

# Divine Worship

2 Corinthians 2.15-17

“The Fragrance of Christ: The View from Here (6)”

## Preparation: Psalm 84.11

For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
The LORD will give grace and glory;  
No good thing will He withhold  
From those who walk uprightly.

Silent Meditation

## Call to Worship

Leader:  
O God, behold our shield,  
And look upon the face of Your anointed.  
For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.

Psalm 84.9, 10, 1

All:  
How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts!

## Hymn of Praise

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)  
Lord of hosts, how sweet Your dwelling; how my soul longs for Your courts!  
Let my soul with joy keep telling of Your grace forever more.  
Like a bird upon the altar, let my life to You belong.  
Blessed are they who never falter as they praise Your grace with song!  
  
Blessed are they whose strength is founded in Your strength, O Lord above.  
All whose hearts in You are grounded journey in Your strength and love.  
Though they weep with tears of sadness, grace shall all their way sustain.  
In Your presence, filled with gladness, they shall conquer all their pain.  
  
Lord of hosts, my prayer receiving, hear me, help me by Your grace!  
In Your courts I stand believing; turn to me Your glorious face!  
Lord, our sun, our shield, our glory, no good thing will You deny  
to those who proclaim Your story, and who on Your grace rely.

Psalm 84.1-12

## Invocation and Call to Confession

Leader:  
O Lord Jesus, thank You for calling us to come to You, and to come through You and in Your Name to worship our God and heavenly Father. Fill us with Your Spirit, and plant us in Your Word, that our worship may be acceptable through You, and that we may grow to love You more. We pause in our coming before You, Lord, to let Your Spirit search us, that we may confess our sins, repent, and be cleansed. **Hear our silent confessions, O Lord.**

Silent Confession

All

**Word of Assurance**

**Psalm 32.1, 2**

Leader:

Blessed *is he whose* transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin *is* covered.

Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

All:

Thanks be to God!

**Hymn of Assurance**

**Psalm 85.10, 11**

(Lyons: *O Worship the King*)

In Jesus God's grace and truth are combined;  
both goodness and peace in Him do we find.  
Truth springs from the earth as He walks in our midst,  
and righteousness flows from the heav'ns as a gift.

**Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving**

**Psalm 85.1-3**

Leader:

LORD you have been favorable to Your land;

All:

You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.  
You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;  
You have covered all their sin.  
You have taken away all Your wrath;  
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.

All may offer prayers of praise and thanks to the Lord. At the end of these prayers, the Leader shall **lead the people in praying the Lord's Prayer.**

**Offerings to the Lord**

Leader:

Let us now bring our offerings to honor the Lord and edify one another by His Word: a passage of Scripture which has been particularly helpful; a brief word of praise for some grace of God bestowed; an observation from creation which revealed the glory of the Lord; a word of appreciation for some aspect of the beauty, goodness, or truth of the Lord.

When as many as like have shared, the **Leader shall pray:**

We give You thanks and praise, O Lord, and offer ourselves to You in our confession of faith together (**all together, saying the Apostles' Creed**):

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### **The Doxology**

**All**

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!  
Praise Him, all creatures, here below!  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts!  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!  
Amen!

### **Prayers of the People**

Leader:

Let us bring our prayers and supplications to the Lord.

All may offer prayers of intercession or supplication, seeking mercy and grace to help in our time of need. **At the end, let the Leader and people pray Psalm 85.6, 7, as indicated:**

Leader:

Will You not revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You?

All:

Show us your mercy, LORD,  
And grant us Your salvation.

### **The Ministry of the Word**

**2 Corinthians 2.13-17**

The Leader will read the passage for today, or ask another to read it.

Let's recall the specific requests Paul made for the Ephesians – and for us – in his prayer in Ephesians 1.15-23, Paul prayed:

- That the eyes of our heart might be opened
- That we might know the hope of His glory
- That we might know the hope of His Kingdom
- That we might lay hold on the Lord Himself, our great Inheritance of faith
- That we might realize more of the power of Christ and His salvation

Paul has been outlining a vision of the unseen things that are so much a part of true faith in Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews reminds us (11.1) that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”<sup>1</sup> The more we focus on and engage these unseen realities, the more our faith will increase, and more evidence of true and lively faith will be visible in us.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation combined from NASB and KJV

But what evidence should we expect from learning to live from the vantage point of unseen things? Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1 ends with a vision of Jesus Christ, "filling all things in all things." When we *see* Jesus in His glory, *lay hold on Him* as our inheritance, and *draw on the power of His indwelling Spirit*, we *become more like Jesus* in every way. And as Jesus fills us with Himself, He overflows through us to fill the world we inhabit, beginning in our own Personal Mission Fields.

In our text for today, Paul says that we become "the fragrance of Christ." Let's think about that:

1. Why is "fragrance" a good way of thinking about Christ's Presence in and through us?

Paul says that the "whiff of Jesus", so to speak, is to some people the "aroma of life *leading* to life." We carry the fragrance of life itself, and to those who have eternal life, this pleasing aroma helps them to want more.

2. What can we do to be more consistently the aroma of life leading to life to our fellow believers?

To others, who do not know the Lord, the fragrance of Jesus in us can be an "aroma of death *leading* to death." For some people, no matter how sweet the fragrance of Jesus is, they will not receive it, because it brings into view their life of being dead in trespasses and sins. The fragrance of Jesus brings out the stench of death in them.

3. Should the fragrance of Jesus also have this effect on us who believe? Explain.

We can't make everyone love the fragrance of Jesus. But we must not fail to emit that fragrance in all our words and deeds, so that Jesus, and the fragrance of Him, fills all the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of our daily lives. Jesus is alive from the dead, in the full beauty and sweet fragrance of everlasting life. And we are seated with Him, seeing Him in His glory, seeking His Kingdom, drawing on His power, and going to our world to fill it with His Presence, promise, and power.

## Hymn of

**Psalm 85.4-9**

(Lyons: *O Worship the King*)

Restore us, O God, renew us in peace,  
and cause all Your wrath against us to cease.  
Will You evermore all Your wrath to us show?  
Revive us that we may Your joy again know.

Lord, show us Your love; restore us, we pray!  
and help us to hear the words that You say.  
Speak peace to Your people; in truth let us stand.  
We fear You; let glory and grace fill our land.

## Benediction

**Psalm 85.9**

Leader:

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.

All:

Thanks be to God!

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