

Straight from the "Heart"

April 14, 2024

Enemies of Abundant Living (7)

 HARTLAND

Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve

Pushing Forward to Full Potential

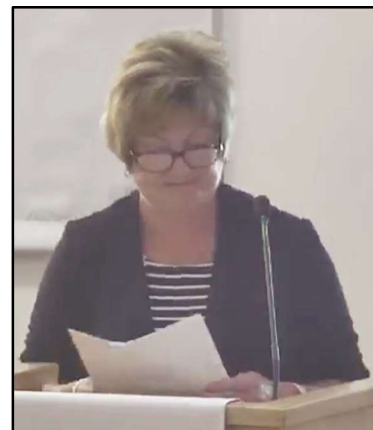
Opening Prayer

O great and holy God, we stand in awe of your creation. We are humbled by your love. We only ask that you receive our appreciation for all your mercies. We offer ourselves in the confidence that our lives will honor you by the healing, hope, and wholeness that will flourish as you work through us. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

adapted and blended from a portions of a couple prayers by
Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship

Call to Worship

Come, let's praise the heavenly king, for by him we are ransomed, healed, restored, and forgiven. Let's praise him for all his grace and favor to people in distress. He is faithful forever, slow to chide and swift to bless. Like a father, he cares and spares us, like a mother he gently bears us ... He rescues us with his wide, freely flowing mercy. Join all those on earth and in heaven who gather to praise the God of grace.



Call to Worship and 10,000 Reasons were inspired by the lyrics of
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven by Henry F Lyte and Psalm 103.

Music Join in praise with the band as we sing

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

Words: Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin

Music: arr by Ken Barker © 2011 Shout Publishing

Refrain

Bless the Lord O my soul, O my soul, Worship His holy name.
Sing like never before, oh my soul, I'll worship Your holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning;
It's time to sing Your song again,

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,
let me be singing when the ev'ning comes.

Refrain

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger,
Your name is great and Your heart is kind;
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing,
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Refrain

And on that day when my strength is failing,
the end draws near and my time has come;
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending,
ten thousand years and then forevermore.

Refrain 2x

I'll worship Your holy name. Lord, I'll worship Your holy name.
Sing like never before, oh my soul, I'll worship Your holy name.
Worship Your holy name. Worship Your holy name

Responsive Reading 1 (R: Reader, C: Congregation)

R: Paul elaborates on the song of our life, the worship we offer and to whom we offer it.

R: O the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge. It is impossible to understand his decisions!

C: His ways are unsearchable!

R: Who knows the mind of the Lord well enough to be his counselor? Who has given so much that God feels indebted to him? For all things are from him and through him and to him,

C: and are intended for his glory forever.

R: *Therefore*, offer yourselves as a sacrifice, living and set apart for God. This will please him.

C: This is the truly reasonable way to worship him.

R: Don't conform to the standards -- don't copy the behavior and customs -- of this world. Let God transform you into a new person by renewing your mind and changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's good, pleasing, and perfect will for you.

C: We will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying, and able to succeed.

R: Don't think you are better than you really are.

C: We will not have exaggerated ideas about our own importance.

R: Develop a sober estimate of yourself.

C: We will be honest in our self-evaluation.

R: Base it on the degree of trust which God has given to each of you.

C: We will measure our potential by the faith God has given us.

R: In his grace, God has given you different gifts for doing different things well.

C: We will use our gifts to the very best of our abilities.

Inspired by Romans 11:33-36; 12:1-3,6-8 (CJB, NLT)

Music When we better understand who God is, and how his thoughts are so far our own. then we also realize our proper relationship with him -- It is not we who need to advise God, but we who need to hear from him, and respond to what he tells us and equips us to be and do. Sing with us

Word of God Speak

Words: Peter Kipley, Bart Mallard Music: arr. by David Shipp
© 2002 Simpleville Music

I'm finding myself at a loss for words, and the funny thing is, it's okay.
The last thing I need is to be heard, but to hear – what you would say.

Refrain

Word of God, speak; would you pour down like rain,
washing my eyes to see your majesty?
To be still and know that you're in this place;
please let me stay and rest in your holiness. Word of God speak.

I'm finding myself in the midst of you, beyond the music, beyond the noise.
All that I need is to be with you, and in the quiet, hear your voice.

Refrain 2 x

Theme

Once upon a time, Three monsters, Pogo the Ogre, Big Giant, and The Abominable One had spent hundreds of years locked up in Monster Prison. They had entered voluntarily, when they realized that frightening children was not a good way to make a living, but they thought it was the only thing they knew how to do well. They were sad and lonely figures, feeling useless and without hope. Since they had voluntarily surrendered, they were actually free to go whenever they wanted, but they felt there was nothing for them to do and had nowhere to go.

However, all that changed on the day they locked up Nightmare. Nightmare was a tiny little monster who had the ability to guide people's dreams into funny surprising endings. The three monsters loved listening to his adventures. The only problem was that Nightmare tended to sleep – a lot, and it didn't seem anything could wake him.

One day, in a bit of impatience, the three monsters combined their terrific cries and Nightmare woke up with a start. But he wasn't frightened or angry. He was happy. "I've always wanted to get up early – so much more of the day to enjoy," he said. "You know what, you three should work as alarm clocks. I know a lot of sleepy people who would be grateful and willing to hire you."

The three monsters were so happy to hear those words. Finally, a useful purpose for their lives! They were wished luck as they left the prison. They started as alarm clocks for people who had trouble waking up, but as time went on and they got more involved with more people, and heard their stories, they realized there were many other good things they could do as well – the skills had just been waiting for the monsters to discover them, and then they lived as happy people. The end.

adapted from "Waking Nightmare" by Pedro Pablo Sacristán, freestoriesforkids.com

The point is that the three monsters realized what they were doing was wrong and finally succeeded in putting away the bad, which was a good start; but it wasn't until they found God's gifts and positive purposes for them that they finally felt free and blessed and having a meaningful life. James works on both these points of not only putting away the bad, but filling our lives with good.

Responsive Reading 2 (R: Reader, C: Congregation)

R: Do not say "God is tempting me." God cannot be tempted by evil, and he never tempts anyone.

C: Temptation comes from our own evil desires,

R: which entice and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions.

C: And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

R: Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father. He chose to give birth to us through a Word that can be relied on.

C: And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

R: If you look closely in the perfect law that gives freedom, and do what it says

C: Then God will bless you for doing it.

From James 1:13-15,17-18,25

Theme 2

Paul says we are clay jars that carry the treasure of Christ's life within us, which makes us temples of the Holy Spirit that he bought us with a price (See 2 Corinthians 4:7,10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20) So we are to be careful about what goes into it. I'm using a glass jar instead of clay so hopefully you can see it better. In last week and today's context, if we are tempted to keep thinking negative things about myself: "My sermons drone on and on and even I can't wait till it is over", (* **toss in a milk dud after each phrase**) or I see a picture of myself and wonder how that 140 pound physique got so covered up that I don't recognize myself anymore * and I don't have the skill to do this * or to do that * I don't know how to deal with this situation * or that person * and so on...make up your own for you... and before long, we have put so many "duds" in our life that nothing is going to "go off" in it. Thinking badly about ourselves and life – James talks about it the context of sin, but the principle is closely related a lack of faith in God, in life, in self, will give birth to "dud-ness", (These are milk duds, in case you can't see them – just shapeless blobs of nothing that fill up our lives), and when it is full grown, the ability to live abundantly fails.



Jones recommends we meet these "dud" thoughts at the door and slam it in their face. (**empty the bowl back into cup**) Keep them out of our lives. "Lock the door and throw the key under a red-hot stove so you cannot get at it," is what he says. But if you keep dancing around it, if you give them a place and seat in your life, if they get your attention, they will get to you. Paul recommends that instead, we dwell on the positive things, whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy, – and if your mind is full of these things, it will be difficult to have any room for these negative thoughts to get a foothold in your psyche – well, the way Paul puts it, the peace of God, like a military sentry, will guard your hearts and minds (See Philippians 4:4-9) from the dud-ness of life.



Music And it is in restoring our belief in God's power and grace to work through us that we find the freedom to live a productive, purposeful life.

I Am Free

Words and Music: Jon Egan

arr. by David Shipps

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Through you the blind will see, through you the mute will sing;
Through you the dead will rise, through you all hearts will praise.
Through you the darkness flees, through you my heart screams I am free.

Chorus (* echo)

I am free to run *, I am free to dance *, I am free to live for you *, I am free *.

Through you the kingdom comes, through you the battle's won;
Through you I'm not afraid, through you the price is paid.
Through you there's victory, because of you my heart sings I am free.

Chorus (2x) (* echo)

I am free.

Music The caveat, the oxymoron, the irony, of course, is that to experience that kind of freedom, the freedom that says, "Yes we can", we must give ourselves completely to God. Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing



I Give You My Heart

Words: Reuben Morgan Music: arr. by David Shipps

© 1995 Reuben Morgan/ Hillsong Publishing

This is my desire, to honor You. Lord, with all my heart I worship You.

All I have within me, I give you praise. All that I adore is in You.

Lord, I give You my heart, I give You my soul.

I live for You alone.

Ev'ry breath that I take, ev'ry moment I'm awake,

Lord, have Your way in me.

(Repeat all)

Lord, I give You my heart, I give You my soul.

I live for You alone.

Ev'ry breath that I take, ev'ry moment I'm awake,

Lord, have Your way in me. - 3x

Prayers

Lord, we want to be who we are. But at the same time, we want to be more: we want to be the people you intend us to be. Then we shall work and play and speak and serve with simplicity and dignity in the center of your will and purpose for us.

We come to you to find power to be strong. Save us from these make-believe strengths that move us away from your will and leave us weak. Move us away from the negative things that we keep throwing into our lives. We want to be the kind of people that nothing without can ultimately deter us, and inwardly, we want to be confident in you and in your strength.

Petitions We pray for those who need strength today, who need prayers, today we name Specifically, * Mary Jo Mallot requests prayers for Jim, who is not doing well with stomach pain. * Sherry Rice asks for people who are having a hard time financially, * Pat Schleh requests for Patty and Carl Didomizio still recovering from covid, * and Ann Martin, still recovering at home, * and Terri asks us to continue praying for Stephen Brittain who had a setback and is in the hospital with a bleeding ulcer, so continue to pray for him, * and a few months back we had been praying for Wes, a friend of one of my friends, Sally. At last report things were going well. She called this week to renew her request to pray for him. She gave no details. And so of course, we will continue to pray for him, * and for Fran Warthman, * for Julie Tuck another relative of a friend of mine, * and for those who are also on our hearts and minds that we have not named out loud. We'll pause just a moment for us to lift them from our hearts to God's ears. (Pause)

Lord, we know that in you, no matter what happens to us on this earth, we know that we cannot be completely defeated if we are living under your wisdom and will, and our future lies wide open before us. What we have, and what we are, we offer to you so that we may powerfully live as you taught us to pray. **Lord's Prayer**

Music And we live the prayer in good times and in not so good times, in blessed gains, and in losses, we praise God's hallowed name. Sing with the praise band

Blessed Be Your Name

Words and Music: Matt & Beth Redman
arr. Jeff Anderson © 2002 Thank You Music

Blessed be Your name in the land that is plentiful,
Where Your streams of abundance flow, blessed be Your name.
Blessed be Your name when I'm found in the desert place,
Tho' I walk through the wilderness blessed be Your name

Refrain

Ev'ry blessing you pour out I'll turn back to praise.

When the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say,

Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your name.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be your glorious name.

Blessed be Your name when the sun's shining down on me,

When the world's all as it should be, blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name, on the road marked with suffering,

Tho' there's pain in the offering blessed be Your name.

Refrain

Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your name.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be your glorious name.

You give and take away, you give and take away;

My heart will choose to say, Lord, blessed be Your name.

(Repeat)

Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your name.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be your glorious name.

(Repeat)

Intro to and Bible Reading 3

It can happen in good or bad times, but there are two particular times that most of us may struggle with the temptation to not bless the Lord by fulfilling our purpose and destiny. The first is when we first discover a new task that lies ahead of us, and the second are during those times when resistance and setbacks in that task discourage us. Jeremiah, like most of the prophets and faith leaders of the Bible, had a hard time believing that they were equipped for their task and had to be encouraged by God. Then, reading between the lines, Timothy's enthusiasm is flagging as he is faced with disrespectful resistance and has to be encouraged by his mentor, Paul. First Jeremiah describes his experience.



Here is the word of the LORD that came to me:

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Before you were born, I set you apart for myself.

I have appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.”

I said, “Oh, Sovereign LORD, I don’t even know how to speak! I’m just a child!” But the LORD said to me, “Don’t say, ‘I’m just a child.’”

“For you will go to whomever I send you,
and you will speak whatever I order you.
Do not be afraid of the people,
for I am with you, says the LORD,
to protect and rescue you.”

Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth, and said to me,

“There! I have put my words in your mouth.
Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms
to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish,
to build and to plant.”

And then Paul’s words to Timothy

If you present these [teachings] ... you will be serving Christ Jesus well; it will show that you have digested the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have followed... godliness is valuable for everything, promising benefits both for the present life and for the life to come... indeed, it is for this that we toil and strive: we have our hope set on a living God who is the deliverer of all humanity, especially of those who trust.

Don’t let anyone look down on you because of your youth; on the contrary, set the believers an example in your speech, behavior, love, trust and purity. Do not neglect your gift... Be diligent about this work, throw yourself into it, so that your progress may be clear to everyone. Pay attention to how you live and to the teaching. Continue in what is right for by so doing you will deliver both yourself and those who hear you.

Jeremiah 1:4-10, 1 Timothy 4:6a,8b,10, 12,14a,15-16 (CJB, NLT)

Sermon Push Forward to Full Potential

A restaurant was trying to drum up some business and so had a little contest hoping to lure people into their store. A sticker is peeled off the side of the coffee cup to reveal a prize. One extremely hot morning, a lady peeled off the contest tag and began shouting, “I won a motor home, I won a motor home!”

The waitress came over and said “That can’t be. We aren’t giving away prizes like that.”

“But that is what it says!” She insisted. “Now I can go where the weather is good.” The waitress rushed to the manager who came running out of his office. “Ma’am, you could not have won a motor home, we are only giving away free breakfast foods.” The customer was getting angry that they were trying to back out of their promise. She defiantly turned the cup to reveal the prize. It said, “Win a Bagel”

We look at Jeremiah’s call from the womb as something exciting for all of us, and Paul’s advice to Timothy to “lead by example” as an inspiring motivation; and quote them often as promises to buoy people up as they move into a tentative future. We see Winnebagos. We also assume that if God calls someone to something, it will naturally lead to success, which we tend to define by cultural standards, meaning spectacular achievement stories, miraculous growth, incomparable skills, as well as the reception of glamor and image, and upward mobility. This then gets combined with pop culture’s philosophy of instant and great reward for a minimal amount of work. And the real danger is that we also measure spiritual vitality, even the validity of someone or something by these same worldly standards, and there are an abundance of Christian books by authors whose special and often isolated anecdotes reinforce this way of looking at our faith, and are also generalized, making it sound like anyone can do nearly nothing but dream and God will almost instantly pour out all sorts of worldly types of blessings upon them.

The temptation, then, is to think unrealistically about what we can be and/or to not put in the effort required to fulfill that dream, that calling, that destiny. When I went to kindergarten, I did really well. As a matter of face, when I went to elementary school, I did pretty well. I got good grades in spelling and penmanship; math, english, band, gym -- and I didn’t hardly have to study outside school at all; and what I did do in school didn’t feel all that much like studying either.

When you get good grades with what seems like little effort, you can develop some sloppy study habits. When study habits go bad, you eventually reach a level of training that requires more, and if you approach it with the same effort that you mastered the afternoon nap in kindergarten, you’ll find you are in for a rude awakening and over your head before you know it. And if the studies don’t get you, life experiences will. Even I can bury a talent in the back yard rather than invest it. (Matthew 25:14-30 (esp vv 18, 24-27))

When you get to that point, then you have two options. One is to lower our ambitions. Even I can succeed at the game limbo if the cross bar is set at 6'2" ... or the high jump if the bar is set at 12", but even that is getting a little shaky. But will we truly feel good about accomplishing something that is below our potential? The other option is to adopt and hold on to the unrealistic, unreachable dream that we have already, in frustration, stopped striving for and we settle for empty positivity, living in an easy chair in the detour of unfulfilled daydreams that we keep dreaming.

In either case, we may need to readjust and start again – setting the bar at a level that will keep us pressing forward to our full potential, as ES Jones put it: to discipline our aspirations into possibilities, or as Paul told us, to use our gifts and abilities in line with the amount of trust that God has gifted us, and to do that to the very best of our abilities. So, the right question for this is not, “What can God or others do for me?” nor is it even, “What can I do?” but it is “What is it that God can and wants to do through me?”

One of my favorite Bible stories that illustrates this is the call of Levi, or better known as Matthew. (See Matthew 9:9-13) As Matthew writes it, he saw his call to follow Jesus as much a healing story as any of the physical healing stories that surround his personal story. Past the age of rabbi following, he hadn't made the cut. As a tax collector, he would have few to no options for his future – without hope. In his primary social mirror, (how others saw him) he was seen as a despicable sinner, a traitor to his faith and nation, rejected as an outcast.

And along comes Jesus, who sees is this hopeless traitor as a man of great potential. A man who, if freed from his personal and social mirrors, could move beyond his past and present and would exceed his capacity, amazing himself and others, both. See how Christ sees you, and let him help you to become that, and don't confuse what is successful in the world's eyes with what is successful in God's eyes.

Because while the world is seeing Winnebagos everywhere, our original faith heroes, people of the Bible saw in their call and encouragement a mere bagel (and it wasn't even kosher 😊). Jeremiah left the womb, grew, and preached for 40 years with relatively little impact, ended up in jail for his faithful words, and was so excited (NOT) about it that he produced the book of Lamentations. You know what a lament is, right? He had a long book that was almost nothing but lamentations.

Paul had already been in jail for his faith – (something that at one point the Corinthians pointed to as one of the signs of invalidating his value as a leader – because if a leader really had faith, God would have delivered him from that – and so they used it against him, as well as a bunch of other negative things that Paul experienced. Because -- they used worldly standards to determine godly value. (See 2 Corinthians 4:6-11ff for one example of how Paul defends his struggles as a sign of faithfulness rather than failure). But right now, Paul was temporarily out of jail and traveling when he wrote young Timothy to “stir up your gift, be bold, lead by example, don’t let your youth get in the way”. It is likely that Paul was hearing, perhaps from Timothy himself, that his gift, his boldness, his leadership was fading out of his life; probably discouraged because people were dismissing him because of his youth. Jeremiah was recognizing some of the same issues, “I’m too young!” he told God. “Don’t let anyone tell you that you are too young,” says God.

Jeremiah and Timothy were fighting the call and ministry the way most people in the Bible fought it. God and sometimes friends tell us we can, while we (and sometimes others) tell ourselves that we can’t. We are too young, we’re too old, we’re too unskilled, we’re too inexperienced, or too experience, we’re too small of a group or too big of a group, we are not able to change, and we have a whole litany of stuff, don’t we?

In the mid to late 60s, quarterback Jack Kemp led the Buffalo Bills to a couple AFL Championships – but then the team had a couple bad years (one he was injured and out), then he had a bad year, and that year he was asked to run for Congress. When he was debating about running for Congress, he said, “If I do throw my hat into the ring, it’ll probably get intercepted.

We can make excuses to not try, to make no effort, to not be obedient, to justify why not... In Kemp’s case, he still had a no-cut contract for 4 years, so if he lost the election, he could go back and be a quarterback again. But he didn’t lose and he went on to be a US representative for 18 years, among other things.

Every calling has interruptions and interceptions; but God doesn’t give in to our excuses or our setbacks. He **Purpose and Destiny** reminds us that we are designed and destined for something. This is the Winnebago moment for God is with us. In God’s words to Jeremiah and to Timothy through Paul: *We do have a purpose*. Jeremiah, all the prophets, really, were called to warn the nation against their sinning ways, most often dealing with oppressive actions of the powerful against others and its eventual but unavoidable conse-

quences if a change of ways did not occur, and then at the same time offer a hope that would encourage the people after the nation spiraled. And because most of their work was predictive, they were often ignored and jailed, and even killed for their words. The greatness of their faithful truth telling was often not recognized until they were long gone from the scene. As someone said, it takes a lot of faith in the future to plant an acorn – knowing they will never see the mature oak. It takes a lot of faith to work for results in the world that we may never see. Even working “our whole life” in various ways of fulfilling our current purpose can be intimidating.

In a classic peanuts strip, Snoopy is talking to the little bird Woodstock as they sit on top of his doghouse. Snoopy asks, “What are you doing here? You’re supposed to be out somewhere sitting on a branch and chirping (it is morning). That’s your job (calling). People expect to hear birds chirping when they wake up in the morning.”

So Woodstock flies off to a nearby branch and gives out a single “CHIRP” and flies back to the dog house. Snoopy says, “You only chirped once. You can’t brighten someone’s day with one chirp.”

So Woodstock flies back to the branch and belts out eight more chirps. And when he returns to the doghouse, Snoopy smiles and says, “There now! Didn’t that give you a real feeling of satisfaction? The bad news is you’re supposed to do that every morning for the rest of your life.” Whereupon Woodstock faints and falls off of the doghouse. Can we be faithful and throw ourselves into something constructive day after day, year after year, even if the results may not be obvious, or immediately obvious to us? (Birds don’t necessarily see how they perk up our day).

Giving in to intimidation and negativism not only hinders our purpose, it keeps us from becoming or simply being what we need to be. Sometimes we get into knee-jerk “No” reactions to new opportunities. Sometimes it is appropriate to say no. But when we use the automatic “no” to everything -- playing it safe and restrictive (and seeing it as wise and virtuous, even), it can also stifle positive experiences that could benefit our growth.

Think of Cinderella. Now turn it into a true story, of a boy raised by unreasonable aunts. Before he was 5, he got a multitude of *needless* “Don’ts” and “Nos”. When you are raised with this attitude (whether the actual words are said or not) they get

Being who we are

down into your subconscious mind and fill you with fears and uncertainties and begin to control your conduct, (it fills your life with all those “duds”) preventing you from taking life on.

Jones writes that when the “No, I can’t” should be a “Yes, I can” the first step to victory is illustrated by the man who said in a meeting: ““I can't,” and “tomorrow” are the twin evils of my life — they are paralyzing hands laid on me.”

As we said with the bowl, we have to shut our minds against these inappropriately negative thoughts the moment they come. Jeremiah said, “But I can’t speak, I’m too young.” God said, “**Don’t!** -- say that.” We can imagine that Paul was responding to Timothy’s lament that his youthfulness was preventing him from bringing to the table all of his skills and gifts and graces. Paul was in a sense saying, “Don’t! -- say that. Don’t give in to that even if others say that.”

We cannot help it if someone else tempts us with negative thoughts, asking us to do something we should say no to, or maybe we were raised with parents, or peers, or media, or circumstances, or our own ruminations that have formed a negative speaking disk in our head and we have a hard time pushing the stop button. We cannot prevent these negative and inferior thoughts from coming our way or from hearing what someone else tells us, but James told us that we can certainly push it back out. We don’t to let it come to birth and mature to fullness in our life. We don’t need to dwell on it, or believe it, or act on it.

A nurse was repulsed by a patient. At first, she thought “I can’t.” but then she said a prayer and the verse came to her “Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to me”. (Matthew 25:40) Love came and no patient was ever repulsive again; because she refused to invite in, and play around with, and entertain, and embrace, and especially, act on those negative thoughts – that were centered on *her*, not on who and what was going on around her. Jesus tells us that compassion doesn’t dwell on ourselves, it is concerned about what goes on around us, on the needs of others. Jesus says that if we want to save our lives by concentrating on ourselves, we are bound to be defeated and our purposes will be lost, and we will lose ourselves. But we invest our lives in God and others, in the abundant, purposeful life that we are trying to create, then that will happen. After all, he says elsewhere, who by worry and effort can add any stature (or any time) to their life? (John 12:24-26, Luke 9:23-25, 12:25)

Someone threatened their enemy, "Why don't you admit your inferiority?" The reply came: "I am a child of God, and out of loyalty to my Father, I cannot accept

that I am inferior." As children of God, we are not inferior; and we are capable of fulfilling opportunities and / or new possibilities. While it is true that our dud choices can turn God's wonderful creation of us into a heap of rubble, to think we are duds and must remain duds is to insult God's creative and recreating abilities, and his opinion of what he has made. Remember that if God made us, and called us very good, it is also true that God is such a great Creator that he can recreate us and remake something wonderful out of us and restore us by his power as we push forward to our full potential, as individuals, and as a church family.

Prayer

Lord, in you, we cannot be defeated nor permanently fail, for we are under your living mind and will, and the future is open and full of possibilities. Take from our lives all negative thinking, all desire to give up, any refusal to accept responsibility, all fearful attitudes, and let us face life with a confidence that in your hands, we can be lead us to accomplishments that may surprise ourselves and bring honor to you our king, who has already done so much for us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Music Let's stand as comfortable and sing

You Are My King (Amazing Love)

Words: Billy James Foote Music: Arr. Jeff Anderson

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I'm forgiven because You were forsaken, I'm accepted, You were condemned.
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me because You died and rose again.

Amazing love, how can it be that You, my King, would die for me?

Amazing love, I know it's true; and it's my joy to honor You.

(Repeat)

In all I do I honor you.

(Repeat all above)

You are my King! You are my King! You are my King! Jesus, You are my King.

Amazing love, how can it be that You, my King, would die for me?

Amazing love, I know it's true It's my joy to honor You.

(Repeat)

In all I do I honor you. I honor you.

In all I do I honor you. I honor you.

Blessing Now go in the Lord, knowing you are his child, made in his image, upheld by his power, informed by his mind, rekindled by his love, remade by his redemption. and empowered for his purposes -- in light of all that, go knowing that you cannot be inferior since he is not, and you are in him, and all that we do will bring honor to Christ our king, Amen.

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