

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

SERMON PREPARATION

By Pastor Brian De Jong

If you expect that this article will divulge the secrets of the Pastor’s study, you are going to be sorely disappointed. It is not that I am unwilling to describe the process I go through in preparing a sermon. It is just that my intention is not to discuss *my* sermon preparation, but *yours!*

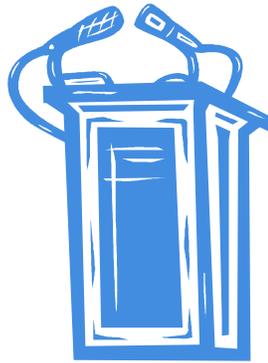
How do most people prepare for sermons? Frankly, they don’t! They assume that if they start listening when the Pastor starts preaching, that is sufficient. But soon attention wanders, and then the sermon is over. There may be a lingering disappointment that “I didn’t get much out of his sermon today!” But maybe the problem lies not only with the preacher, but with the listener.

Consider this statement: Inadequate preparation to hear a sermon can be as spiritually deadly as inadequate preparation to preach a sermon.

Our Westminster Larger Catechism asks in Q. 160. *What is required of those that hear the word preached?* The answer is “It is required of those that hear the word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.”

So how should you “prepare” to hear a sermon? Here are some suggestions that may enhance your sermon-hearing abilities. First, read your Bible. A regu-

lar habit of Bible reading will acquaint you with the teachings of Scripture. These provide the general context needful for any sermon on any passage. You want to view the part (the passage being preached) within the context of the whole (the entire Bible).



Also, if possible, read and reflect on the passage to be preached before you arrive at church on Sunday. That is usually put in the bulletin the week before, and can also be deduced from wherever I’m currently preaching. If I’m preaching Romans 13:1-4, it is a safe assumption that I’ll be preaching on that passage, or the very next verses, on the next Sunday.

For the more adventurous, you may want to do a little study on the passage beforehand. Do you have a study Bible? Check out the “notes” on those verses. Matthew Henry’s commentary is another good source to give you reliable perspective.

As you read and reflect, make the passage and the sermon a matter of prayer. Here are some prayers you could offer: “Lord, please help me to understand what this passage means, and what it requires me to believe and do.” “Lord, help Pastor to clearly explain this verse, and help me to clearly grasp the meaning.” “Lord, use this passage to help me grow in my faith toward Christ, and my love and obedience to you.”

Another bit of advice may be crucial to some: get some good sleep before...

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Volume 7, Issue 3

March 2012

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Mnemonics...

- *Fellowship Lunch, 4th*
- *Missions Sunday, 11th*

A Layman's Introduction to the Regulative Principle of Worship

by Pastor Brian De Jong

In my earliest days as an intern for Reformed University Ministries, I had the pleasure of studying through the Westminster Confession of Faith. G.I. Williamson's Study Guide was my textbook. As I worked through Williamson's comments on the Confession of Faith, I discovered an idea that I had never considered before. That concept is commonly called The Regulative Principle of Worship.

Although I had grown up in a Christian family, and attended reformed churches all my life, I had never heard of the RPW. I felt as if I had found one of the lost jewels of Reformed Christianity.

Since that time I have pondered the Regulative Principle and its application within the church. Let me share the fruit of my studies and ponderings by posing and answering pertinent questions about the RPW.

Q.1. What is the Regulative Principle of Worship?

A.1. The Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW) is the idea that God and God alone prescribes and regulates his own worship. He determines and defines true worship, He declares it in His word, He animates and empowers it, He controls and governs it, He judges and blesses it.

Q.2. What is the classical statement of the RPW?

A.2. The classical statement of the RPW is found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 21, paragraph 1, which reads as follows

The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.

Another complementary citation from the WCF is chapter 20, paragraph 2...

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

Q.3. Do other Reformed documents contain statements of the RPW?

A.3. Both the Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms have similar statements, as do the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession. A few samples are...

WSC Q. 50. *What is required in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

WSC Q. 51. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

WLC Q. 109. *What sins are forbidden in the second commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or

Introduction Continued...

service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.

Heidelberg Catechism Q. 96. What does God require in the second commandment?

A. That we in no wise represent God by images, (a) nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his word.(b)

(a) Deut.4:15-19; Isa.40:18-25; Rom.1:23,24; Acts 17:29.

(b) 1 Sam.15:23; Deut.12:30-32; Matt.15:9.

Belgic Confession: Article 32: The Order and Discipline of the Church

We also believe that although it is useful and good for those who govern the churches to establish and set up a certain order among themselves for maintaining the body of the church, they ought always to guard against deviating from what Christ, our only Master, has ordained for us.

Therefore we reject all human innovations and all laws imposed on us, in our worship of God, which bind and force our consciences in any way.

Q.4. But is this a Biblical idea? Where is it found in Scripture?

A.4. Yes it is. Consider the following passages:

Exodus 20:3-6 “You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵“You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations

of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Deuteronomy 12:28-32 “Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God. ²⁹“When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, ³⁰ beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?’ ³¹“You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. ³²“Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

Mark 7:5-9 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?” ⁶ And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. ⁷ ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’ ⁸

“Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.” ⁹ He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

John 4:21-24 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you

Introduction Continued...

worship the Father. ²²“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²⁴“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Q.5. Are there other Biblical passages that have bearing on the RPW?

Q.5. Certainly. Look, for instance, at the story of Nadab & Abihu in Leviticus 10. Or consider Samuel’s words in I Samuel 15:22-23. Likewise, in many of the Psalms we find God directly regulating worship. A good example is Psalm 100, which governs our hearts as we enter into worship, as well as what we do when we worship God.

Q.6. Does everyone believe this?

A.6. No – Lutherans and Anglicans follow something called the normative principle of worship. According to this normative principle of worship, believers should use all the prescribed elements in worship, and they are free to include anything else that is not expressly forbidden by Scripture. In this approach, many things not specifically required can be included in worship, so long as they are not forbidden by God. Man can therefore introduce non-biblical innovations into worship that have no authorization from God. Man assumes legislative authority and thereby binds the conscience of worshipers to participate in these unauthorized worship practices.

Q.7. J.I. Packer has claimed that the RPW is a product of the Puritans and that such concepts are not found in earlier reformers, like Calvin. Is that correct?

A.7. No, Dr. Packer is not correct in his criticism. Look at this excerpt from Calvin’s book entitled The Necessity of Reforming the Church...

Moreover, the rule which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of him who alone is entitled to prescribe. Therefore, if we would have him to approve our worship, this rule, which he everywhere enforces with the utmost strictness, must be carefully observed. For there is a twofold reason why the Lord, in condemning and prohibiting all fictitious worship, requires us to give obedience only to his own voice. First, it tends greatly to establish his authority that we do not follow our own pleasure, but depend entirely on his sovereignty; and, secondly, such is our folly, that when we are left at liberty, all we are able to do is to go astray. And then when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions. Justly, therefore, does the Lord, in order to assert his full right of dominion, strictly enjoin what he wishes us to do, and at once reject all human devices which are at variance with his command. Justly, too, does he, in express terms, define our limits, that we may not, by fabricating perverse modes of worship, provoke his anger against us.

I know how difficult it is to persuade the world that God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by his word. The opposite persuasion which cleaves to them, being seated, as it were, in their very bones and marrow, is, that whatever they do has in itself a sufficient sanction, provided it exhibits some kind of zeal for the honor of God. But since

*“God
wants our
hearts to be
right when
we come
before Him
in a
worship
service.”*

Introduction Concluded...

God not only regards as fruitless, but also plainly abominates, whatever we undertake from zeal to his worship, if at variance with his command, what do we gain by a contrary course? The words of God are clear and distinct, "Obedience is better than sacrifice." "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 15:9). Every addition to his word, especially in this matter, is a lie. Mere "will worship" (*ethelothreeskeia*) is vanity. This is the decision, and when once the judge has decided, it is no longer time to debate.

Q.8. Is absolutely everything connected with worship regulated by God?

A.8. No it is not. There is a proper distinction between the elements of worship and the circumstances of worship. The Westminster Confession admits as much in chapter 1, paragraph 6, which reads *...there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.*

Elements would include such things as prayer, singing, the reading and preaching of God's word, and the sacraments. Circumstances would cover such things as the beginning time for the worship service, the length of the worship service, the color of the carpeting in the sanctuary, and the use of a sound system. We do not claim that God tells us what time worship is supposed to begin, or what color the carpeting should be. These are left to the light of nature and Christian prudence.

Q.9. How does the RPW impact our worship at Grace Church?

A.9. For one thing, we seek to be thoroughly Biblical in our worship services at Grace OPC. Every aspect of our worship service is consciously conformed to the Biblical pattern. Therefore any element that we include in worship must have a clear Biblical warrant. If no warrant exists, we ought not to include it in worship. We also seek

to consider Biblical elements that are not included in our worship. This has led to the introduction of the reading of the law, confession of sin, and assurance of pardon. It has also been the reason we have been singing Psalms in our worship services. Not only does the RPW inform us about the proper elements, but it helps us understand the proper ordering of those elements. This includes an idea from our OPC Directory for the Public Worship of God called "the Dialogical Principle."

According to this idea, worship is a meeting of God with His people. The worship service is a dialogue between God and His church. He speaks to us and we respond to Him.

Q.10. Is there any aspect of the RPW that is often overlooked?

A.10 Yes, I think the positive aspect of the RPW is too often ignored. This Principle is not just a negative idea – forbidding inappropriate innovations. It has a positive aspect. We are to worship God in all of the ways He has commanded – in a positive sense. So we are to heartily give to God the glory, honor and praise that is due to Him. After all, the Regulative Principle is not only about outward actions, but about our internal attitudes. God wants our hearts to be right when we come before Him in a worship service. If our hearts are not humbly submitted to Him, it doesn't really matter whether we go through an outwardly correct worship service. God wants us to come into His presence with joy and thanksgiving, and to worship Him in Spirit and truth.

Q.11. Does the Regulative Principle cover every area of life?

A.11 Technically, the RPW is focused on the corporate worship services of the church and does not speak to every other aspect of our lives. Yet we profess that the Word of God is "our only rule for faith and life." Hence we believe that our lives should be governed by God's word.

Why All Things Work for Good

by Thomas Watson

The grand reason why all things work for good, is the near and dear interest which God has in His people. The Lord has made a covenant with them. *"They shall be my people, and I will be their God"* (Jer. 32:38). By virtue of this compact, all things do, and must work, for good to them. *"I am God, even thy God"* (Psalm 50:7) This word, 'Thy God,' is the sweetest word in the Bible, it implies the best relations; and it is impossible there should be these relations between God and His people, and everything not work for their good. This expression, 'I am thy God,' implies.

(1). The relation of a physician: 'I am thy Physician.' God is a skilful Physician. He knows what is best. God observes the different temperaments of men, and knows what will work most effectually. Some are of a more sweet disposition, and are drawn by mercy. Others are more rugged and knotty pieces; these God deals with in a more forcible way. Some things are kept in sugar, some in brine. God does not deal alike with all; He has trials for the strong and cordials for the weak. God is a faithful Physician, and therefore will turn all to the best. If God does not give you that which you like, He will give you that which you need. A physician does not so much study to please the taste of the patient, as to cure his disease. We complain that very sore trials lie upon us; let us remember God is our Physician, therefore He labours rather to heal us than humour us. God's dealings with His children, though they are sharp, yet they are safe, and in order to cure; *"that he might do thee good in the latter end"* (Deut. 8:16).

(2). This word, 'thy God,' implies the relation of a Father. A father loves his child; therefore whether it be a smile or a stroke, it is for the good of the child. I am thy God, thy Father, therefore all I do is for thy good. *"As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee"* (Deut. 8:5). God's chastening is

not to destroy but to reform. God cannot hurt His children, for He is a tender hearted Father, *"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"* (Psalm 103:13). Will a father seek the ruin of his child, the child that came from himself, that bears his image? All his care and contrivance is for his child: whom does he settle the inheritance upon, but his child? God is the tender hearted *"Father of mercies"* (2 Cor. 1:3). He begets all the mercies and kindness in the creatures.

God is an everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6). He was our Father from eternity; before we were children, God was our Father, and He will be our Father to eternity. A father provides for his child while he lives; but the father dies, and then the child may be exposed to injury. But God never ceases to be a Father. You who are a believer, have a Father that never dies; and if God be your father, you can never be undone. All things must needs work for your good.

(3). This word, 'thy God,' implies the relation of a Husband. This is a near and sweet relation. The husband seeks the good of his spouse; he were unnatural that should go about to destroy his wife. *"No man ever yet hated his own flesh,"* (Eph. 5:29)

There is a marriage relation between God and His people. *"Thy Maker is thy Husband"* (Isaiah 59:5). God entirely loves His people. He engraves them upon the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16). He sets them as a seal upon His breast (Song of Solomon 8:6). He will give kingdoms for their ransom (Isaiah 43:3). This shows how near they lie to His heart. If He be a Husband whose heart is full of love, then He will seek the good of His spouse. Either He will shield off an injury, or will turn it to the best.

(4). This word, 'thy God,' implies the relation of a Friend. *"This is my friend"* (Song of

"If God does not give you that which you like, He will give you that which you need."

Watson Concluded...

Solomon 5:16) A friend is, as Augustine says, half one's self. He is studious and desirous how he may do his friend good; he promotes his welfare as his own. Jonathan ventured the king's displeasure for his friend David (I Sam. 19:4). God is our Friend, therefore He will turn all things to our good. There are false friends; Christ was betrayed by a friend: but God is the best Friend.

He is a faithful Friend. "*Knowest therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God*" (Deut. 7:9). He is faithful in His love. He gave His very heart to us, when He gave the Son out of His bosom. Here was a pattern of love without a parallel. He is faithful in His promises. "*God, that cannot lie, hath promised*" (Titus 1:2) He may change His promise, but cannot break it. He is faithful in His dealings; when He is afflicting He is faithful. "*In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me*" (Psalm 119:75). He is sifting and refining us as silver (Psalm 66:10).

God is an immutable Friend. "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Heb. 13:5). Friends often fail at a pinch. Many deal with their friends as

women do with flowers; while they are fresh they put them in their bosoms, but when they begin to wither they throw them away. Or as the traveler does with the sun-dial; if the sun shines upon the dial, the traveler will step out of the road, and look upon the dial: but if the sun does not shine upon it, he will ride by, and never take any notice of it. So, if prosperity shine on men, then friends will look upon them; but if there be a cloud of adversity on them, they will not come near them. But God is a Friend for ever; He has said, "*I will never leave thee.*" Though David walked in the shadow of death, he knew he had a Friend by him. "*I will fear no evil, for thou art with me*" (Psalm 23:4). God never takes off His love wholly from His people. "*He loved them unto the end*" (John 13:1). God being such a Friend, will make all things work for our good. There is no friend but will seek the good of his friend...

Taken from Divine Cordial by Thomas Watson (1663), "Why All Things Work for Good", 1, 1-5.

"Men, You Are Invited"

Men, if you are available, please come to Grace Church on any Thursday, 8:30 a.m.

We have a time of Fellowship, (snacks & coffee included), Bible Study, Prayer time, and discussions of current interest.

Come as you are and don't be afraid to "speak up."

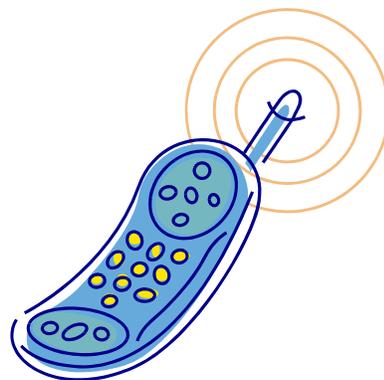
(H.W.H.)



March Birthdays



New Phone Number





Grace OPC

March 2012

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

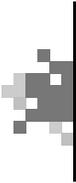


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Fellowship Lunch (a.m.)	5 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	6	7 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	8	9	10
11 Missions Sunday	12 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i> Theology, 3:30 p.m.	13 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	14 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	15	16 Presbytery in Hanover Park	17 Presbytery in Hanover Park
18	19 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	20	21 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	22	23	24
25 Lord's Supper, (a.m.)	26 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i> Theology, 3:30 p.m.	27	28 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	29	30	31

Rejoice LORD! IN THE

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Comments on Finances

General Fund receipts for February totaled \$11,768.31 as compared to the budget of \$12,538.39, while General Fund disbursements for February totaled \$17,647.79. February year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$27,318.21 as compared to the budget of \$28,211.34 (a shortfall of \$893.13), while February year to date disbursements of \$26,278.95 were \$1,932.39 below budget. Through the end of February, the General Fund has increased by \$1,075.77. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. Year to date General Fund receipts for February were 7.9% above last year's total while disbursements were 2.0% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for February totaled \$1,719.80 as compared to the budget of

\$1,493.75 (an excess of \$226.05). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through February totaled \$2,898.80 and were \$88.70 short of budget. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts. Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. During March, we are budgeted to send \$600.00 to Menomonie OPC, Zoar for their ministry.

February Year to Date giving for the Capital Expansion Project was \$915.00. The outstanding Promissory Notes balance was \$59,000.00 as of the end of February 2012. During the current year, \$53,000.00 is scheduled to mature on these notes.

February Benevolence Receipts

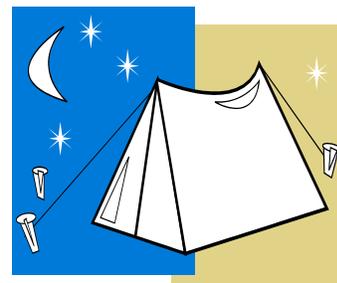




“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”

Camp Calvin

Camp Calvin will be held June 18-23. Mark your calendars now to reserve these dates. The camp is for youth entering grades 4-9 in the fall of 2012.





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
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Spurgeon Corner

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
(Ephesians 3:8)

The apostle Paul felt it a great privilege to be allowed to preach the gospel. He did not look upon his calling as a drudgery, but he entered upon it with intense delight. Yet while Paul was thus thankful for his office, his success in it greatly humbled him. The fuller a vessel becomes, the deeper it sinks in the water. Idlers may indulge a fond conceit of their abilities, because they are untried; but the earnest worker soon learns his own weakness. If you seek humility, *try hard work*; if you would know your nothingness, attempt some great thing for Jesus. If you would feel how utterly powerless you are apart from the living God, attempt especially the great work of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, and you will know, as you never knew before, what a weak unworthy thing you are. Although the apostle thus knew and confessed his weakness, he was never perplexed as to the *subject* of his ministry. From his first sermon to his last, Paul preached Christ, and nothing but Christ. He lifted up the cross, and extolled the Son of God who bled thereon. Follow his example in all your personal efforts to spread the glad tidings of salvation, and let “Christ and him crucified” be your ever recurring theme. The Christian should be like those lovely spring flowers which, when the sun is shining, open their golden cups, as if saying, “Fill us with thy beams!” but when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, they close their cups and droop their heads. So should the Christian feel the sweet influence of Jesus; Jesus must be his sun, and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness. Oh! to speak of Christ alone, this is the subject which is both “seed for the sower, and bread for the eater.” This is the live coal for the lip of the speaker, and the master-key to the heart of the hearer.



Evening, March 2, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded

you come to church. If you stay out late on Saturday, and go to bed in the “wee hours,” you may be drowsy during the service. Sleeping *before* church keeps you from sleeping *during* church! Still another practical suggestion is to eat something before church. Your body needs fuel for your brain to work well. If you are physically unable to concentrate, perhaps a little breakfast will help!

Arriving at church on time, you will be able to

visit the restrooms, get your bulletin, sit down and have a few minutes to quiet your spirit before the service starts. The sanctuary is a quiet place to collect your thoughts and to spend a few minutes in prayer. Pray for yourself, pray for me, pray for your fellow worshipers. Ask God to drive distractions away, and to make you attentive to the whole service – especially to the preaching.