

# Order of Worship

January 10, 2021

Elim Reformed Church – Kings, IL

## APPROACH to GOD

Votum

Psalm 124:8

*Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Amen.*

Sentences

Isaiah 60:1

*“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.”*

A Lyric From “Here I am to Worship”

Chris Tomlin

*“Light of the world, You step down into darkness. Open my eyes let me see. Beauty that made this heart adore you. Hope of a life spent with you. Here I am to worship. Here I am to bow down. Here I am to say that you’re my God. You’re altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me, my love!*

## CONFESSION and ASSURANCE

Prayer of Confession

Let us confess our sin to the Lord. Let us pray.

God of eternal hope, you place a light in every darkness and a star in every sky, and yet we sometimes choose to walk in the darkness of despair and worry. Sometimes we forget that there is never a moment that you are not with us. Shine your light upon our path and walk with us through all the valleys of our lives. Hear our confession of those times when we try to forge ahead and handle life in our own strength.

Declaration of Pardon

Matthew 1:21

## THE WORD of GOD in PROCLAMATION

Lyrics From “Open Our Eyes, Lord”

Robert Cull

*“Open Our Eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him. Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen, Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus!”*

Scripture and Sermon

Rev. Marv Jacobs

How Will You Run This New Year? 2 Samuel 18:19-33

I hate running! Always have. Always will. I should be like Forrest Gump. If you’ve seen the movie, you may remember how he begins his practice of running. After fleeing from some bullies, he begins to run just for the sake of running. Here’s how he describes it, **“That day, for no particular reason, I decided to go for a little run. So, I ran to the end of the road. And when I got there, I thought maybe I’d run to the end of town.**

And when I got there, I thought maybe I'd just run across Greenbow County. And I figured, since I run this far, maybe I'd just run across the great state of Alabama. And that's what I did. I ran clear across Alabama...and for no particular reason I just kept on running...**FOR THREE YEARS, 2 MONTHS, 14 DAYS, AND 16 HOURS!**

That's a long time to run for no particular reason!!! Which probably explains why he eventually stops and says, **"I'm pretty tired now...I think I'll go home."** To me, that's what happens when you run for no particular reason—you just get tired! Which leads me to ask...How do you plan to run through this new year? With purpose...or...for no particular reason? Our Scripture text comes from Second Samuel, Chapter 18, verses 19-33. David's army has defeated the enemy. Unfortunately, the enemy was led by David's own son, Absalom, who has died in the battle.

*<sup>19</sup>Now Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Let me run and take the news to the king that the LORD has vindicated him by delivering him from the hand of his enemies." <sup>20</sup>"You are not the one to take the news today," Joab told him. "You may take the news another time, but you must not do so today, because the king's son is dead." <sup>21</sup>Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off. <sup>22</sup>Ahimaaz son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, please let me run behind the Cushite." But Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to go? You don't have any news that will bring you a reward." <sup>23</sup>He said, "Come what may, I want to run." So Joab said, "Run!" Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain<sup>[1]</sup> and outran the Cushite. <sup>24</sup>While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone. <sup>25</sup>The watchman called out to the king and reported it. The king said, "If he is alone, he must have good news." And the runner came closer and closer. <sup>26</sup>Then the watchman saw another runner, and he called down to the gatekeeper, "Look, another man running alone!" The king said, "He must be bringing good news, too." <sup>27</sup>The watchman said, "It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok." "He's a good man," the king said. "He comes with good news." <sup>28</sup>Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well!" He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise be to the LORD your God! He has delivered up those who lifted their hands against my lord the king." <sup>29</sup>The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered, "I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was." <sup>30</sup>The king said, "Stand aside and wait here." So he stepped aside and stood there. <sup>31</sup>Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you." <sup>32</sup>The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man." <sup>33</sup>The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"*

It was years ago, and we were in Puerto Rico getting ready to take a cruise. Because we'd be visiting foreign ports, a passport was a necessity. As I'm waiting to board, I notice an older couple talking to a representative from the cruise line. They are obviously distraught. She is crying and he's ready to join her. Being the nosy guy that I am, I move a little closer to hear the conversation....a conversation that sounded very much like the movie, *Home Alone*. It seems they had overslept that morning, so when their son came by to pick them up and take them to the airport, they were running around like chickens with their heads cut off. In the chaos, the husband forgot his passport and has just now realized it. So...here they are wondering if they can still board the ship? Can they still take the cruise? The agent is sympathetic but firm, "I'm sorry sir, but a passport is necessary for this cruise." What follows is a series of popcorn questions. What if we did this? What if we did that? What if our son faxed it to us? What if? What if? What if? Unfortunately, that's when our boarding number was called, leaving me to wonder (and now you!) if this couple took the cruise. I know one thing....if I was his wife, I'd be saying, "Well sweetie, I'll try not to have too good of a time without you, but I'll tell you all about it when I get back!" Seriously, I couldn't help but feel for them. That morning they left Boston fully expecting to take a cruise. For the most part, they knew where they were going, how they were going to get there, and what time they would arrive. Sadly, at this moment, they weren't sure of anything. Without that passport, they may have come...they may have been running...for nothing! Proving again, that, "haste makes waste."

So, have you ever done something like that yourself? Go off running to get something and then forget what you were after? All because you were in a hurry? Well, it's that same kind of memory lapse that lies at the heart of our scripture lesson this morning. Only in this case, that memory lapse is more deliberate than accidental.

Our story begins with an attempted coup and it's a sad one to say the least. A man named Absalom has mounted a revolution against his own father, King David himself. Having two boys of my own, I can only imagine how painful that must have been to have your son seeking not only your throne, but your life, as well.

After a day of intense fighting (the bible says there were 20,000 casualties), David emerges victorious. The enemy is defeated, and in the process, Absalom is killed. There is only one thing left to be done and that is to inform his father. But who's going to do that? Today, we could just send a text message. Done! Back then, however, it was a different story. It wasn't instant messaging, it was distance messaging. A runner would be sent cross country to convey the message in person-eyeball to eyeball.

Well, on this particular day, there were two runners available. One was a man named Ahimaaz and the other, a man simply identified as the Cushite (a descendant of Noah). Our text tells us that Ahimaaz was not only the faster of the two, but much more eager, as well. He asks for the job! However, Joab, essentially David's general out in

the field, has some concerns about that. It's not that Ahimaaz was a lousy messenger. Quite the opposite. This guy seems to be the ace in the bull pen. When you have good news to share and you to convey it quickly, he's your go to guy! It's his specialty. Which is why David is pleased when someone tell him that the runner is Ahimaaz. He immediately calls him a 'good man' and naturally assumes the news must be positive.

But let's go back to Joab. Joab is like a good baseball manager who knows his players, their strengths and weakness. He knows when to put them in and when to take them out. A right hander could be pitching a great game, but the manager replaces him because he feels the situation now calls for a lefty. That's Joab. While Ahimaaz may be the fastest runner and the one favored to share good news, this situation calls for a runner who can share bad news. So, while the Cushite might be slower, Joab believes he is better suited to carry the message.

But Ahimaaz must have been like me...a good low German who's stubborn as a mule! For one reason or another, Ahimaaz insists on running. Joab asks, why? Why do you want to run if you have no message to carry? I already sent the message with the Cushite. You'd be running for nothing, running without a purpose!" But again, Ahimaaz insists and with that, Joab relents.

Well, sure enough, Ahimaaz gets there first, but that's when reality sets in. That's when he sees the cameras and realizes this isn't about being first. This isn't about showing off your speed. This is about having to tell your King that his son is dead. There will be no reward for getting there first. There will be no reward for sharing this kind of news. Back then it could happen, *"if you didn't like the message, you might want to kill the messenger!"* Feeling the pressure, Ahimaaz shares only the good news, "You've won!" But winning isn't all that David is interested in. "What about Absalom," he asks. "Is Absalom safe?" And even though he knows the truth, Ahimaaz skirts the issue and...lies, "uh...boy...there was so much confusion going on. I can't really say for sure." You see Ahimaaz had run quickly, but aimlessly...without a purpose and without a message.

The Cushite, on the other hand, is a different story. While he's not nearly so fast, he at least runs with purpose. So, when he arrives, he arrives with a message. The message may sound rather cold and blunt to us, but at least it's honest. What's more, it's cloaked in a beautiful statement of personal loyalty and allegiance.

An interesting story, but what does it have to do with us. Well, as we begin this new year 2021, I hear God reminding us (both as individuals and as a church) to run like the Cushite...with a message and with purpose. Remember Jonathan Swift's satirical novel, Gulliver's Travels? At one point in the story, the Lilliputians go through Gulliver's pockets and discover his watch. Only they don't know it's a watch. They think it's Gulliver's god. Why? Because they noticed how often he consults it. Imagine...1726, and

Swift is poking fun at his generation for becoming slaves of time! What would he say about us today? I know my watch has me running quite often, and more times than I like to admit, it finds me running without a purpose.

Peter says it well (1 Peter 3:15), **“always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”** Which is simply another way of saying, as you run through life, make sure you run with a purpose, run with a message. Truth is, someday you and I will be standing before our King just like Ahimaaz and the Cushite. And He’s not going to ask us, “how fast did you run?” “How busy were you?” “How many hours did you work and how much money did you make?” He’s going to ask us, “why did you run?” “What was the purpose of your life and what was the message that you conveyed?” Please know how much I look forward to running with you through this new year! I pray that we will run together with joy in our hearts and a message on our lips! Happy New Year my friends and may God bless us all!

Offering – Please remember to submit your tithes and offerings.

Mail to: Elim, 140 S. Church Rd., Kings IL 61068

#### Joys and Concerns for Prayer

- Praise for the ministry of Pastor Cary and Betsy Winn and prayers for a joyful retirement!
- Praise for a new chapter in the life of Elim Reformed and Pastor Marv Jacobs. Prayers for a blessed ministry!
- Family and friends in need of healing and comfort; Covid-19 victims and their families; Nursing and Convalescent home residents. (DeWayne Adams, Joyce Bennett, Marge Stouffer, and Diane Terviel)
- Medical facility personnel, first responders, retail, factory, and charity workers whose health is at risk daily; Small-business owners, farmers, and the unemployed who are struggling financially during this pandemic.
- A quick and efficient distribution for the Covid vaccine, and a return soon for our public worship
- Prayers for our nation, leaders, a smooth transition of power, unity, and peace.

Lyric from “This Little Light of Mine”

Loews

*“This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”*

#### Benediction

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*