

## **Super Bowl Sunday**

Sunday, February 5, 2012—Orion UMC

Pastor Dave Schultz

### **An Order of Worship for Super Bowl Sunday**

#### **Pre-Game Festivities**

Prelude

Welcome and Commercial Announcements

*Please note we are not charging \$3 million for a 30-second spot*

#### **Coin Toss**

*Today is also "Souper Bowl Sunday" and our youth are collecting money for the Orion Food Pantry. Please toss your coins in the container for either the New England Patriots or the New York Giants.*

#### **Singing of the National Anthem**

\*The "Christian National Anthem" # 378, Amazing Grace

#### **Invocation:**

\*Sharing of God's Love

#### **First Quarter: We Pray to God**

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Hymn No. 452, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee (vs. 1-2; 8 a.m. only)

Choral Anthem, "Hear Me Now, O Lord" (Althouse) (10:30)

Sharing of Joys and Concerns with Pastoral Prayer

*Following each petition, the pastor will say, "Lord, in your mercy" to which the people may respond, "**Hear our prayer.**"*

Response # 898, "Three-fold Amen"

#### **Second Quarter: Patriots' Ball**

Hymn of the Patriots No. 696, America the Beautiful

Gospel Lesson, Mark 1:29-39

#### **Half-Time**

Brown Bag Story

*Simon and his companions went to look for [Jesus], and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Mark 1:36-37 (NIV)*

Psalter #859, Psalm 147 with response

#### **Third Quarter: Giants' Ball**

New Testament Lesson, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

<sup>16</sup> For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! <sup>17</sup> If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. <sup>18</sup> What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not misuse my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

<sup>19</sup> Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Hymn of the Giants No. 577, God of Grace and God of Glory

*This hymn was written by one of the most famous preachers of his day, Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick. A New Yorker and an ardent opponent of racism, Fosdick served Riverside Church in New York City from 1925-1946.*

Old Testament Lesson, Isaiah 40:21-31 (KJV/TNIV)

<sup>21</sup>Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup>It is [God] that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; [It is God] that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

<sup>23</sup>That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

<sup>24</sup>Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

<sup>25</sup>To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

<sup>27</sup>Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

<sup>28</sup>Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

<sup>29</sup>He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

<sup>30</sup>Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

<sup>31</sup>But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

### **Sermon, “Read My Lips”**

Over the course of the past twenty weeks, many of us have watched as our favorite football team has been eliminated from the playoffs. As I looked forward to today I fully anticipated I would be wearing my Green Bay Packer tie. Instead I’m stuck with this generic thing.

This year has been an interesting year for one ongoing football debate: Is a strong defense more important than a strong offense? Or is it the other way around?

This season the Packers fielded one of the top rated offenses in the league. Packers Quarterback Aaron Rodgers set all kinds of franchise records which helped their fans forget all about Brett Favre.

However, the Packers also owned the second-worst defense in the league and after a first-round bye, the Packers lost their first playoff game to the New York Giants.

During the regular season, the Packers’ offense racked up enough points to compensate for their weak defense. All the Giants had to do was figure out how to contain the Packers’ offense, knowing that their defense would be no match for Eli Manning.

So this year it would seem as though the debate has tilted in favor of a strong defense.

Today’s scriptures are all about strength; however, there are different types of strength expressed in the passages before us, just as a good football team fields different kinds of strength depending on whether it’s playing offense or defense or for that matter special teams.

In each passage, strength belongs to God. Isaiah tells us that by his strength, God creates the world and reigns over it. By his strength, God brings down the rulers of the earth. By his strength, God sustains the universe. By his strength, God never grows faint or weary.

In the Gospel lesson we discover that it is by his power that Jesus heals diseases. It is by his power that he casts out demons and by his powers he silences the power of evil.

Strength and power are characteristic of God. Yet it is a characteristic held in tension with another characteristic of God: his goodness.

We see this tension on the pages of our newspapers: a young father loses his life because some drunk got behind the wheel of a car. His widow lifts up an anguished prayer that goes

something like this: “God, if you’re such a good God and if you’re so powerful, why didn’t you keep that drunk from getting into that car and killing my husband?”

In a sense, that’s exactly the kind of charge that the Israelites were making against God in Isaiah 40:27. Speaking through the prophet, God asks, “Why do you complain, O Jacob? Why do you whine, O Israel, saying, ‘God has lost track of me. God doesn’t care about what happens to me’?”

It was a complaint borne out of the Hebrew experience in Isaiah’s day: the Hebrews had been deported out of their Promised Land into Babylon. Finding themselves in a foreign land, they felt forsaken of God and abandoned. They had lost their hope and they were losing their faith.

Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever felt as though God just doesn’t care about you and that God would be perfectly content to let your world spin out of control?

Hear the word of the Lord this morning:

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. (He doesn’t come and go). His understanding is unsearchable. <sup>29</sup> He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might he increases strength. <sup>30</sup> Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, <sup>31</sup> but those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah portrays God as One who comes in celestial grandeur. God is the Creator of the universe. God is the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Before him all nations must bow. Idols cannot be compared with him. God, the Creator, is the Lord of heaven and earth and history. God is incomparable and omniscient.

And yet, this wonderful, glorious, exalted God is concerned for the people he has created. God, who does not have to share his power or his glory, does. Why? Because God is also compassionate. God not only knows each and every star; he knows me and he calls me by name. The God who upholds the stars also supports his weary people.

Have you ever felt weary in your walk of faith? This passage is written for you: not to the strong, but to the weary. And to the weary, God makes a remarkable offer: God promises to transfer power to you. “He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless” (vs. 29).

Have you ever watched a football game when a camera happened to zero in on one of the coaches as he’s talking to a player or communicating with one of his coordinators up in the booth. Have you ever noticed that the coach will always cover his mouth with some sort of placard or clipboard? That’s because the coach knows that someone from the other team might be watching him on television or through a pair of binoculars and will try to read his lips. If the coach somehow tips off the opposing teams, he has empowered that team and the last thing any coach wants to do is empower the team across the field—even if it’s only empowering them for a single play.

There’s no covering of the lips in Isaiah 40. Instead, God declares, “Read my lips. Better yet, hear what I have to say because I am going to empower you.”

God doesn’t keep his power to himself; he gives it to us. “He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless.”

To illustrate this transfer of power, Isaiah draws upon two images: that of youth and that of the eagle.

How often have you watched a teenage boy or girl play basketball until the sweat drips from his or her brow? The buzzer sound; the quarter ends and the coach asks, “Are you tired?”

“No, Coach. I’m not tired at all. Put me back in. I wanna play.”

Eventually, though, that ball player does get tired. “For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles. They run and don’t get tired; they walk and don’t lag behind” (vs. 30-31, *The Message*).

We as believers “mount up with wings like eagles” when we soar toward our highest possible goal. We soar upwards, toward the will of God, with the strength and power of God, high and heavenward. We soar above the cares of the world. We soar above the temptations of the world. We soar into the very presence of God.

You see, rather than bringing God down to our level, Isaiah strives to lift us up to God’s level. We press on. We walk. We run. We soar. We persevere because we’ve learned what it means to “wait upon the Lord.” Waiting suggests faith and expectancy. It means we have confidence in God and we are willing to stake our claim on him.

Earlier I mentioned a woman who lost her husband to a drunk driver. In her anguish she cried out to God—and rightly so. God’s shoulders are broad enough to bear such prayers. The sad fact of the matter is that we live in a sinful world and that means that there are times when sinners are going to sin and when they do, they just might bring unbearable heartache to others.

However, when such heartaches come—and they will come just as certainly as the sun will rise in the East—when heartaches come, God never makes excuses.

*“Oh, well, I’m sorry. I know I’m all-powerful and all that and I meant to stop that drunk driver in his tracks but...but the sun got in my eyes.”*

God never makes excuses to us. But God does something better: God transfers power to us. God shares a part of what he is with us.

There is an old rabbinical tradition that says that the eagle, at the end of every tenth year, soars so close to the sun that it is scorched and falls from the sky into the sea. From there it emerges with fresh plumage, ready to fly majestically again for another decade when the process is repeated.

When applied to the life of the redeemed, that rabbinical tradition hints of the resurrection. But more than that, when we wait on the Lord we mount up with wings as eagles. You might say that we sprout new feathers. We renovate ourselves. We renew our strength.

Last week at our Ladies Luncheon I played a clip from the movie, “Space Jam” as part of a trivia game: Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny playing basketball: what a blast! We watched as Michael Jordan made *nine* baskets in that short clip and we listened to the background music as R&B singer R. Kelly sang,

*I used to think that I could not go on  
And life was nothing but an awful song  
But now I know the meanin' of true love  
I'm leanin' on the everlasting arms*

*See I was on the verge of breakin' down  
Sometimes silence can seem so loud  
There are miracles in life I must achieve  
But first I know it starts inside of me*

*If I can see it then I can do it  
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it*

*I believe I can fly  
I believe I can touch the sky  
I think about it every night and day  
Spread my wings and fly away  
I believe I can soar  
I see me running through that open door  
I believe I can fly...*

Right on, R. Kelly.

Right on, Prophet Isaiah.

Right on, Faithful Friends.

Response no. 143, On Eagle's Wings

**Fourth Quarter: We Celebrate Holy Communion**

*No Super Bowl Party is complete without a feast!*

Prayer of Confession:

Words of Assurance:

Hymn No. 618, Let Us Break Bread Together (vs. 1-3)

*Sung in celebration of Black History Month*

The Great Thanksgiving No. 17

The Lord's Prayer No. 895

\*The Bread and the Cup

Prayer

\*Hymn No. 666, Shalom to You

\*Benediction

\*Postlude