

INSPIRED WORD

April 3, 2019

Summary of chapters in “Into His Likeness” – small group discussions on same.

PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit, and give us the grace to focus on You and on the Father and on Jesus tonight. We’ve come from many places but we’re here to look to You. We’re here to give You praise. We’re here to enter into Your holiness. We’re here to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So, Lord, help us to do that. Help us to press in, to focus, and not be distracted, to give You our sacrifice, a sacrifice of praise here in this place tonight. Glory to You.

PRAYER

Lord, You pour forth upon us even now as we sing to You and open our hearts, Lord, to that love that sustains, that love that saves, that love that heals, that is better than life, Lord. Glory to You!

PRAYER

Lord, You look upon us with love no matter how broken we are; it makes no difference to You, Lord. Your love is infinite and poured forth here, now, to us. Glory to You, Lord, glory to You.

SHARING

I just really love from that song... there are two lines that we were singing tonight jumped out at me so hard. “We cast aside our shadows and trust you with our sorrows.” How many of us trust God with our sorrows and think He’s actually big enough to handle them, to support them, to hold them? That we can get mad at Him, we can hurt, we can grieve, we can trust Him with our sorrows? And then the next verse is: “The dark is just a canvas for your grace and brightness.” If there’s no contrast in our world, in our lives, in our life, how can we see God? How can someone else see God in us? A friend of mine was driving to his 96-year-old grandmother’s funeral with their ten children in their van and all of a sudden, it started smelling funny. And they pulled aside and they got into an empty parking lot and got everybody out of the van and it burst on fire. And air bags were exploding and the gas tank exploded – the whole thing was a giant ball of fire. But all the kids got out; everybody got out. They were protected. And they were so afraid. It was like everything they brought with them was gone. Their full transportation was gone. What are they going to do? Including their computer with the new ministry that they had just launched this year, like about three months ago. He quit his job full-time and he and his wife started a new ministry for Catholic families called The Messy Family Project, and all their information was on the laptop in the van. It’s like, “O Lord, you called us to this ministry and now you just took it away. What are we going to do? How can we

rebuild this thing, the resources?" And the suitcase melted into a giant lump of bluck over the top of the laptop, and when they were able to get back to the van the next day, they were able to retrieve the hard drive from the laptop. He protected even that little piece. Trust Him with our sorrows so that His grace and rightness can shine for the world to see.

SHARING / EXHORTATION / SCRIPTURE

I would like to share a child-appropriate art project. You take a piece of paper and you scribble all over it heavily with crayon and then you cover the surface with black ink. Then you take a sharp instrument and etch onto the black paper and what comes of it is a cheerful design in which the bright colors just come popping out. Well, it's a favorite childhood memory of mine. So what I think the Lord is saying (...). (singing) Thou art my God and I will praise thee. Thou art my God; I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good and his mercy endureth forever. Psalm 118 is the kind of psalm that when you're kind of under duress, this is a psalm to turn to. **Psalm 118:1-17:** *O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever! Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures for ever." Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures for ever." Let those who fear the Lord say, "His steadfast love endures for ever." Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free. With the Lord on my side I do not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side to help me; I shall look with triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. All nations surrounded me; in the name of the Lord I cut them off! They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side; in the name of the Lord I cut them off! They surrounded me like bees; they blazed like a fire of thorns; in the name of the Lord I cut them off! I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Hark, glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly, the right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!" I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.*

CONFIRMATION

This next song is confirmation of God's steadfast love for us.

SHARING / SCRIPTURE / PRAYER

This isn't exactly on topic but I went to a funeral this morning and tonight I was reading Ezekiel 33. It was a difficult funeral; it really was. **Ezekiel 33** talks about the watchman. There's a watchman. If you deliver what is given to you to deliver, then the blood is not on your hands. It's not on your head; it's on the head of the individual who receives the warning. But if you do not deliver the warning to the individual, it's on your own head. And I think sometimes we let these times go by when we're supposed to give warning to people, who are in their sin and we do not take care of business by giving them the warning as God instructs us in Ezekiel 33. And sometimes there are difficult funerals that follow. It's very important that we do what God calls

us to do each and every day, what He calls us to do. Father, I just praise You and exalt You and magnify Your holy name, glorify Your holy name, for You alone are worthy. Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb of God, worthy is the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. We praise You and exalt You and magnify Your name.

SCRIPTURE / EXHORTATION

Along the same lines that Jimmy was saying about when we're out there evangelizing, we're really talking to sinners. And one of the things that we need to realize is from Romans 5:8. And there's 34 bible verses about loving sinners. But **Romans 5:8** says: *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.* And the best thing to realize is that these people need help bad. It's the whole idea of hating the sin but loving the sinner. And that's hard to do sometimes. Jesus has the words in the verse of the Our Father – "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." When they trespass against us, they trespass against God – they're sinning. So how do we love them? That's something we need to pray for. And then Jesus also said, "*I go but I will leave my Spirit with you*" (**John 16:7**). And so we need to realize that we have the Holy Spirit in us but also, not just in us, but going outward to be the hands and feet of Jesus.