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Worship from the Mount – September 6, 2020

SOAP

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for worship. In our service we gather before our almighty God to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful word. Please come again and worship with us very soon.

We all are ready to welcome you and to make your time with us and with God good for your soul. ***Please, make yourself at home with us.***

Parent Room If you have a young child or a nursing infant and are in need of a place to care for them, you will find it down the hallway to the left as soon as you exit the sanctuary. A television there allows you to see and hear the service.

Please take a moment to check-in at Mount Lebanon whether you are with us in-person or watching online. <https://www.themountmke.com/check-in>

S-O-A-P

God works through his Word. As we study God's Word, we discover how God interacts with people just like us. We learn about God's character and how he loved us enough to send his Son to die for us. We also learn about our purpose in life to be a blessing to others, as well as to bring glory and honor to our Heavenly Father in all we do. Throughout Scripture, there are lessons to be learned, examples to be followed, promises to be enjoyed and a God of grace to be cherished.

SOAP 1.0 is a tool we are introducing this fall to encourage daily personal devotions. The SOAP acronym sets a pattern for reflecting on God's Word and recording the important life lessons you will discover through your time in God's Word. You are encouraged to journal as you journey through the Bible in order to catalog the blessings, promises and life lessons you've learned through your time in the Word.

This worship service is also a Bible study so that we might not only find rest in Jesus, but also be equipped to rest in Jesus every day of the week.

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Dear Master Peter: I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do better than I! Amen.
Martin Luther in "A Simple Way to Pray."

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Hymn #283 v 1,2 – Speak, O Savior; I am Listening

Speak, O Savior; I am list'ning,
As a servant to his lord.
Let me show respect and honor
To your holy, precious Word,
That each day, my whole life through,
I may serve and follow you.
Let your Word e'er be my pleasure
And my heart's most precious treasure.

Oh, what blessing to be near you
And to listen to your voice!
Let me ever love and fear you;
Let your Word still be my choice.
Many hardened sinners, Lord,
Flee in terror at your Word,
But to all who feel sin's burden
You give peace and words of pardon.

Invocation and Opening Prayer

L In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

L Dear Father, we come to you this morning as dear children who long to hear your Word. Your ways are higher than our ways. Your thoughts are deeper than our thoughts. Your love is boundless; it's width and height and length and breadth we cannot begin to fathom. We want to hear you, Lord. So come, by your Spirit, and speak through your Word.

C **Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening** (1 Samuel 3:9).

L Lord God Almighty, we want to see you. We want to know you. We want to understand you. We know that there are hidden things and those belong to you alone. But you have not kept all things hidden from us. You have left behind for us in the Scriptures the revealed things; these things belong to us and our children. So, we ask you:

C **Please, show us now your ways** (Exodus 33:13).

L Dearest Lord Jesus, we need you. We come before you this morning sinful and flawed. We come to you with a load of sin and guilt. We come to you with a restless heart. We come before you with unclean hearts and unclean lips. Show us, we pray, how you make us righteous and holy again.

C **Show us your ways that we may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ** (Philippians 3:8-9).

L O Holy Spirit, you have inspired the Holy Scriptures to teach us, to rebuke us, to correct us, and to train us in righteousness so that we, the servants of God, might be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Be poured out on us this morning, O Spirit, that we might walk in your paths and follow after Christ where he has led the way.

C **Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path** (Psalm 119:105).

L O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are dry bones lying on the dust of the earth. We have no power in ourselves. We have no strength of our own. So, come to us today, and breathe life into our dry bones and make us alive. Yes, raise us up to be a mighty army of Christ-followers in this world and for this world.

C **Give us life according to your Word, and we will declare your praises** (Psalm 119:107; Psalm 145:6).

Hymn #283 v 3,4 Speak, O Savior; I am Listening

Lord, your words are waters living
Where I quench my thirsty needs.
Lord, your words are bread life-giving;
On your words my spirit feeds.
Lord, your words will be my light
Through death's cold and dreary night;
Yes, they are my sword prevailing
And my cup of joy unfailing.

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;
Let your words in me take root.
May your Spirit e'er be near me
That I bear abundant fruit.
May I daily sing your praise,
From my heart glad anthems raise,
Till my highest praise is given
In the endless joy of heaven.

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Evaluate

As we begin our study of the Christian's devotional life and dig into what God says to us about our lives of faith in his Word. It's good for us to do some introspection and personal evaluation of our lives of faith. We want to honestly evaluate our lives of faith before the Lord. There are many questions that we might ask. We could ask questions about how often we are reading God's Word and meditating on it. We could ask questions about how often we are calling upon God in prayer. We could ask questions about how often and how many. Those questions are useful and have their place. But today, there are two questions that I want you to ask yourself.

How rested am I?

Weakest

0

1

2

3

4

Strongest

5

We ask this question because what we are really dealing with in this service and in our study of the Christian's devotional life is the Third Commandment. In this commandment, God speaks to us and says, "Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy." As we learn about this commandment from all of God's Word we learn that this commandment is not about church on Sunday, but rather it is about finding rest in God's Word. The word "sabbath" means rest. It refers to rest for the body, but more than that, it refers to rest for the soul. We find and receive rest for the soul from Jesus and in God's Word. That's why Luther explains this commandment by saying: "We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it."

So, it stands to reason that if we are in God's Word, we will rest in him. So, how rested are you? How rested is your spirit inside of you? Are you fully rested and recovered, ready to take on the world? Unafraid of what it is coming? Or is your heart restless and weary and burdened? [pause]

And secondly we ask,

Where am I at in my relationship with God?

Weakest

0

1

2

3

4

Strongest

5

We ask this question because when we talk about our devotional life, we are not talking about checking a box or ticking something off of our checklist. If there is one thing I can change about the way we look at devotions and at reading the Bible it is that. We aren't trying to check something off of our to-do list. We are trying to spend time with our God who speaks to us in the Word. That's what the Bible is. The Bible is God's Spirit-inspired word to this world and especially to us his people. In other words, it is God's way of developing and cultivating a relationship with us.

So, where are you at in your relationship with God? Are you listening to him? Are you spending time with him? Are you speaking to him through prayer? Where are you at in your relationship with God.

What you will find, if you have been honest about your heart inside of you and about your relationship with God, is that it is far from where you want it to be. Whenever we talk about our devotional lives and about reading the Bible, there seems to be a lot of guilt in our hearts around it. I'll confess to you that early in my ministry and still today, more often than I would like to admit, that I've used the Bible as a professional tool, but not as the devotion gift that God wants it to be. I've used the Bible for sermons and Bible classes, but I did not use it for my own life of faith. You will find the same thing if you are honest in your evaluation, so let's take a moment to confess our sins before our God.

Confession

L I confess and acknowledge great sin and wicked ingratitude on my part because all my life I have made disgraceful use of the Sabbath and have thereby despised his precious and dear Word in a wretched way.

C **I have been too lazy, listless, and uninterested to listen to it, let alone to have desired it sincerely or to have been grateful for it.**

L I have let my dear God proclaim his word to me in vain, have dismissed the noble treasure, and have trampled it underfoot. He has tolerated this in his great and divine mercy and has not ceased in his fatherly, divine love and faithfulness to keep on preaching to me and calling me to the salvation of my soul.

C **For this I repent and ask for grace and forgiveness.**

From "A Simple Way to Pray" by Martin Luther.

Forgiveness

There are two truths that I truly want to settle into your heart before we talk about the what and the how. We have to understand and take to heart some really precious truths about God's Word. The first truth is this.

Truth #1: Jesus suffered and died for **every sin** by which you have dishonored God's gifts of Word and prayer.

When we have guilt that weighs down our hearts, this is such an important truth for us to know and remember. See, we all have sin in our hearts and lives. We have dishonored God and disobeyed his

commands in countless ways. But in ways that are even more countless, our God has forgiven each and every sin that we have every committed.

When Jesus came into this world and began his public ministry, John the Baptist said something really important about Jesus. He said, “Look! This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). It’s such a vivid picture when you step back to think about it. He pictures Jesus as a lamb, led to the slaughter. And why is he about to die? Why will he be led to the slaughter by his Father’s own hand? Because of sin. But not his own. He was led to the cross for your sin. He was led to the cross for my sin. On his back and on his cross, we carried away all the sins of the world.

See, this means that your sins are gone. There is no sin still clinging to you. There is no more condemnation for you. It has all been assigned to Jesus and he died for it. He paid the full price for each and every sin. There is no sin in your life – not this one or any other sin – that Jesus has not already paid for and covered by his holy and precious blood. Yes, Jesus suffered and died for every sin. AND...

Truth #2: Everything demanded of you has already been fully accomplished for you in the life of Jesus.

It’s really important that we see this truth. See, if we are reading the Bible and getting into the Bible in order to somehow measure up in God’s sight, we will always fall short. But what we need to see and realize is that everything God has demanded of us, everything that God expected of us, every “to-do” from God has already been accomplished for us. Let me show you. Come with me to the temple when little boy Jesus was just twelve years old (cf. Luke 2:41-51). He had gone there with his parents for the Festival of the Passover. But when Jesus’ parents went home, Jesus stayed behind. He stayed behind and he was sitting with the Bible teachers. He was listening to them. He was asking them questions. Jesus was thoroughly devoted to God and his Word. He loved it! He had to be there. He had to be in Father’s house. And it wasn’t just at that point in Jesus’ life that we see his devotion to God and his Word. Repeatedly throughout his ministry, we see Jesus escape in the middle of the night to be with his Father in prayer. At his moment of greatest trial, we see Jesus with his Father in prayer. We hear his Father speak to his Son.

And this is the Father’s own evaluation of the life that his Son lived. At his baptism and again when his figure was changed before his disciples on the mountain, God the Father gave his verbal affirmation of his Son’s life: “This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased” (cf. Matthew 17:5). The Father affirmed that his Son’s life was fully perfect and complete in every way.

And you get credit for that life. Paul said to the Corinthians that: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). God has not only given our sin to Jesus so that he died in our place, but, and this is a majestic “but”, he has also given us the perfect righteousness of Jesus. When God looks at you through Jesus, he does not see someone who has failed God. He does not see someone who falls short of loving the Word. Through Jesus he sees you as one who has perfectly loved God’s Word and devoted your life to knowing it.

Your Father in heaven is not ashamed to call you his child. In fact, the same words of affirmation that God spoke over his Son, Jesus, he also speaks to and about you. He proclaims for all the world to hear: This is my child! I love you. I am pleased with you.

So, listen to and receive with believing hearts this solid word of promise that sets us free.

L God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Hymn Jesus

There is a truth, older than the ages
There is a promise, of things yet to come
There is One, born for our salvation. Jesus

There is a light, that overwhelms the darkness
There is a kingdom, that forever reigns
There is freedom, from the chains that bind us. Jesus, Jesus

**Who walks on the waters
Who speaks to the sea
Who stands in the fire beside me
He roars like a lion
He bled as the lamb
He carries my healing in His hands. Jesus.**

There is a name, I call in times of trouble
There is a song, that comforts in the night
There is a voice, that calms the storm that rages
He is Jesus, Jesus.

Who walks on the waters
Who speaks to the sea
Who stands in the fire beside me
He roars like a lion
He bled as the lamb
He carries my healing in His hands. Jesus
Messiah, my Savior
There is power in Your name
You're my rock and, my redeemer
There is power in Your name
In Your name

You walk on the waters
You speak to the sea
You stand in the fire beside me
You roar like a lion
You bled as the lamb
You carry my healing in Your hands
God, you walk on the waters
You speak to the sea
You stand in the fire beside me
You roar like a lion
You bled as the lamb
You carry my healing in Your hands

Jesus. There is no one like You

Jesus. There is no one like You

Words and Music by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash and Klaus Osigus © Worship Together Music CCLI #70949020

The Promise Psalm 1

There are many verses that we could consider when we speak about the promises that God makes to us as we meditate on his Word. This is one of the first ones that comes to mind for me. It's from Psalm 1. I would like to read it responsively with you and then ask you to identify some of the blessings from our God when we sit in his Word, when we meditate on his Word day and night, when we delight in what he has to say.

Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the one

 who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
 or sit in the company of mockers,

**2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.**

3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
 whatever they do prospers.

4 Not so the wicked!

**They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.**

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

**6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.**

What is the promised blessing that our God lays out when we meditate on his Word? There are a few that come quickly to mind.

- It keeps us away from wicked paths and leads us in the right paths. God's Word helps us to know the way we are to walk. God's Word promises to guide us and to be a light for our path.
- It gives us roots and makes us fruitful. In this psalm, God pictures the Christian who is sitting in God's Word as if they were a tree. There are two parts to this picture. First of all, this tree is rooted. It will not be blown over when storms come. It will not be washed away when floods come because it is rooted deeply in God and in his Word. When we are in God's Word, we are deeply rooted and will not be blown over in difficult days.
- Secondly, because this tree is deeply rooted, it is also abundantly fruitful. God's Word has tremendous power to make us fruitful Christians as we live for him.
- Finally, those who sit in the Lord's Word are absolutely safe. See, as we meditate on God's Word and daily hear and learn it, we learn of salvation. We are safe and we are saved by the power of God's Word

There is so much more that we could say about the promise of God's Word, but let this be enough for now. But what of its goal? Why should we read the Bible? Why should we study it? Why should we learn, read and inwardly digest it? Let's see what Paul says as he speaks to us:

The Goal

Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

As you have approached reading the Bible and devotions before, what sorts of goals have you set? In my experience, people set goals for themselves like, "I want to read the Bible in a year." Or, "I want to read the Bible in three years." Or, "I want to learn more about this or about that." Or, "I want to have an answer for this question or for that question." None of these goals are wrong or even sinful. It is a worthy goal to read through the Bible. It is an important goal for us to understand in fuller and deeper ways what God teaches us about this or that. It is part of our mission to be able to give a reason for the hope that is within us? All of these are fine and good goals. But notice here what Paul sets before us and apply it specifically to God's Word.

He wants us to offer up our lives as worship to God. He doesn't want us to be conformed to the world. But he wants us to be transformed and changed by God. He wants us to be able to test and approve what God's will is. How will that happen? When we're in the word. Transformation of our hearts and our lives happens when God's Word enters our ears and sinks down into our hearts. So, the goal then is **not to master the book, but to be mastered by the God of the book**. Our God masters us through his Word. His Word, as we've said before, is a powerful force to change us. His Word is a powerful tool that corrects us, rebukes us and trains for acts of righteousness. His Word rules over us and governs us. We don't just want to have a complete mastery of everything in the Bible, but we want God to have complete mastery over us. After all, he has redeemed us so that we may live under him in his kingdom and serve him forever.

Our goal then is **not to know things in the book, but to know the God who wrote the book**. When we stand before God on the last day and we have to give an answer for why he should let us into heaven, he will not ask us to recite the commandments and their meanings. He will not ask us to recite the books of the Bible or even a certain number of Bible verses. He will not ask us to explain words like justification or redemption. Certainly, all of these things are valuable and important. But that is not our goal. Our goal is not to know things in the book, but to know the God who wrote the book. Our God will only ask us, "Do you know and believe in my Son? Do you believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?" So, our goal then is not to know things in the book, but to know the God who wrote the book.

So, we spend time in devotions and in God's Word with that intent. We want to be mastered by the God of the book. We want to know the God who wrote the book.

What I want to share with you next is a tool that has greatly helped me. It is a tool that you can use personally in your devotional lives. It is something that you can use with your spouse. Ruth and I have recently begun to use this tool together. It is something you can even use with your kids to get them into God's Word. The tool is called: "S-O-A-P."

The Tool

S-O-A-P

S

Scripture:

Pick a verse that stood out to you.
Write it down at the top of a Daily SOAP Page.

O

Observations:

Write down some observations regarding this verse.
What insight is God giving you through this verse?
How is God demonstrating his love and faithfulness?
What timeless truths do you notice?
What do these verses say about life, faith, God, people, human character, truth, sin, relationships, culture, etc.?

A

Application:

Application is a time to discover. Take a few moments to personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Respond to the following questions:

- How does this apply to my life right now?
- How does this apply to my relationship with God?
- How does this apply to my relationship with myself and other people?
- How does this apply to my responsibilities in life at home, work, school, church?
- Is there an instruction, encouragement, or promise God wants me to take to heart?
- Is there a warning or caution I need to apply to my life?

P

Prayer:

Write out your prayer. Remember, God's Word is a gift. Through it, he reveals to us his amazing love for you and his desire to be in a relationship with you.

What I want to do with you now is take a moment to do this with you. We will sing the verses of the hymn, read a portion of the psalm, and then we'll give you about five minutes to S-O-A-P. This is your personal devotion right now. I won't ask you to share it. Let's begin with the hymn:

HYMN **Lord, Open now my Heart to Hear**
Lord, open now my heart to hear,

And through your Word to me draw near.

Let me your Word e'er pure retain;
Let me your child and heir remain.

Your Word grants healing from my sin.
Your Word has pow'r to guide and bless;
Your Word brings peace and happiness.

Your Word inspires my heart within;

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Shall glory, praise, and honor be
Now and throughout eternity.

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READ Psalm 103

- 1 Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- 2 **Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—**
- 3 who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
- 4 **who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,**
- 5 who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- 6 **The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.**
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
- 8 **The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.**
- 9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
- 10 **he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.**
- 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
- 12 **as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.**
- 13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
- 14 **for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.**
- 15 The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
- 16 **the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.**
- 17 But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children—
- 18 **with those who keep his covenant**

and remember to obey his precepts.

Sung

Lord, open now my heart to hear,
And through your Word to me draw near.
Let me your Word e'er pure retain;
Let me your child and heir remain.

Date	Title	Page
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<p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">P</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Prayer:</p>	
<p><i>What does this truth mean for my life today?</i></p>	

Prayers

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

HYMN **Good, Good Father** (Chris Tomlin)

Oh, I've heard a thousand stories of what they think you're like
 But I've heard the tender whisper of love in the dead of night
 And you tell me that you're pleased
 And that I'm never alone

You're a Good, Good Father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

Oh, and I've seen many searching for answers far and wide
 But I know we're all searching
 For answers only you provide
 'Cause you know just what we need
 Before we say a word

You're a Good, Good Father
 It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
 And I'm loved by you
 It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

You are perfect in all of your ways
 You are perfect in all of your ways
 You are perfect in all of your ways to us
 You are perfect in all of your ways
 You are perfect in all of your ways

You are perfect in all of your ways to us

Oh, it's love so undeniable
I, I can hardly speak
Peace so unexplainable
I, I can hardly think

As you call me deeper still
As you call me deeper still
As you call me deeper still
Into love, love, love

You're a Good, Good Father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

You're a Good, Good Father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am
You're a Good, Good Father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am
You're a Good, Good Father
(You are perfect in all of your ways)
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
(You are perfect in all of your ways)
It's who I am, it's who I am it's who I am

Words and Music by Anthony Brown and Pat Barrett © 2014 Capitol CMG Paragon CCLI #70949020

Blessing

This Bible reading plan starts on September 8. Take one section a day and skip Sundays because you'll be in church or will have a sermon to read, watch and meditate on it. You can sign-up to receive a devotion and a prayer based on these readings here: <http://eepurl.com/dACBv5>.

Pastor Bourman is also posting daily devotions based on these readings on both Facebook Live (Daily at 8 am) and on our YouTube channel (www.YouTube.com/c/MtLebanonChurch).

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SOAP

We have created a S-O-A-P journal for you and a prepared a reading plan that will take us as a church to the end of the year. These are printed and prepared for you at the back of the church. The daily prayer and video devotion will also follow this plan. Whether you use this tool or not, whether you

follow this plan or not, it is our prayer that you will grow in your faith as you walk with your God through his Word. Below are a few additional Bible reading tips.

A Few Tips to Remember

- Don't rush! Take your time. Let God speak through his Word.
- Personal Bible study is the heart of a healthy Christian. Through your time in God's Word, you will be blessed, and you will be a greater blessing to others!
- If you get behind, don't get discouraged. Go back to the Bible Reading Plan, find today's date, and continue with that reading.
- The more we love God, the more we will become the people he created us to be. Cherish the grace and faithfulness of our loving Father.

If you would like a copy of the SOAP journal please contact the church office at (414) 461-1563.