

A WORD ON WORSHIP

REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM SEPT 21, 2014

BY PASTOR ANDREW KICKERT, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hear Sunday Sermons at www.SunriseTC.org

1 John 3:1

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

The heart of every pastor desires to strengthen the spiritual stamina of his flock. This is particularly the case when, as in John’s church, opponents are seen standing outside the door. But the question that roams my heart and mind is what strategy is best for our church to reinforce Christian discipleship? John can often raise more questions than answers, which allows for us to wrestle with the Holy Spirit to find application in our lives. John tells us we are the children of God. And all of this is the result of God’s love that He initiated on our behalf. If that does not cause you to stand up and praise God, look to John and his example of rejoicing in this truth.

When John tells us our status is as “God’s children” it is proclaimed as an absolute, unyielding decision initiated by God. That is why John exclaims, “How great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God.” It is a part of a divine choice, an unmerited adoption, where we are brought into the family of God. It is only in this framework that we see our security with God is completely out of our hands and firmly in His. Only then does assurance of salvation move from an intellectual construct to a concrete reality. Our confidence comes from finding out God is the One who holds us secure.

I am continually amazed at the number of church-going people who intellectually understand they are God’s children and cannot be un-adopted, and yet their hearts are filled with insecurity. Caught up in their feelings of the moment, they wonder how they can be children of God if they don’t “feel” like they are children of God. Or others who look upon their personal struggle with sin and question if they ever were in the family of God. This may be a common experience of many today. But if my confidence is based on what I feel in my Christian walk, then confidence is frail indeed.

Experience is an important part of our Christian walk. Christ told us we must be born again, walk in obedience to His commands and live holy and righteous lives. While these experiences are important, the measure of our assurance is not the magnitude of the experience of the past, which often fade as we become older. Rather, through the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ and with it the payment of our sin by our faith, God makes known to us His immeasurable love and makes our assurance steadfast.



Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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SEPTEMBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

The Hymns We Sing

COURTESY OF THE CYBER HYMNAL™

<http://www.hymntime.com/>

Be Thou My Vision

<http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/b/e/t/bethoumv.htm>

“When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.”

– Numbers 12:6

Words: Attributed to Dallan Forgaill (*Rob tu mo bhoile, a Comdi cride*); translated from ancient Irish to English by Mary E. Byrne in Eriú, Journal of the School of Irish Learning, 1905, and versed by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912, alt.

Music: Slane, of Irish folk origin. Slane Hill is about ten miles from Tara in County Meath. It was on Slane Hill around 433 AD that St. Patrick defied a royal edict by lighting candles on Easter Eve. High King Logaire of Tara had decreed that no one could light a fire before Logaire began the pagan spring festival by lighting a fire on Tara Hill. Logaire was so impressed by Patrick's devotion that, despite his defiance or perhaps because of it, he let him continue his missionary work. The rest is history.

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle shield, sword for the fight;
Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight;
Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SUNRISE

September 2014

- Sept. 21 8:45 a.m. 1 John 3:1 *The Father's Great Love*
 10:30 a.m. Sunday School
- Sept. 23 7:00 p.m. Bible Study at the Kikkert's
- Sept. 26 6:30 p.m. Friday Night Fellowship
- Sept. 28 8:45 a.m. 1 John 3:2-3 *The Purifying Hope*
 10:30 a.m. Pastor Andy Preaches for the Presbyterians
- Sept. 30 7:00 p.m. Bible Study at the Kikkert's
- Oct 3 7:00 p.m. Friday Night Game Night

Sudanese Christian Meriam Ibrahim speaks of her prison ordeal

WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Sudanese mother who was sentenced to hang for refusing to give up her Christian faith has spoken about her ordeal for the first time, saying she never once considered giving in and that she made her stand on behalf of all those facing persecution around the world because of their religious beliefs.

Nearly two months after finally being allowed to flee her native country and taking refuge in the United States, Meriam Yahya Ibrahim, 27, said she had been subjected to intense daily pressure while in prison to accept conversion to Islam but that she consistently refused to give in to her captors' demands.

"If I did that that would mean that I gave up," she said in a first interview given to the Fox News Channel in the US. "It's my right to follow the religion of my choice. I am not the only one suffering from this problem.

"I put my life at risk for the women of Sudan and for Christians live under difficult circumstances, persecuted and treated harshly. There are many Meriams in Sudan and throughout the world."

Ms Ibrahim, a Christian, revealed that following her arrest on charges of apostasy last year – abandoning Islam – she had been given three days by the authorities in Khartoum to succumb and reconvert and that she had refused.

"I would never leave my faith. If you don't have your faith, then you are not alive."

There was an international outcry when a court in Khartoum subsequently sentenced her to 100 lashes and death by hanging. A campaign for her release begun by Amnesty International won the support of world leaders, including David Cameron.

Pregnant at the time of her sentencing, she was refused access to proper medical care for the baby's birth. "I was supposed to give birth at a hospital outside of prison but they denied that request as well," she said. "When it was time to give birth, they refused to remove the chains from my ankles. So I had to give birth with chains on my ankles."

Meanwhile, the attempts to force her to convert were relentless, she revealed. "While I was in prison, some people came to visit me from the Muslim Scholars Association," she said. "These were imams that created an intervention by reciting parts of the Koran for me. I faced a tremendous amount of pressure."

Under Sudan's strict Islamic penal code women are forbidden from switching faiths. It also states that a woman's faith is determined by that of their father. Ms Ibrahim, a graduate of Sudan University's school of medicine, was indeed born to a Muslim father. However, her mother was Christian and she insisted at her trial that she had been raised from birth as a Christian.

In 2011, meanwhile, she had married her husband, Daniel Wani, a Christian from southern Sudan who also had American citizenship. He had taken up residence in Manchester, New Hampshire, where the couple and their two children – one born before her ordeal – are living today.

Ms Ibrahim was released in June after Sudan's highest court overturned her death penalty.

But she and her family were forced to seek refuge in the US embassy in Khartoum after the Sudanese government refused to allow her to leave the country.

When finally she was given permission to leave in late July, she made a stop in Rome and was granted an audience with Pope Francis before continuing on to New Hampshire.

Living in Manchester, a city with many Sudanese refugees, seemingly has challenges of its own, however.

"I still don't have a stable life but it's better than prison," Ms Ibrahim said.

