

Harvest at Home

(things to think about, discuss with others, and act upon, in response to what we hear in worship)

Harvest at Home, Morning Call to Worship, Hebrews 8:2

Main ideas:

- 1) Jesus isn't just sitting but serving.
- 2) Jesus' service as our priest in the holy places is the main "service" of a Christian "worship service"
- 3) In the Old Covenant, God designed the worship and man built it; in the New Covenant, God both designed and built it Himself (see point 2)
- 4) The necessity of simplicity in Christian worship on earth is driven by the glorious majesty of Christian worship as mediated by Christ the priest in Heaven

Questions for Application:

- 1) Do I respect God as the designer of our worship services, or do I secretly (or not secretly) want to add to or take away from what He has designed? Do I really think that Word (read, sung, prayed, preached) and sacrament are adequate as "the stuff" of our earthly part of Christian worship?
- 2) Do I appreciate what Christ is doing in glory during Christian worship?
- 3) Does our worship's simplicity on earth thrill me, because it is a reminder of its glory in Heaven?
- 4) Am I more impressed with what we do in worship, or what Jesus does in worship?
- 5) Do I appreciate how important is the reality of Christ's sacrificial death to our worship services?
- 6) Do I appreciate how important is the reality of Christ's permanent resurrection to our worship services?
- 7) Do I appreciate how important is the reality of Christ's current rule to our worship services?
- 8) Do I give myself to the reading, singing, praying, and hearing in Christian worship in the way that I would if I really believed that Jesus Himself is leading our service?

Notes:

Harvest at Home, Morning Serial Reading, Mark 14:1-25

Main ideas:

- 1) It is possible to have all of the sacraments of God and none of the Spirit of God (to be very careful about keeping Passover and even more keen about carrying out murder!)
- 2) Jesus is more valuable than everyone else put together—in fact, the only value any of us have is value that we get from how valuable Jesus is
- 3) Jesus Himself places a priority on serving Him in direct, worshipful interaction with Himself over (the also necessary, and especially to the poor) service to Him by doing good to others.
- 4) Jesus prepares everything, even our preparations and service to Him
- 5) Jesus very intentionally, carefully, and masterfully planned and accomplished His death as our sacrifice, substitute, and salvation from physical and spiritual death as a punishment from God
- 6) God's sovereign control over everything doesn't excuse or take away what we deserve for our sin
- 7) Jesus offers Himself for our health, strength, joy, forgiveness, and salvation
- 8) Jesus plans to celebrate forever and ever with those who receive Him in this life

Questions for Application:

- 1) Do the thoughts and plans of my heart, and the words that come out of my mouth, and my actions during the week show that what I do on the Lord's Day isn't really who I am?
- 2) Do I really think of Jesus as a Person? Do I spend time with Him and spend money on Him?
- 3) Do I tell myself that other things that I do are for Jesus, when I don't actually do anything for Jesus?
- 4) Am I amazed at how intentionally Jesus died for me?
- 5) Do I try to use God's control as an excuse for my sin?
- 6) Am I amazed at how personal and costly is Jesus' love in giving Himself?
- 7) Do I love and enjoy Jesus in everything I do and experience to the point that what I want more than anything is for the Lord's Supper to end and the eternal feast with Him to begin?

Notes:

Main ideas:

- 1) God's promises are truths to rest in, because they are already true before what is promised actually happens
- 2) Certainty of future blessing is a big part of believers' lives on earth
- 3) We are to enjoy already things that have not yet happened because God has promised them
- 4) We are to respond already to things that have not yet happened because God has promised them
- 5) God with us is the only way that we can ever truly do our duty
- 6) God's plan isn't to make us independent of Him but entirely dependent upon Him
- 7) Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God with us
- 8) God's promise of multiplying offspring is primarily a spiritual promise
 - a. It is a spiritual promise for natural children
 - b. It is a spiritual promise for the objects of evangelism
 - c. Jesus is the ultimate recipient and fulfiller of the promise for spiritual offspring
- 9) On this side of the cross, we have certainty of God's promises:
 - a. Because God is the One who made them
 - b. Because of Christ's finished work, and Christ's prayer on the basis of that work

Questions for application:

- 1) Do I treat God's promises for the present and the future as if they already happened?
 - a. Do I ever stress as if they might not happen?
 - b. Do I think much about going to be with the Lord, or the resurrection on the last day, or the everlasting life of joy in the New Heavens and New Earth? Do my mind and heart go regularly to these for encouragement to my current duty or comfort in my current trials? Do I enjoy already their certainty? Do I respond already with gratitude and service to God?
- 2) Do I consciously depend upon God in my duty?
 - a. Is my hope and strength for duty sapped by my personal condition or circumstances around me?
 - b. When my duty *does* get done, is my exulting closer to boasting pride in self or amazed gratitude toward God?
- 3) Do I view spiritual multiplication as one of the main promises of God to me and one of the main objectives in everything I do?
- 4) Is spiritual multiplication the single greatest object of my parenting?
- 5) Am I impressed with the certainty found in a promise's having been made *by God*?
- 6) Am I impressed with the impossibility of something not coming true if Christ has earned it by His life and death?
- 7) Am I impressed with the certainty of Jesus' getting everything He asks for ... and how much of what Jesus asks for is actually directly and individually connected to me?

Harvest at Home, Evening Call to Worship, Psalm 148:11-13

Main ideas:

- 1) Everyone exists to glorify God.
- 2) No matter how great a king is, everything about him is not for himself but for God's glory.
- 3) The most humble poor people are not so low that they cannot exist for God's glory.
- 4) Male and female both exist for God's glory.
- 5) Everyone in every nation exists for the glory of the same God.
- 6) You're never too old to praise God.
- 7) No one is too young to praise God.

Questions for application:

- 1) What excuses do I make for telling myself that someone else is a better fit for praising God than I am?
- 2) What am I most proud of? How can I plan and force myself to remember that this and every other good in me are for the praise of God alone?
- 3) Do I intentionally spend time worshipping God every day?
- 4) Am I eager for the times when I worship God, as if it is my purpose for existing?
- 5) Am I eager for the end of this life and the end of this age, because *worship* will be more perfect and more constant then?
- 6) Do I look for God's glory in everything I see?

Notes:

Harvest at Home, Evening Serial Reading, Jeremiah 24

Main ideas:

- 1) We all deserve to be treated very badly.
- 2) God can treat amazingly well whomever He wishes.
- 3) You can't tell which of these two categories someone is in by the events that are happening to them.
- 4) One of God's amazing blessings to those whom He saves is giving them a heart to know Him and wholeheartedly return to Him.

Questions for application:

- 1) Do I believe that I deserve to become a horror, a reproach, a byword, a taunt, and a curse?
 - a. If so, why am I so upset when these things actually happen to me?
 - b. If so, why am I not more amazed at the grace by which things that are better than this happen to me?
- 2) Do I really believe in God's right to do good to whomever He wishes?
 - a. Is there anyone whom I think or treat as if he or she could never be saved?
 - b. Do I think of people's salvation as God maintaining His right to save? Am I ever tempted to think of God as being unfair to people by not granting them to hear the gospel or by not granting them to believe it?
- 3) Do I ever measure what God thinks of me by what seems to happen to me?
 - a. Do I think or feel more as if God is against me when bad things happen?
 - b. Do I think or feel more as if God is for me when good things happen?
 - c. Do I tend to think of God's blessing in terms of easy or comfortable things happening in this life?
- 4) Do I count knowing God as a blessing that comes completely from Him and not at all from me?
- 5) Do I count turning away from my sin and turning to God as a blessing that comes completely from Him and not at all from me? Does the prayer, "Thank you, God, for giving me repentance" sound strange to my ears or perhaps to my heart?

Notes:

Main ideas:

- 1) God has the right to reject anyone and everyone.
- 2) God has not used that right upon Israel.
- 3) God's action in the heart of a person to save him is always stronger than the action of that person in his heart to rebel.
- 4) It is impossible for God to set His special love upon a person and then later to change His mind—even our sin can't change the special love that God sets upon us.
- 5) We can't tell what God is actually doing from what we can see
 - a. He works everywhere at once.
 - b. He works in the heart, which is beyond our ability to observe
- 6) God saves for His own sake. Salvation is about God maintaining His rights, and not at all about any imagined rights of ours.
- 7) You can tell whom God *has saved* because their changed hearts are displayed in changed actions. But it is always salvation that produces the actions, and never actions that produce the salvation.
- 8) The first of these actions that salvation produces is the faith through which we are justified. This faith is *produced* by God's saving action; it never *earns* God's saving action.
- 9) The point of "remnant style" saving is to show how completely by grace they are chosen.
- 10) The point of saving by grace is to eliminate all boasting and reserve not just some people for God, but especially to reserve ALL GLORY for God.

Questions for application:

- 1) Do I really understand the right of God to damn EVERYONE to Hell? Do I freely acknowledge His right to do this to ME?
- 2) Do I have a sense of the absolute desperation of humanity, with no rights whatsoever, and deserving to be damned? Do I have a sense of MY desperation before God: MY having no rights before Him, MY deserving to be damned?
- 3) Am I amazed that even for utterly desperate, totally Hell-deserving sinners, instead of insisting upon this right, He has insisted upon His divine right to SAVE? Am I amazed that He would insist upon saving ME?
- 4) Whom have I written off as unsavable?
 - a. What people groups or religions?
 - b. What individuals?
- 5) Am I pessimistic about the CURRENT state of the church and the spread of the gospel?
- 6) Am I tempted to downplay Scripture's description of true heart change as being visible in ACTIONS?
 - a. Do I ever excuse wicked actions with the good news that actions cannot save?
 - b. Do I ever give myself credit for righteous actions as if God didn't savingly produce them?
- 7) Which do I care more about: the rights and glory of God, or the imagined rights and stolen glory of sinners?
- 8) Do I really love God: Does it really make a difference to me that God would get glory out of a situation?