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the tapestry



A WORSHIPING COMMUNITY OF GRACE

Faith Church, a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

The pumpkin spice has been flowing now for about a month and is just getting its yearly traction as we head into real Autumn. I hope you are enjoying the cooler temperatures and are looking forward to one of the best holidays on the calendar, October 31st, Reformation Day! Since I'm going to be on sabbatical when this is published, I'm writing ahead of time and using a series of articles I did many years ago to get us focused on worship. Deeper engagement in worship is always a good thing, so join me as we look at the Call to Worship from the Pastor's Pondering of September 2008.

I have locked myself into a series here in the Pastor's Ponderings on the order of worship we typically follow in our corporate worship services. So far, we have considered the function of the Prelude and how it is designed to be a time of preparation for corporate worship. (I hope you are using that time for such an important purpose.) We have also looked at the Welcome and Announcements time and the importance of those elements in our worship to us as a gathered body. The next thing we need to consider is "The Call to Worship."

In considering The Call to Worship we must first consider a foundational principle that guides how we approach worship from a Reformed and Presbyterian perspective. "The Regulative Principle" is the

fundamental principle of worship we find in the Scriptures. Simply put, the principle is this: People have no right to approach the Holy God in worship in any manner they choose. It is God who determines how He is to be worshiped, not sinful men. It is God who initiates worship and men respond. In all spiritual things in life this is the flow: God begins the process, by His grace, and men respond as they are enabled by the Holy Spirit. Worship is no exception. God "calls" us to worship Him in His Word. We respond to that call with singing, praying, giving, confessing, professing and preaching. We draw near to God in worship because He invites us to draw near to Him in Christ. God calls us from our earthly cares and relationships to focus on Him and His Kingdom.

Robert Rayburn describes the call to worship this way, "The call to worship summons the people to a consideration of that exalted purpose for which they have assembled. The minister calls them on behalf of God, and this introduces the divine human dialogue. We must always remember that no one is fully ready for the high and holy experience of united corporate worship...The call to worship must, just as far as possible, secure their attention for the all important activity of the precious hour of corporate communion with God in which it is each one's individual privilege to participate."

This call from God to worship is no small thing. It is not something to take lightly. The Triune God of the Universe is calling you from His Word to come to worship. The call is a command to be obeyed not an option to be considered. That is not to say that we are to dutifully come to worship

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like a child being called home from play. Just the opposite is true. Like children released for recess we should run with our hearts flung open wide to embrace the opportunity to worship our Holy God. He deserves nothing less than our whole hearted devotion and love.

God's attributes are the main theme of the call to worship. So next time you hear the call to worship, pay attention to the excellencies of our God and know that it is God Himself calling you to worship from His Word. God calls you to come into the very throne room of heaven to commune with Him as His dearly loved child. How could you ever refuse such a priceless invitation.



How We Got the Bible

by Bruce Brierly

Part 9



Entire volumes have been written about the books of the Old Testament received as authoritative by the Christian Church. I got most of my information from the website, <https://www.bible-researcher.com/>. No doubt there are people and sites out there that will dispute what this site says, but it appears to be reliable and comprehensive.

Let's go back again to the Westminster Confession, Chapter 1, part 4: The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. Yet, we have to ask how the church received the Word of God? It took time and debate.

We can look at the writings of various church fathers and councils which provided lists of the books they believed to be the Word of God. The earliest known list was written by Irenaeus back in 170 AD. Other lists were compiled by Eusebius (~ 324 AD), Jerome (AD 391), Rufinus of Aquileia (400 AD), and the Eastern Orthodox scholar John of Damascus (730 AD), which all excluded the Apocryphal writings, though Jerome and Rufinus also excluded Esther. Athanasius (AD 367) included Baruch but left out Esther. Cyril of Jerusalem (350 AD) included Baruch. The Council of Laodicea (363 AD) included Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah. The Third Council of Carthage and Augustine (397 AD), and Innocent the 1st (405 AD) dismissed those two but included Tobit, Judith, and 1st and 2nd Maccabees. But all the churches pretty much agreed independently with the list made back in 170 AD.

What clouds matters is the use of the word 'canon'. B.F. Wescott states, "The real divergence as to the contents of the Old Testament Canon is to be traced to Augustine, whose wavering and uncertain language on the point furnishes abundant materials for controversy." Augustine and Jerome used "canon" in a different sense. Jerome meant "authoritative" while Augustine meant "useful". Augustine did not deny that there was debate as to the books of the canon, but deferred to the list of larger churches and councils than to the smaller ones.

To quote Augustine, "He will hold this, therefore, as a rule in dealing with the canonical scriptures, to prefer those which are received by all catholic churches to those which only some receive. But, with respect to those which are not received by all, he will prefer such as the more and more dignified churches receive, to such as are held by fewer churches, or churches of less authority." For Augustine, majority rule was preferred. I don't know where I found this quip, but the story goes that Augustine admonished a student for using an Apocryphal reference when from an authoritative book one could be used. Augustine viewed the Apocrypha as useful and informative, but not of the same level as the books accepted by most churches. I just wished he had used a different word than 'canon'.

Whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Orthodox, we all agree that there are at least 66 books of the Bible. Since God cannot change, it only makes sense that any additional books must agree with the 66. Lord willing, we will take a layman's view of issues with the Apocrypha before looking at the New Testament.

One rainy afternoon I was driving along one of the main streets of town, taking those extra precautions necessary when the roads are wet and slick. Suddenly, my son, Matthew, spoke up from his relaxed position in his seat. "Mom, I'm thinking of something." This announcement usually meant he had been pondering some fact for a while, and was now ready to expound all that his six-year-old mind had discovered. I was eager to hear. "What are you thinking?" I asked.

"The rain!," he began, "is like sin, and the windshield wipers are like God wiping our sins away."

After the chill bumps raced up my arms I was able to respond. "That's really good, Matthew." Then my curiosity broke in. How far would this little boy take this revelation? So I asked... "Do you notice how the rain keeps on coming? What does that tell you?"

Matthew didn't hesitate one moment with his answer: "We keep on sinning, and God just keeps on forgiving us."

I will always remember this whenever I turn my wipers on.

--Brenda Hunter <https://www.heavensinspirations.com/rain.html>



Historic Missionaries You Should Know

bruce olsen (1941-)

From the time he became a Christian at age 16, Bruce felt a pull in his heart to go to the unreached corners of the world and tell others about Jesus. At 19, Bruce Olsen bought a plane ticket to Venezuela. Shortly after his arrival, he learned of the Bari tribe, a group of people with little to no positive contact with the rest of the world. They were violent and considered “Stone Age”. He had a burden to reach the Bari with the news of Jesus and his life work centered on connecting with and sharing the Gospel with them in a way that they could understand. His life was full of challenges as he attempted to reach and be accepted by the Bari, but the ways God used him to lead them to Christ were truly beautiful.

You can read the astounding story of his mission work in his book [Bruchko](#).

kindredgrace.com/missionary-heroes-stories

PERSECUTED BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN

Iran

Overview: The Islamic Revolution of 1979, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, created the world’s only Shiite Islamic theocracy and profoundly changed every aspect of life in Iran. Today, many of those who committed their lives to Islam and Islamic rule are filled with despair. This disillusionment has opened new doors for the gospel, which is sweeping across the nation via Christian media and bold evangelists in Iran’s growing house church movements. However, the government continues its attempts to thwart this move of God. Christian leaders and pastors are often arrested, tortured and imprisoned, and their families are harassed. Some, left with no other options, choose to flee the country.

Major Religion:

More than 97 percent of Iranians are identified by the government as Muslims, but a significant segment of the population has abandoned Islam, and many have come to faith in Christ.

Persecutor:

Christians are persecuted by government authorities, who have networks of informants in each city. Family, friends and community members also persecute Christians, especially when news of a conversion becomes public.

What It Means To Follow Christ In Iran:

The Iranian government is among the most oppressive regimes in the world. It is illegal to leave Islam, and Christians face the constant threat of imprisonment and being falsely charged with “acting against national security” for owning Bibles or even talking about Christ. Christians are routinely fired from their jobs, and it is difficult for a known believer to find a job or rent a home. Many Christians gather in covert fellowships and receive teaching through Christian media smuggled into the country and through broadcast media. Several Christians are currently imprisoned, and many others are under house arrest awaiting sentencing.

Access To Bibles:

It is illegal to own, print, import or distribute Bibles. Since they are so difficult to obtain, Bibles are treasured by Iranian believers. Few have their own copy of God’s Word.



<https://www.persecution.com/globalprayerguide>

INTERN'S INSIGHTS

BY QUENTIN JOHNSTON

Paul, On Celibacy

Paul's ministry begins in a specific time in the redemptive-historical framework—the wake of the resurrection of Christ and the ingrafting of the Gentiles. Believers, once dead in sin, are now delivered from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:1–2). In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul addresses the Corinthians' pastoral concerns. Some in the church, influenced by ascetic tendencies, asserted that it is better to avoid sexual relations altogether. Later theologians such as Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine built on this, claiming virginity to be superior and marriage to be polluting, though preferable to fornication. Paul, however, does not argue this. He presents both marriage and celibacy as legitimate gifts (*charismata*). His concern is undivided devotion to the Lord, for “the present form of this world is passing away” (1 Cor. 7:31).

The Corinthians declared, “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” Paul rebuts, “Each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (7:2). Corinth was notorious for immorality, from the temple of Aphrodite to its culture of excess, and some believers overreacted with an asceticism shaped by philosophical ideas that depreciated the body.

Paul affirms marriage as God's gift (7:7), to be “received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4). Forbidding marriage, he warns, is “a doctrine of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1). Far from defiling, marital intimacy is ordained in creation (Gen. 2:24) and portrays Christ and the church (Eph. 5:30–33). He commands spouses not to deprive one another (7:5), correcting the Corinthians' false notion that abstinence, even within marriage, was holier. Calvin warns that “Satan dazzles with the appearance of what is right, to make men believe that marital sex somehow pollutes,”¹ yet this self-righteousness only opens the door to the devil's work (cf. 7:5b).

Paul does commend celibacy, saying, “It is good for a person to remain as he is” (7:26). But unlike the Corinthians, his reasoning is practical—“because of the present distress.” This may have referred to famine or unrest, but the entire passage has an eschatological urgency: “the appointed time has grown very short” (7:29). Marriage, he says, brings “tribulation in the flesh” (7:28), and he would spare believers such anxieties.

Herman Ridderbos observes that “suffering in and because of the present world...must restrain [believers] from becoming attached to the gifts and pleasures of this world as though their life consisted in them.”² Paul's hyperbolic statement, “Let those who have wives live as though they had none” (7:29), calls for detachment, not neglect. Calvin captures the point: “We ought to live as if we were every moment about to depart from this life.”³

Paul highlights the practical advantage of celibacy: “The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife” (7:32–33). This is not a condemnation of marriage, but recognition that it divides attention. Waters clarifies: “We yet continue to live within this age, even as we no longer belong to this age.”⁴ In this “overlap of the ages,” the unmarried may have a freer devotion, but both married and unmarried are called to live in light of the coming kingdom (Tit. 2:12–13).

Marriage remains a created good and a picture of Christ's union with the church, but it is temporary. Celibacy is not perfection, but a gift that enables greater freedom to serve. Calvin summarizes Paul's thrust: “Not to think of celibacy as over and above marriage... but that we may cleave to God without distraction—that being the one thing that a Christian man ought exclusively to look to during his whole life.”⁵ Whether married or single, the call is the same: live with undivided devotion to Christ, knowing the time is short and the form of this world is passing away.

1 Calvin, John. *Commentary on Corinthians – Volume I*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 186.

2 Ridderbos, Herman. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1966), 311

3 Calvin, John. *Commentary on Corinthians*, 211

4 Waters, Guy P. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. “1-2 Corinthians.” Edited by Michael Kruger. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 203

5 Calvin, John. *Commentary on Corinthians*, 215

Charlie Van Meter, What are the ten best books or authors you've ever read?



5

#3 & #4

Kingdom & Covenant

by Gentry and Wellum

Sacred Bond

by Brown and Keele

I am taking these two books together because they both pertain to covenant theology. "Reformed theology" and "covenant theology" are basically synonymous. The unfolding of the covenants in Scripture from the covenant of Redemption to the New Covenant helps us to see God's plan and ties all the pieces together in the coming of Jesus.

"Sacred Bond" by Brown and Keele is a great book for beginners to get a grasp on the covenants. This is a short, well-written book that is easy to understand, is very helpful and is, in my opinion, a must for covenant theologians. This book would be great for small group study.

For the more adventurous ones, "Kingdom and Covenant" by Gentry and Wellum goes into a lot more detail. It is especially good on the Abrahamic Covenant, has an excellent summary at the end of the book, and is great for a reference when you get confused on how a covenant works. It can be read cover to cover or a chapter by itself when a question pertaining to a specific covenant comes up. This is a good book for your bookshelf. Of course there are many other books on covenant out there, but these two should help you as you firm up your covenant theology.



Early Church FATHERS

PAPIAS (70 - 155) BISHOP OF HIERAPOLIS

Papias was a pupil of the apostle John, he became bishop of Hierapolis. He may have known Philip, who probably died in Hierapolis. He was martyred in Pergamum about the same time as his friend Polycarp. He was one of the earliest writers in the Church.

He wrote one book, now lost, but portions are quoted in writings by Eusebius:

Explanation of the Lord's discourses: He inquired of the elders to have the exact words of Jesus.

POLYCARP (69 - 155) BISHOP OF SMYRNA

Polycarp was instructed by the apostle John. He became the greatly loved bishop of Smyrna for 40 years and was martyred in his old age in 155, one of the last to have known any of the apostles. He was revered for the quality of his godly life and gentle manner. He wrote a letter to the Philippians and taught Irenaeus. His martyrdom during the persecution under Marcus Aurelius is described in a letter - The Martyrdom of Polycarp. He was brought before the governor and offered his freedom if he would curse Christ. He replied, "For 86 years I have served Christ and He has done me nothing but good, how then could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour?" He was burned alive.

www.julianspriggs.co.uk/Pages/ChurchFathers





MATTHEW
28:19-20

GO therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

PRAYER FOR US **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** October

Father God,

I remember when our family started attending Faith Church 19 years ago; our Joel was the only baby in the nursery. The leadership began praying for more young families and children, and YOU, O Lord, have heard our request and have blessed us beyond our imaginings.

We praise you for the beautiful lives of many, many covenant children whose laughter and energy now fill our hallway, and we especially give thanks for the four precious covenant babies who were born in the last month! FOUR in one month! Our cup overflows! Glory be to You, Lord Christ!



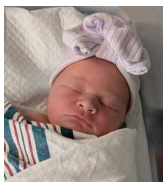
Calvin Ryan Baker
8/22/25



Brynlee Rose Wilson
9/11/25



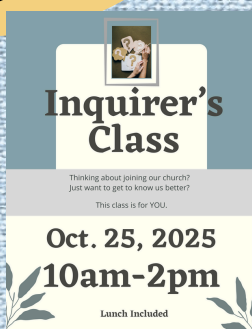
Juan Angel Ochoa
9/15/25



Felicity Jane Adams
9/19/25

- 5 Steve Biggs
- 4 Hannah Paugh
- 4 Tony Penny
- 8 Libi Driggers
- 10 Jack Dombrow
- 13 John Page
- 13 Megan Yost
- 14 Brendan Lyons
- 14 Joy Messinger
- 15 Richard Kline
- 16 Sam Jacobs
- 19 Landon Hoffman
- 19 Bert Windle
- 21 Katiy Paul
- 23 Ellen Nicodemus
- 24 Wayne Tucker
- 25 Gary Cooper
- 28 Shirley Bell
- 29 Lisa Snyder

Coming Events



WEEKLY

Sundays:

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:15am Fellowship
- 10:45am Worship
- 5:00pm Youth Group
- 5:30pm Evening Worship / Meal (1st Sundays only)

Mondays:

- 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

Every Other Tuesday: (14th, 28th)

- 12:00pm Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays:

- 12:00pm Men's Lunch Bunch
- 7:00pm Prayer meeting

Thursdays:

- 7:00pm ESL Ministry

Fridays:

- 10:30am Fiber Fellowship

Saturdays:

- 10:30am Downtown Christian Fellowship

MONTHLY

Third Saturdays, (18th)

- 8:30am Men's Breakfast
- 8:45am Women's Bible Study **

Third Sundays, (19th)

- 12:00pm Fellowship Meal

Faith Church

Sunday School for All Ages 9:15am
Worship Service 10:45am
Evening Worship, 1st Sundays 5pm

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