

Christian Worship

Class 9: Wrap Up

October 29, 2023

Class 1

- Worship is what we were made for.
- The true object of worship is the Triune God.
- Worship is formative; idolatry is deformative.

Class 2: Which Worship?

- This class is focused on Explicit Worship and Corporate Worship.
- The Goals of Corporate Worship: The Glory of God and The Building Up of the Body of Christ.

Class 3: The Source of True Worship

- Right Worship is determined by God and revealed to us in his Word—this is true of both the actions of worship and the motives of worship.
- We can think of worship in terms of its content, elements, forms, and circumstances; and God's word directs us differently in each of those categories.

Class 4: The Transformation of Christian Worship

- Jesus transforms worship by taking it from earth to heaven; corporate worship is a supernatural event that takes place in the very presence of God.

Classes 5 & 6: The Elements of Worship

- God speaks to us in worship through the reading and especially preaching of his Word; we respond to him in prayer, singing, and the sacraments.

Class 7: The Forms of Worship

- Every worship service has a structure, and those structures tell stories. The question is whether our structure is communicating the story of the gospel.
- Christian worship is a covenant renewal ceremony, where God refreshes his promises to us and renews us by his grace.

Class 8: The Forms of Worship

- Our worship service is structured according to the pattern of call, confession, atonement, renewal, equipping, sending from Scripture (esp. Isaiah 6). We have much commonality with the historic liturgies of the church, but also some diversity.
- That structure is not just evident in one service, but over the course of many services. Our big picture structure comes by way of expositional, sequential preaching and the church calendar.

I. Wrap Up—What Did We Learn and What Do We Still Have Questions About?

II. What about circumstances?

- Time of gathering, length of service and elements
- Lighting, temperature, sound levels, instrumentation
- Posture (sitting, standing, kneeling, hands in pockets, outstretched, raised, eyes closed)
- Clothing, aesthetics of the building

None of these is unimportant; some even have theological significance. We have chosen many of these things carefully because we believe that it is what best communicates and countenances the gospel (or maybe is the least distracting).

But notice how often our conversation (and even our choice of church) is dominated by circumstances. Kind of instruments, skill of singers, aesthetics of the room, clothing of pastor, speaking skill of pastor, length of service, length of sermon, length of prayer, taste of communion bread.

What is most important about our church and our worship is not that the pastors wear robes or we sing traditional hymns or that we have beautiful liturgy or observe the church calendar. It is the **content** of our worship that matters the most.

Books

Basic:

- *Does God Care How We Worship?* by Ligon Duncan
- *What Happens When We Worship* by Jonathan Landry Cruse
- *The Westminster Directory of Public Worship*, discussed by Mark Dever and Sinclair Ferguson
- *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* by James K. A. Smith
- *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters* by Tim Keller

More Specifically-Focused:

- *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of Christ-Centered Worship* by Michael Horton
- *With Reverence and Awe: Returning to the Basics of Reformed Worship* by D. G. Hart and John R. Muether
- *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* by Bryan Chapell
- *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* by Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey
- *The Presbyterian Liturgies: Historical Sketches* by Charles W. Baird
- *Worship: Reformed according to Scripture* by Hughes Oliphant Old
- *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* by G.K. Beale

Audio

- Reformed Theological Seminary class, "Theology of Worship" taught by Ligon Duncan, https://rts.edu/resources/?fwp_resources_series=theology-of-worship (you can also access this on the free Reformed Theological Seminary app)