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PREPARING YOUR HEART FOR SUNDAY MORNING

For many of us, Sunday morning preparation focuses on practical and musical aspects: arranging, scheduling, printing charts, sending emails, and a host of other details. But we often miss the crucial component of preparing our hearts to meet with God and his people. Christians throughout the centuries have valued the importance of spiritual preparation for Sundays, and in this breakout you'll be equipped and encouraged in that vital practice.

I. Introduction

II. The Priority of Preparing our Hearts

“There is scarce any work which admits of any considerable perfection but requires some previous preparation. In works of nature, the ground must be dunged, dressed, ploughed, harrowed, and all to prepare it for the seed. In works of art the musician tunes his violin, screwing up some of his strings higher, letting some down lower, as occasion is, and all to prepare it for his lesson, and indeed without this he would make but sad music. Truly, friend, thus it is with us in matters of higher moment; hearts, like soil, must be prepared for the seed of the word—how many a sermon has been lost because this was wanting!—and the violins of our souls must be tuned to praise God, or otherwise they will sound but harshly in his ears” (George Swinnock, Works, 1.226).

III. The Practice of Preparing Our Hearts

- A. *The Right Perspective: Heart preparation begins with how we view the church gathered in worship*
 - 1. *How do we view the purpose of Sunday morning?*
 - 2. *How do we view our role on Sunday morning?*
 - 3. *How do we view others on Sunday morning?*
- B. *Disengagement: Heart preparation aims to minimize distractions in gathered worship by disengaging from the world and sin before gathered worship.*

“Consider what you are about; and if anything interpose that may divert you, or cool your affections in your present worship, cast it out” (Stephen Charnock, Works, 1.343)

- C. *Prayerful Meditation: Heart preparation focuses on the character and past, present, and future work of God in order to soften our hearts in the midst of gathered worship.*

A Model for Prayer: “Beg a blessing upon the word which is to be preached; that it may be a savour of life to us; that by it our minds may be more illuminated, our corruptions more weakened, and our stock of grace more increased. Let us pray that God’s special presence may be with us, that our hearts may burn within us while God speaks, that we may receive the word into meek and humble hearts, and that we may submit to it, and bring forth fruits. . . . Pray for him who dispenses the Word; that his tongue may be touched with a coal from God’s altar; that God would warm his heart who is to help to warm others. . . . Some complain they find no benefit by the word preached; perhaps they did not pray for their minister as they should. . . . Pray with and for your family. Yea, pray for all the congregations that meet on this day in the fear of the Lord; that the dew of the Spirit may fall with the manna of the word; that some souls may be converted, and others strengthened; that gospel ordinances may be continued, and have no restraint upon them. These are the things we should pray for. The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless it be shaken by the hand of prayer” (Thomas Watson, Ten Commandments, 106).

- D. *Practical: Heart preparation is practical, engaging our real life decisions.*

IV. The Effect of Preparing Our Hearts

- A. *Joyful Humility*
- B. *Humble Sincerity*
- C. *Sincere Godliness*
- D. *Godly Expectation*