letting others see your “clay feet” will help them see Jesus!

Even if your life seems to spin out of control, God can use your suffering for His good and glorious purposes. As Paul begins and ends this section: “therefore, we do not lose heart.”