

Series: **Simplifying Church** – week 2

CDOBC – beginning on 2/5/17

Today's Title: "**Committed to Worship**"

February 12, 2017 - Selected passages

OBJECTIVE: To help people realize the second step in following Christ is to commit to corporate worship.

Opening Prayer

Ever open an e-mail, and find it's so long and the font so small - that you just delete it?

Ever have a Christmas Eve when your kids were little - and after they went to bed you started assembling the big present - only to get the directions out and you were instantly overwhelmed by how complex they were?

Ever go to a website - and it was so confusing you didn't even try to navigate through the site?

Ever try and find the phone # to call Amazon customer service? They bury it!!!

Ever open the hood of a modern car - and try to perform some basic maintenance?

These thoughts and feelings of being overwhelmed or confused is what many people experience as they walk into a church.

Churches often become so confusing and so complex that new people can't figure out where to even begin - and many Christians in the church are uncertain of the next step they should take to grow in their faith.

This is why it's important for us to simplify the ministry focus of our church.

We must make it very clear:

- How to begin following Christ
- How to grow as a follower of Christ

Within the first few minutes of someone walking into our church, we must make it easy for them to know the answer to these 2 questions.

We have identified 5 steps where our church will focus our efforts and energy to help people follow Christ.

Last Sunday, I spoke on Step #1 - *Belief and Baptism*.

Today, I'm speaking on Step #2 - *Worship*.

I realize these things are not "*new*" - we've been preaching belief and baptism - and we've been involved in worship every Sunday.

- What is new is our focus on these steps.
- What is new is the goal of making sure we don't have ministries and events which operate outside of these five steps.
- What's new is helping you see the movement toward Christian maturity and balance each follower of Christ should display.

Worship is the most inclusive thing a church does - it's the broadest net a church can cast. It's a natural entry point for most people who decide to visit a church.

Belief and baptism is how you begin following Christ - and step #2 is start worshiping God with other believers on a regular basis.

Everyone is welcome into the worship service.

Worship is also one of the most varied things churches do.

You can go to 5 different churches and have 5 different experiences of worship.

This is not a sermon on *'how to'* worship - but a sermon where I hope to show you the importance / priority of public or corporate worship.

It's not a sermon sharing with you *3 steps to Godly worship* - but a sermon where I hope to show you the why worship is the 2nd step our process of how our church will help each and every person follow Christ by committing to regular, public worship.

The 'What' and 'Why' of worship

What is worship?

When most people think of worship, they think of a worship service - but worship is more than a weekly event.

Author Gordon Dahl's famous statement about worship in modern-day America:

"We worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship."

Worship is the only thing we do in this life - which we will also do in heaven.

A.W. Tozer says: *“I can safely say, on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is not ready for heaven.”*

(Worship on Earth as it is in Heaven, by Rory Noland, p. 115)

In **Revelation 22:3** it says: “His servants will worship Him.”

One of the challenges in today’s post-Christian culture is knowing what worship is - the Biblical definition of Christian worship.

(Swindoll) “In Hebrew, the root word for worship has the idea of *bowing down*.

In Greek, the word for worship (*proskuneo*) refers to *prostrating oneself before a person and kissing their feet*, which has the idea of giving honor.

In English, our word *worship* comes from an old Anglo-Saxon term (*weorthscipe*) and it means *to attribute worth to someone or something*.

Therefore, when referring to the worship of our God, it is attributing supreme worth to Him who alone is worthy of our praise and honor.”

(The Church Awakening, by Chuck Swindoll, p. 116)

We worship God because God alone is worthy of our worship. Worship is celebrating God, along with

praising and thanking Him. Worship is not limited to any single style or form. Worship is vertical in it's focus on God.

Why do we worship? Why is this important?

1. Great Commandment - **Deuteronomy 6:5**

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

This is a statement of worship. Our total self (heart, soul, strength) must worship God.

2. The 1st & 2nd Commandment - **Exodus 20:3-5**

3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them...”

Worship is important because God commanded us to worship.

The Great Commandment along with the 1st and 2nd of the 10 commandments all have our worship as their focus.

3. The central location of the Tabernacle in the years Israel wandered in the desert.

“The arrangement of the camp suggests that worship was central to all other activity. The Tabernacle was at the center of the camp. Next to the Tabernacle were the priests who led in the

worship. A little farther out from the Tabernacle were the Levites, who were involved in service. Beyond that were the various tribes, each one facing toward the center, the place of worship.”

(Worship, The Ultimate Priority, by John MacArthur, p. 16)

God made worship the central point of Israel’s community.

4. We have been saved to worship

“...the primary reason we are redeemed is not so that we may escape hell - that is a blessed benefit, but not the major purpose. The central objective for which we are redeemed is not even so that we might enjoy the manifold eternal blessings of God. In fact, the supreme motive in our redemption is not for us to receive anything. Rather, we have been redeemed so that God may receive worship - so that our lives might glorify Him.”

(Worship, The Ultimate Priority, by John MacArthur, p. 53-54)

Ephesians 1:4, 5, 6

“He chose us...predestined us...to the praise of His glorious grace...”

A.W. Tozer - *“...we were redeemed, that we might be worshipers of the Most High God...We’re here to be worshipers first and workers only second. We take a convert and immediately make a worker out of them. God never meant it to be so. God*

meant that a convert should learn to be a worshiper, and after that they can learn to be a worker.”

(The Practice of Praise, by Don McMinn, p. 15)

John 4:23b

“...for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.”

God saves you so you can worship Him in “spirit and in truth”.

5. Because He has given us so much.

1 Corinthians 4:7

“What do you have that you did not receive?”

2 Corinthians 9:15

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!”

We worship because of what we have received from Christ. We give Him thanks and praise for all He has done...is doing...and will do.

Ephesians 3:21

“...To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

6. (**Bonus!!**) The 4th Commandment “Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.” (Ex. 20:8)

I defined worship - and I gave you 5 6 reasons why we worship.

But we live in a consumer-driven world...in a culture which chooses what they will do and where they will go based on what it does for them.

This way of living doesn't work with worship.

We don't (shouldn't) worship for what it gives us.

We worship because God alone is worthy.

We worship and give ourselves - our heart, soul and strength to God.

Worship is counter-culture - it goes against the normal motives at work in the culture.

“On Sundays God wants us to do more than sing songs together and have wonderful worship experiences. He wants to knit the fabric of our lives together. For many, church has become all about me – what I’m learning, what I’m seeking, what I’m desperate for, what I need, how I’ve been affected, what I can do. We see ourselves as isolated individuals all seeking personal encounters with God, wherever we can find them. Sadly, this reflects our individualistic, me-obsessed culture. Rather than seeing ourselves as part of a worship community, we become worship consumers.”

(Worship Matters, by Bob Kauflin, p. 126-127)

In addition, Christians were not called to live in isolation, in solitude or independence. We're called to come together as the Body of Christ and worship our Savior.

Public worship displays our unity and inter-dependence.

All throughout the Bible, you never see someone who is a follower of God, and insists on being a spiritual loner.

Samson got on a solo track for a while, and it didn't turn out well.

John the Baptizer was a bit of a loner - but he ministered to and engaged with others and had disciples who assisted him and were under his teaching.

Acts 2:46

“And day by day, attending the temple together...”

Psalm 22:22

“I will tell of Your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You...”

Psalm 109:30

“With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise Him in the midst of the throng.”

Psalm 122:1

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!”

Psalm 149:1

“Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, His praise in the assembly of the godly!”

Each passage focuses on the followers of God coming together for worship.

Our common worship gives evidence to the unbelieving world of our unity in Christ and our inter-dependence.

Romans 15:5-6

“May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that

together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Such power! Public worship displays our unity and inter-dependence - and when worship is Christ-centric and Gospel-centric - it's a powerful evangelistic force!

Worship is both personal and public.

John 4:23-24

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Worship is personal:

Our culture is very unbalanced in this area - and has made anything spiritual a private matter. *“I’ll do my thing...you can do your thing...don’t meddle in my stuff!”*

But God never intended your spiritual life to be a private matter off-limits to everyone else - but it is a personal matter for you to understand and embrace.

This is the primary point when Jesus says, “...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit”.

Your worship must be connected to your “spirit”.

This word translated “spirit” in vs. 23 & 24 is the human spirit – your ‘heart’ - the inner person.

Your worship must be much more than external things – it must come from your heart. Location is not the

primary concern – nor is the practice, traditions, liturgy or ritual of your worship. Your worship must be from the inside-out. David said in **Psalm 45:1** “My heart is stirred by a noble theme...”

Psalm 103:1

“Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name.”

Is your heart ever “stirred” by worship?

Are you ever overwhelmed by your emotions in worship?

You need to worship God personally, with your head and your heart fully engaged!

At the same time our worship is public:

Our worship is not to be independent and isolated from other believers (although it may be this at times).

Notice the plural: “worshippers” (vs. 23-24). You could take the plural to mean there will many people worshipping God by themselves in their own home in total privacy. But the rest of Scripture – both the O.T. and N.T. clearly teach the importance of believers gathering together - in a public setting for worship.

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...”

Psalm 111:1

“Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.”

“The Reformers understood the importance of public worship. Before the Reformation, worship was a spectator event as the congregation would watch the priest perform the rituals of the Mass at the altar. The language of the Mass was Latin, a language which the congregation didn’t even know or understand. The Reformers were intentional about the congregation participating in worship - and they brought the activity down from the altar into the pews and they insisted on using the language spoken by the congregation.”

(The Living Church, by John Stott, p.38)

Many truths in Scripture point to worship as a public event for believers to attend and participate in!

Genesis 2:18a

“Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone...”

Exodus 19:6a (Kingdom of priests and a holy nation, the O.T. festivals)

“...and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

The church is called to live life together – One Another
- The Body of Christ - Living stones in a spiritual house.

“God doesn’t give us a choice about whether we want to be in the church. If we’re Christians, we’re already part of the family. The question then becomes where and how we work out the details of family life.”

(True Worshipers, by Bob Kauflin, p. 72-73)

Psalms 34:3 (exalt God’s name together)

“Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt His name together.”

Psalm 35:18

“I will give You thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise You.”

See also: **1 Corinthians 14:26** (benefits of meeting together)

“We should consider it the great end of our existence to be found numbered among the worshipers of God.”

(John Calvin, quoted in True Worshipers, by Bob Kauflin, p. 21)

Psalm 84:10

“For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

Psalm 34:3

“Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together!”

“Real, meaningful worship with God’s people is not optional. It’s not a suggestion. It’s not a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Worship on the Lord’s Day should be the crowning joy of our week. It’s our opportunity to engage our minds toward God. To enjoy His people. To bask in His presence. To corporately drink from His Word. To give of our talents and resources. To encourage and to be encouraged. To offer praise.”

John MacArthur

One of the big problems we have in the modern American church is the decline in attendance of committed, regular church attenders.

Apply it...

Commit to regular, public worship with God's people.

If you're a new believer in Christ:

- 1st - get baptized (March 26)
- 2nd - Make regular public worship with God's people a priority.

"If you are redeemed (saved, born again) and you aren't now worshiping...you deny the very thing for which you were redeemed. Face the questions:

Do you worship God?

Is it a way of life for you?

Scripture calls for worship; destiny calls for worship; eternity calls for worship; the angels call for worship. Our Lord commands it."

(Worship. The Ultimate Priority, by John MacArthur, p. 66)

In **Romans 1**, Paul tells us God's wrath (judgment) is being poured out on sinful humanity in large part because they refuse to worship God, and they worship what God has made. (Romans 1:18-25)

Engage your heart and mind in worship.

Don't just attend...engage.

Worship is a verb - not a noun identifying a place or destination.

Engage your mind as you sing and think about the words.

Engage your heart as you sing about the greatness of God, the love and mercy of God.

Stand in awe of what He has done for you!

Do you sing...do you play an instrument...do you have some tech ability?

Serve in the Music Ministry.

No other ministry in the church ministers to the entire church like Music Ministry does!

What a blessing to help others engage their heart and mind in worship!

Warning! Some Christians stall out in step #2 - the worship service becomes the fullness of the Christian life. Next week we'll look at step #3 - and hopefully spur you on to *Connect and grow with others*.

Close in prayer