

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP “In Christ Alone”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RY4CW5pte98> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

CALL TO WORSHIP: Read out loud by yourself or with a loved one

YOU: O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

LOVED ONE: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

YOU: For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

LOVED ONE: The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

YOU: O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

ALL: For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

OPENING PRAYER: Read out loud

We give thanks unto you O Lord; for you are good: because your mercy endureth for ever. Amen

Opening Hymn “Come Thou Almighty King”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEeoIRXFM9Y> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

Prayer of Confession:

If GOD hadn't been for us when sin went against us, we would have been swallowed alive by its anger, swept away by the flood of rage, drowned in the torrent; we would have lost our lives in the wild, raging water. Oh, blessed be GOD! Thank you God, for you did not go off and leave us to what our sins deserved. You didn't abandon us defenseless, helpless as a rabbit in a pack of snarling dogs. By your grace and mercy we've flown free from sin's fangs, free of its traps, free as a bird. Sin's grip is broken; we're free as a bird in flight because of your forgiveness. Your strong name God is our help. You are the same GOD who made heaven and earth. Amen.

Assurance of God's Forgiveness:

Hear the GOOD NEWS!

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Alleluia. Amen.

VIVALDI'S GLORIA PATRI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckjdPaZVoB4> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Holy Spirit, God of Very God, we beseech thee to empower the readings, give us your understanding, proclaim your Word to our hearts, transform our will to match your own, and live the Life Of Christ through us, your vessels of clay. In the Holy Name of Jesus we ask, Amen.

BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalm 119:105-112

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ps+119%3A105-112&version=NIV>

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 8:1-11

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rom+8%3A1-11&version=NIV>

Children's Time

The Blessing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w&feature=youtu.be> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

SERMON

"Stories"

Carlos Baladez

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Stories come in many forms. They have different purposes. They entertain, inform or persuade. Think of your childhood stories. The Three Little Pigs. Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Jack and the Bean Stalk. Or How about Aesop's Fables? Always

with a moral to learn. Can you recall a family story? Perhaps it was one where you moved frequently. Maybe one of your grandfather's or grandmother's "back in the day" stories. How about your favorite pet? We also have the more personal stories. Our first kiss. Our first puppy love and first heart break.

Yes, stories are wonderful. It is how we store and recall our memories. They are full of adventure, colors, scents, feelings, and imagination.

Now here in this text we have Jesus teaching the multitude. And what does he use? A story. How best does God in the flesh convey spiritual truths to humans? Through a means they are familiar with: a story.

Let's read Matthew 13:1-9 and then skip to verses 18-23.

That same day Jesus left the house and went out beside Lake Galilee, where he sat down to teach. Such large crowds gathered around him that he had to sit in a boat, while the people stood on the shore. Then he taught them many things by using stories. He said: A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn't very deep. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots. Some other seeds fell where thornbushes grew up and choked the plants. But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants produced a hundred or sixty or thirty times as much as was scattered. If you have ears, pay attention!

Now listen to the meaning of the story:

The seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message about the kingdom, but don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches the message from their hearts. The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it right away. But they don't have deep roots, and they don't last very long. As soon as life gets hard or the message gets them in trouble, they give up. The seeds that fell among the thornbushes are also people who hear the message. But they start worrying about the needs of this life and are fooled by the desire to get rich. So the message gets choked out, and they never produce anything. The seeds that fell on good ground are the people who hear and understand the message. They produce as much as a hundred or sixty or thirty times what was planted.

Did you recognize an old familiar pattern? Three little pigs. Three bears. Three unproductive grounds. Jesus, God Incarnate telling stories to get a spiritual truth

across to his audience. The seed remains the same. The difference was the ground which received it. The first ground was hard. The second was shallow. While the third was crowded. Now in place of ground, read heart. The first heart was hard. The second heart was shallow. The third heart was crowded. But the fourth heart was just right! It was cultivated. The fallow ground was broken up. The soil was toiled and tilled. The soil was also cleared of debris.

We are called to prepare our hearts to receive the Life giving Word of God. Humbling ourselves before God, softens our hard hearts. Casting all our care upon him gives us deep focus. Renouncing the glitter of this world rids us of distractions.

Let us give up the old and make room for the new. May we forsake the temporary to embrace the eternal. May God in his grace lead us to abandon the lie and the lies and receive the TRUTH that makes truly us free. Fulfilled. Satisfied! Enjoying his fellowship forever and bringing him glory in the process.

Finally, with our eyes and hearts are clean, we are ready to receive the eternal seed and produce in abundance, 30, 60, and 100 fold.

Wow! All this truth hidden in a story. A story told us by the creator of the universe. Our creator. Our Lord and Savior. We can trust His-Story!

To God alone be all the glory. Amen.

HYMN “Jesus, Thou Joy Of Loving Hearts”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tvOqL5KJOQ> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

THIS WE BELIEVE:

For we are convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen!

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Please, continue to support the life and work of Crestholme. You can mail your tithes pledges and offerings to...

CPC
PO Box 23919.
SA TX 78223-0901

Or you can save them and gather them until we meet again.
Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice.

DOXOLOGY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8TkUuKlh84> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Accept these gifts, the fruits of our labor, and our lives the gift of your grace. Bless them. Multiply them. Enlarge your kingdom within us, through us, and around us. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Here, in your own words, pray and intercede for the body of Christ, the governments of this world, the poor, the marginalized, the lost, and others. Pray also for your family and for yourself. Follow this with the Lord's Prayer.

CLOSING HYMN "Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFl6X-jsvh8> (place your cursor over the link. Right click, and then choose Open Hyperlink)

BENEDICTION:

[With our hands lifted unto the Lord and a heart full of grace and love, receive this blessing in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccvx9uujwq0>

Praise be to God. Amen

We have temporarily closed our congregation's campus — no group activities, no church programs, no shared-space partners' programs, no Food Pantry or Clothes Closet... to honor the White House's Guidelines and the City's Emergency Directives and to protect our vulnerable volunteers and members and neighbors during these perilous COVID-19 days.

But that does not mean that we've... gone away.

How can we support you? Your prayer life? Your every-day needs and cares?

Yes, "Social distance!" But, NO, not "Emotional distance!" Help us connect and care!

There's an active "hug train" — our phone tree. Would you make a call or two? Would you like to be called? Chat with Carlos at: crbaladez@yahoo.com or 210 324 5665.

There are lots of "little things" that are quite important for us — for someone — to continue to do. Got an hour? Some of our members could use a hand with... shopping, "essential errands," every-day little things. Got a hand?

Blessings!