

# First Sabbath Worship

## November 3, 2007

Welcome and Announcements

Norman Moll

*If you are a visitor, we wish you a special welcome. You are invited to enter into our worship completely. Please to stay after worship for dinner with us in the Activity Center. "H" indicates hymns found in the Church Hymnal. "C" indicates hymns found in Celebrate. May God's Spirit touch and renew your life today.*

## ENTER TO WORSHIP

### PREPARING TO HEAR THE WORD

Preparation "Prelude in Bb" *Johann Krebs*

Choral Call to Worship "Let Us Sing Together" *Czech Tune*

Leader: We are gathered in the presence of the risen Christ, who remains with us forever.

**People: When we remain in the love of Christ, love, joy, and peace grow.**

L: We are rooted in Christ's love that we may bear these fruits together.  
With the faithful of every race, tribe, people, and nation, we say

**People: "Blessing, Glory, Wisdom, Thanks, Honor, and Might be to God forever and ever."**

\* Hymn of Praise "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven" **C-4**

### CALL TO CONFESSION:

L: The Savior bends low, at home with the humble, taking up residence in the contrite heart and forming all people in God's image.

**P: We come before you, O God, and wait for the kindling flame of your Holy Spirit. Show us your way. Guide our thoughts as we examine our hearts before You.**

SILENCE for personal reflection and confession

### ASSURANCE

Isa. 33:14 – 17 *New Century Version*, adapted

The sinners . . . are afraid;  
those who are separated from God shake with fear.  
They say, "Can any of us survive this devouring fire?  
Who can live when this fire that burns on and on?"  
A person who does what is right  
and speaks what is right,  
who refuses to take money unfairly,  
who refuses to take money to hurt others,  
who does not listen to plans of murder,  
who refuses to think about evil—  
this is the kind of person who will be safe.

He will be protected as he would be in a high, walled city.  
He will always have bread,  
and he will not run out of water.  
Your eyes will see the king in his beauty.  
You will see the land that stretches far away.

**Congregational Response**

**“Glory Be to the Father”**

**H-660**

## **HEARING THE WORD**

Children’s Story

“A Picture’s Worth a Thousand Words”

Norman Moll

Anthem

“Lord Jesus, Be Near Me”

*Natalie Sleeth*

Lord Jesus, be near me by night and by day; thy Spirit surround me and light Thou my way;  
Lord Jesus, restore me, that filled with Thy love, my heart may know clearly Thy Father above.  
Lord Jesus, forgive me if needful I be, send comfort to heal me, from sin set me free.  
Lord Jesus, renew me, that forth I may go, Thy bountiful goodness and wisdom to show.

Lord Jesus, prepare me to serve Thee full well; to all men Good News of Thy Kingdom to tell;  
Lord Jesus, inspire me with others to share the joys of Thy mercy, the depths of Thy care.  
Lord Jesus, protect me, preserve me from harm,  
uphold me with strength from Thine Almighty arm.  
Lord Jesus, direct me, that all of my days Thy paths I may follow in infinite praise.

Scripture

(Adapted and selected from Hebrews 7, 8 and 9, *The Message*)

Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of the Highest God. He met Abraham, who was returning from battle, and gave him his blessing. Abraham in turn gave him a tenth of the spoils. "Melchizedek" means "King of Righteousness." "Salem" means "Peace." So, he is also "King of Peace." Melchizedek towers out of the past—without record of family ties, no account of beginning or end. In this way he is like the Son of God, one huge priestly presence dominating the landscape always.

Earlier there were a lot of priests, for they died and had to be replaced. But Jesus' priesthood is permanent. He's there from now to eternity to save everyone who comes to God through him, always on the job, ready to speak up for them.

So now we have a high priest who perfectly fits our needs: completely holy, uncompromised by sin, with authority extending as high as God's presence in heaven itself. Unlike the other high priests, he doesn't have to offer sacrifices for his own sins every day before he can get around to us and our sins. He's done it, once and for all: offered up himself as the sacrifice. The law appoints as high priests men who are never able to get the job done right. But this intervening command of God, which came later, appoints the Son, who is absolutely, eternally perfect.

In essence, we have precisely this, a high priest with authority right alongside God, conducting worship in the one true sanctuary built by God. The assigned task of a high priest is to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and it's no different with the priesthood of Jesus. But these earthly priests provide only a hint of what goes on in the true sanctuary of heaven, which Moses caught a glimpse of as he was about to set up the tent-shrine. It was then that God said, "Be careful to do it exactly as you saw it on the Mountain."

Jesus' priestly work far surpasses what these other priests do, since he's working from a far better plan. If the first plan—the old covenant—had worked out, a second wouldn't have been needed. But we know the first was found wanting, because God said,

This new plan I'm making with Israel  
    isn't going to be written on paper,  
    isn't going to be chiseled in stone;  
This time I'm writing out the plan in them,  
    imprinting it on the lining of their hearts.  
I'll be their God,  
    they'll be my people.  
They won't go to school to learn about me,  
    or buy a book called *God in Five Easy Lessons*.  
They'll all get to know me firsthand,  
    the little and the big, the small and the great.  
They'll get to know me by being kindly forgiven,  
    with the slate of their sins forever wiped clean.

By coming up with a new plan, a new covenant between God and his people, God put the old plan on the shelf. And there it stays, gathering dust.

That first plan contained directions for worship, and a specially designed place of worship. A large outer tent was set up. The lampstand, the table, and "the bread of presence" were placed in it. This was called "the Holy Place." Then a curtain was stretched, and behind it a smaller, inside tent set up. This was called "the Holy of Holies." Beside the curtain was placed the gold incense altar and inside the curtain the gold-covered ark of the covenant containing the gold urn of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, the covenant tablets, and the angel-wing-shadowed mercy seat. But we don't have time to comment on these now.

After this was set up, the priests went about their duties in the large tent. Only the high priest entered the smaller, inside tent, and then only once a year, offering a blood sacrifice for his own sins and the people's accumulated sins. This was the Holy Spirit's way of showing with a visible parable that as long as the large tent stands, people can't just walk in on God. Under this system, the gifts and sacrifices can't really get to the heart of the matter, can't assuage the conscience of the people, but are limited to matters of ritual and behavior. It's essentially a temporary arrangement until a complete overhaul could be made.

But when the Messiah arrived, high priest of the superior things of this new covenant, he bypassed the old tent and its trappings in this created world and went straight into heaven's "tent"—the true Holy Place—once and for all. He also bypassed the sacrifices consisting of goat and calf blood, instead using his own blood as the price to set us free once and for all. If that animal blood and the other rituals of purification seemed effective in cleaning up certain matters of our religion and behavior, think how much more the blood of Christ cleans up our whole lives, inside and out. Through the Spirit, Christ offered himself as an unblemished sacrifice, freeing us from all those dead-end efforts to make ourselves respectable, so that we can live all out for God.

For Christ didn't enter the earthly version of the Holy Place; he entered *the Place* itself, and offered himself to God as the sacrifice for our sins. He doesn't do this every year as the high priests did under the old plan with blood that was not their own; if that had been the case, he would have to sacrifice himself repeatedly throughout the course of history. But instead he sacrificed himself once and for all, summing up all the other sacrifices in this sacrifice of himself, the final solution of sin.

In our fallen condition everyone has to die once, then face the consequences. Christ's death was also a one-time event, but it was a sacrifice that took care of sins forever. And so, when he next appears, the outcome for those eager to greet him is, precisely, salvation.

