

Today, our week three, we're gonna, I scheduled, I've planned on studying the reading, the preaching, and the hearing of the word in public worship. I don't think I'm gonna get past reading. So Wayne, you may have another week. So I think it may, I don't think we're gonna make it all the way through.

There's a lot of much, there's a lot of things that I wanna deal with that is more about overall worship, and the fact that our reformed worship didn't start in the 1517 to 1550 range, that it wasn't a new invention, that our worship is based back in the apostolic church, it's based in the patristic church, and it's not it was going back. They saw that there were problems with the Roman Catholic worship. There was idolatry, there was a lack of trust in God's word. So they went back, they didn't reinvent it. I mean, they went back and found it and said, this is what is true, should be true worship.

And I want to spend some time as we get into the word because the importance of the word to us as Christians and to us as worshipers is vitally important. So I'm gonna spend, I think we're gonna spend too much time there to get everything done today. So just warning y'all that. But let's begin with prayer.

Lord God, our Father, the triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, Lord God, I pray that you would come and be with us this morning as we study what it is to worship by reading the Word. Oh Lord God, I pray that you would help me here, even as you help us in worship and help Mac in preaching, by pouring out your Holy Spirit as we come to you through the Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I have two nephews that have left the Protestant Church to go into Eastern Orthodox Church. I have a friend whose son left the Protestant Church and gone into Eastern Orthodoxy, and another friend whose son has joined the Roman Catholic Church. And I was reading in the table talk, there's several articles about this phenomena. 64% of new people joining the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches are coming out of the Protestant church.

And so I'm gonna read a little bit about from an article by Christopher Gordon. Christopher Gordon is a senior minister of Escondido United Reform Church in Escondido, California. He hosts a radio show and is an author. But he had some interesting things to say just to bring it to our mind. And then there's an article by Jonathan Landry Cruz that I want to read a section of before we get started in review.

Christopher Gordon says, the attraction of many Protestants to the worship of Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy is a subject that needs much attention in our day. There are a series of assumptions that are driving this attraction that require clarity and historical perspective concerning Protestant worship and its origin. Many who are attracted to Eastern Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism have come to believe that Protestants began a new worship tradition that voids all history from the time of the Apostles to 1517. Also, some appeals to the regulative principle of worship from the Reformed tradition can leave the impression that the 16th century was the first time in history that true worship began. Further, The frustration of many with the modern evangelical church, its severance from the ancient church, its lack of uniformity, and its inundation by worldly fads and consumeristic entertainment, has created enough burnout that many are willing to swim the Tiber in search of ritual-filled worship that makes God seem as authentically close to them as he was for the Apostles. So it is assumed it is precisely this tactic that both so is assumed. It is precisely this tactic that both traditions use to allure many away from Protestantism.

Both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy claim an unbroken succession of liturgical tradition as founded by Jesus. And this often unanswered assumption has been a great selling point for both groups in their recent uptick of converts.

We can indeed sympathize with those who are exhausted by their irreverent and shallow approach to worship and evangelicalism, often untethered from any historical ties to the ancient church, yet deeply embedded in the worship of Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism amid the allure of crossings, chanting, kneelings, and veneration of icons and relics and incense burning.

is a problem that the apostles directly condemned in the worship of God, idolatry. Some evangelicals may have lights and fog, but exchanging them for medieval smells and bells is no solution.

It is here that Reformed worship offers a great solution to the temptation toward these things, not as something that originated at the time of the Reformation, something recovered from the apostolic tradition handed to us.

And then Jonathan Landry Cruz said the first, he gives us two things that he thinks that, well he says three things that we are leaving behind if you leave the Protestant Church.

So the first thing is the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. as defined in Westminster Confession of Faith 1-6. This doctrine teaches that all things necessary for God's own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequences may be deduced from Scripture.

Put another way, everything that we need to strengthen our spiritual walk or provide richer communion with God is found in the Bible. This is because God has infused his word with power to revive our souls. The path to true blessedness is to meditate on and delight in God's law day and night.

He goes on and he also says the second thing, that if you go to one of the ancient churches, is you lose assurance of faith. You lose your assurance of faith because they're both works-based salvation. You have to tend to those works to continue in the faith instead of being, we are saved by faith through grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He saves us, not we ourselves. That's a problem in the greater church. That's another reason for us to understand where our worship comes from. And I'll be touching on that later today.

First thing we talked about two weeks ago, we said, we just talked about worship in general. We said the corporate worship was the gathering of the body of Christ, the church, to worship and honor God, glorifying and enjoying Him with reverence, devotion, adoration, and praise with thanksgiving on the Lord's Day.

We looked at why we, also we looked at why should we study worship. We said because there's, as we said, there's a wide range of worship types and there's a confusion about how we should do it. But the main thing is man is prone to false worship. We chase our own ideas instead of God, God's ideas.

We also looked at the object of our worship. Our object of our worship is God himself. We are worshiping the triune God. We're worshiping the holy God who is eternal, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. We also said that we needed a mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, and we need the help of the Holy Spirit. Everything we do in the Christian life is we need the mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we need the power of the Holy Spirit helping us. He is our helper. Jesus sent Him to be our helper.

And lastly, we talked about the regulative principle. I'm just going to read that again. As from the Confession, the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself and so limited by His own revealed will that He may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. God prescribes, He directs how we should worship Him. He cares about it, we looked at examples. So we are trying to worship God the way He tells us to.

Last week we talked about prayer. Shorter Catechism says that prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God in the name of Christ by the help of His Spirit with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgments of His mercies. We also read Shorter Catechism 88, said, what are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer. which are all made effectual to the elect for salvation.

We're going to refer back to this because this is the ordinary means of grace or the simple means of grace. I said earlier, we are a simple means of grace church. Our worship is meant to have the simplicity of the word, the sacraments, and prayer. There are other elements, but that is the means of grace. This is how God communicates the benefits of redemption, especially. So when we examined the prayers of our worship service, we said we have four prayers in our liturgy that we use. That's not the only way to do it, but this is how we do it because prayer is important.

We talked about that we start off with a call to worship. That's not a prayer. That is God calling out and saying, come to me and worship. Come, worship me. It's not us saying, God, please come here. We do pray that, but God says, come worship me. And so our response to that call is praise and prayer. The prayer of the invocation is we're going, God, help me. How can I approach your holiness and your goodness that we talked about who God is? How can I approach this holy God? I need your help. I need the Lord Jesus Christ to make it possible through his mediation, and I need the Holy Spirit to help me do it. So we call out to God for help. That's our response.

I'm going to read the quotes I used last week from Cruz. He said, once again, this once again is an extremely covenantal act in the ancient covenants. The lesser king would call on the name of the greater king in his time of crisis. It was a covenantal relationship that obligated the greater king to come to the rescue of the lesser. And in worship, we call on the name of the Almighty God in faith, trusting that He will come by His Spirit to enable us to

work He Himself, excuse us, excuse me, by His Spirit to enable the work He Himself has given us to do. He's given us a duty to work of worship and He is giving us the ability to do it. So we call on or invoke the name of the Lord.

Terry Johnson describes what should be involved in this prayer. He says, So that's the invocation. I think it's one of our most important prayers because as we As I said, we studied who God is, the object of our worship. Well, when we understand who God is, we're approaching him. That affects our mood, our tone, the way we approach God. And we said God is a consuming fire, so we are to approach him with reverence and awe. We're approaching the king of the universe, the creator of all things. our God who condescended to save us from our sins, that's who we come to. And he's calling us, he wants us to. He's given us the Lord Jesus Christ so that we can come to him because we have his righteousness. So that affects how we approach in worship. And I think that's important to keep in our mind as we approach him in prayer, which the invocations acknowledging all those things that we're approaching our God who is great and powerful and he wants to meet with us. It approaches our attitude as we come in here. We don't do it flippant. This isn't a fraternity or sorority. This isn't a community group. We are the body of Christ meeting God and he has said he would be here with us. He said that if you ask for the Holy Spirit he would send him. We need all these things to be able to do that. And so this is how we do and that's the invocation. That's why it's so important.

Our next prayer is a pastoral prayer. Very important. Terry Johnson has a great description. I can't improve on it. He says, the pastoral prayer should be a prayer of confession of sin, forgiveness of pardon, and intercession. Then he goes on to describe what the intercession, he says it's fivefold. We pray for the civil authorities. We see that in 1 Timothy 2, excuse me, 2 Timothy, 1 Timothy 2, 1. We pray for the civil authorities. In Ephesians, we're commanded, I think it's 13, we're commanded to pray for the civil authorities. And then we pray for Christian ministry and mission. We pray for the work of the church. We pray for the salvation of all men. we're also pray for the sanctification of the Saints and lastly we're to pray for the afflicted. So that's what the pastoral prayer is supposed to do.

A fourth prayer is after the collection of tithes and offerings is a prayer of thanks. In this, it's a shorter prayer, but it's an acknowledgment of our complete dependency on God for all our temporal as well as spiritual blessings. And then before Matt gets up to preach and read God's Word, we have the prayer of illumination. And in it, we're acknowledging that we are frail and we're dependent on our triune God. We confess we need Christ's meditational work and the Holy Spirit to help us, that we would understand it, that we'd be able to see Christ and our need for Christ, that we'd be encouraged and strengthened, that we would grow in our love for Christ, that we would know the love of Christ. we pray that the Holy Spirit would help the preacher as he preaches and that any error would be discounted and obscured.

Then we talked about ending the service. The benediction is not a prayer, but it's important. The benediction is God's blessing on us as we leave his worship and go forth in the world. So we close our worship with a benediction of God once again talking to us. In the call to worship, he calls us in the benediction and he says, go in my peace. What a wonderful thing.

All right, today we're going to read, discuss the reading. I don't know, there's no way I'm going to get any further. I didn't think so. The Confession chapter 21 and 5 says, the reading of the Scriptures with godly fear, the sound preaching and conscious hearing of the Word in obedience to God with understanding, faith, and reverence. We read the Scriptures with godly fear.

I'm going to add this verse to meditate on from 1 John 2, 5. We're talking about the Word of God. We need to hear the Word of God because it is our life. It is our life. We're like little children that don't know how to behave. But God is so kind that He gave us His Word. We should love it and embrace it and eat it up. Jesus Christ is called the Word. He is the way, the truth, and the life. The truth is the Word. If we're going to grow in our love for Christ, we must know His Word.

So as we talked about last week, worship is a conversation. God calls, we respond. Well, this is another of God talking to us. It's through His Red Word. And as we read the Word and listen to the Word, we need Christ to mediate for us. and we need the Holy Spirit to help us, because we are weak and frail.

Last week we were looking at John 4, 23-24 where Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman by the well. I referenced this last week, but it's important to everything we look at in worship. He says, but an hour is coming, and now is, When the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such people the Father seeks to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

As Ian Hamilton told me, he said, his talking has two meanings. We're to worship from the heart and according to God's revealed will, from God's word. We're to worship according, Spirit, wait a minute, excuse me, I lost my place, to the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus. So we see we need the Word to worship Him, we're to worship Him according to the Word, we're to worship in Spirit and in truth.

Larger Catechism, question 155. How is the Word made effectual to salvation? The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ, of conforming them to His image, and subduing them to his will, of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions, of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

Don't we want to have those things applied in our lives? I can pick any one of those, but I really need strength against temptations and corruptions. I want my heart established in holiness and comfort. And I want to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. What we're being taught here is that the Word is made effectual by the reading and especially the preaching. We're going to talk about the reading today.

Hebrews 4.12 says, The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The Word of God is powerful. It is powerful. There is power in God's Word. We don't need to forget that.

So why should we read the Word of God? I think I've answered that question to some degree, but according to... I've got four reasons. According to the catechism, reading God's Word makes it effectual to salvation, and we want that. Secondly, according to the shorter catechism, the Word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him. So if we want to glorify and enjoy God, we need to know what that rule is. So we need God's Word.

2 Timothy 3, 14-17, Paul says to Timothy, But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good work." If we want to be equipped for every good work, we need God's Word.

The third reason we should be reading God's Word in worship is, as we talked last week about worship being a conversation, God calls us to worship and we respond with praise and prayer. With the reading of the Word, we see God responding to our prayer and praise, instructing us on how to glorify and enjoy Him. It's God talking to us.

And fourthly, we see examples of this being, of the word being read in the scriptures in worship. So it's, all those are good reasons, but we also see God gives us examples. We see it in Exodus 24, 7, Moses at Mount Sinai. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, all that the Lord has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient.

And Nehemiah 8, 5-8, Ezra. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people. And he opened it, and all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Also, Jeshua, Bani, Sherebi, Jamin, Akub, Shabethai, Hodai, Maciah, Kelita, Azariah, Josabath, Hanan, Peleah, the Levites. The Levites helped the people to understand the law while the people remained in their place and they read from the book, from the law of God clearly and they gave sense, the sense, so the people understood the reading.

We see the exiles coming back and Ezra instructing them in worship, they read the law. And I think in one part they sat all day in the rain listening to the law of God and the Levites instructing them.

In Luke chapter 4, 16 and 17 says he, Jesus, came to Nazareth where he had been brought up and as was