Key Verse

“My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.”

— John 15:8 (CEB)

Suggested Scripture for Worship


Key Idea

We were created by God for the sake of flourishing, of fully developing all our powers (intellectual, emotional, physical), of becoming a whole, complete human being made in the image of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is the perfect power of God’s perfect love that enables us to be all God created us to be.

Calls to Worship

WELCOME/SPOKEN WORD INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second week of the series A Perfect Love. We are spending these weeks (of Lent) immersed in the teaching of our forefather John Wesley and the doctrine of Christian perfection.

Last week we acknowledged that “Christian” and “perfection” do not seem to go together. That is, when we understand perfection as being flawless or faultless. But there is a second definition of perfection that is about completeness and wholeness. So, it is by God’s grace we journey on to Christian perfection, becoming a whole, complete human being made in the image of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Today we consider perfect power. Not power in the sense of command and control, or of wielding force and authority – or is it?
Today we turn to Jesus’ teaching of the vine and the branches and are reminded that what the branch produces is empowered by the life coursing through the vine. Indeed, we were created by God for the sake of flourishing, of fully developing all our powers (intellectual, emotional, physical), of becoming a whole, complete human being made in the image of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is the perfect power of God’s perfect love that enables us to be all God created us to be.

So, join me as we worship the One who is perfect love, loves perfectly, and empowers us to love completely.

CALL TO WORSHIP#1 (RESPONSIVE)

Leader: God is the Gardener, and God is planting something new;

People: In this time of worship, may we grow in Christ.

Leader: God is pruning us back so we may bear fruit;

People: In this time of worship, may we repent, and know God’s forgiveness.

Leader: God is nurturing us with water and Spirit, that we may blossom;

People: In this time of worship, may we praise our Creator and Sustainer!

Leader: Come, let us join together in worship;

People: Let us praise God, who is growing something new in us.

Prayers, Litanies, etc.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, remain here with us. Nurture us where we are not growing. Encourage us to see the sun again. Remain here with us, O God. Remain here. Remain in us.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen. (UM Hymnal, p. 6)
PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of all creation, you are pure and holy. You created a perfect environment and beautiful beings for your pleasure. All of this was good. Yet today we find ourselves in an imperfect world, and we confess that the sin in our own lives separates us from your will and your ways. Forgive us, Lord, for making choices contrary to your purposes, for refusing to live by your guidance, for failing to trust that your ways are in place with our well-being in mind. Give us the power through your Holy Spirit to turn from our willfulness and trust you alone for our rule of life. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen. (Worship & Song Worship Resources, #49)

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, teach us to render to you all that we have and all that we are, that we may praise you, not with our lips only, but with our whole lives, turning the duties, the sorrows, and the joys of all our days into a living sacrifice to you; through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (UM Book of Worship #555)

SENDING FORTH (RESPONSIVE)

Leader: Jesus is the Vine.

People: God is the Vine grower.

Leader: We are the branches.

People: God is expecting fruit.

Leader: Go into the world, reaping a harvest of blessings for God.

People: We will abide in God and bear much fruit.

Leader: God the Vine grower, Jesus the Vine, and the Holy Spirit, the fruit producer, are with us.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May God’s perfect love uplift you.
May God’s perfect love transform you.
May God’s perfect love surround you through the challenges ahead.
May God’s perfect love convince you, in every situation, to love.
Go now to love others, even as Christ loves you. (Worship & Song #176 adapted)
Artistic Elements

HYMNS (UM HYMNAL)

Note: hymn numbers followed by (W) are written by Charles Wesley

384 (W) – Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

402 – Lord, I Want to be a Christian in my Heart

417 (W) – O For a Heart to Praise my God

463 – Lord, Speak to Me

554 (W) – All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord

562 (W) – Jesus, Lord, We Look to Thee