



# Why Worship Matters

## CHAPTER 3: *THE PRINCIPLE OF WORSHIP*

## Class #3 Review-"Purpose"

- ▶ We addressed WHY we should worship God corporately.
- ▶ When we see who God is and what he has done, we begin to rightly value him and thus desire to offer worship.
- ▶ Not everything constitutes right worship so we must take care as we approach our Holy God. No "strange fire."
- ▶ Corporate worship gives us a proper sense of God's immense value and worth-ship.
- ▶ The "tone" of worship must be characterized by gratitude, reverence, and awe. Right decorum must be exercised.
- ▶ The presence of God is "intensified" in our consciousness as we gather to worship in concert with the heavenly throngs each Sunday. Such services shape us spiritually.

# The *Principle* of Worship

- ▶ Tonight, we will focus on **How** we should worship. God is the “primary actor,” and focus of our gathered worship services.
- ▶ The Father draws us to himself through Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ We worship God out of a deep sense of satisfaction and affection because he made us and sustains us continually.
- ▶ By *faith*, along with **ever-arriving** grace, we look with *trust*, *assurance*, and *joy* to the God Man as the focal point and rightful “place” to center and motivate our worship.
- ▶ True worship is grounded in the New Covenant promises that bring believers into eternal UNION with Christ who is perfect.
- ▶ The H.S. acts as orchestrator, animator, and guarantor of this union that leads to salvation, shapes our desires, and spurs genuine worship of our Triune God. The Holy Spirit motivates true worship.

# Who Should The Church Worship?

- ▶ The O.T. repeatedly warns against the worship of idols.
- ▶ **Deut 6:14-15**— *You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—<sup>15</sup> for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God*—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.
- ▶ **Isaiah 42:8** *I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.*
- ▶ God justly punished Israel for turning to idols. The **exile** of Israel was not without an extended period of warnings and calls to repent, but their idolatrous rebellion including temple prostitution and human sacrifices resulted in God's punishment by being conquered by Gentile nations.

# Who Should The Church Worship?

- ▶ We become like what we worship.
- ▶ God will not allow his children to stray without taking corrective action. Justice must be served-God is holy.
- ▶ Much trouble came to the N.T. church because of the legal and cultural mandates that compelled those populations to worship many gods. We also find civil laws that outlawed the practice of Christianity.
- ▶ We see repeated warnings in the N.T. to avoid idols.
- ▶ **1 Cor 10:14** *“Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.”*
- ▶ **1 Jn 5:21** *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”*
- ▶ Cultural, governmental, and errant religious practices were common threats to proper worship in N.T. times.
- ▶ Exclusive worship of God matters to Him and thus to believers.

# The Way We Should Worship

- ▶ We turn to the tabernacle and temple to learn about the way God intended Israel to corporately worship.
- ▶ Many specifics, all designed to bring order, symbolism, and dignity to each practice were specified by God.
- ▶ **Deut 14:5-8** But you shall *seek the place that the Lord your God will choose* out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation<sup>[a]</sup> there. There you shall go, <sup>6</sup> and *there* you shall bring your *burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.* <sup>7</sup> And *there* you shall *eat* before the Lord your God, and you shall *rejoice*, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the Lord your God has *blessed* you.
- ▶ <sup>8</sup> “You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, *everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes,*

# Unacceptable Attitudes & Actions

- ▶ The “strange fire” incident is an example of wrong attitudes and actions in worship.
- ▶ **Leviticus 10:1-3** *Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered **unauthorized<sup>[a]</sup> fire** before the Lord, **which he had not commanded them**. <sup>2</sup> And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Among those who are near me **I will be sanctified**, and before all the people **I will be glorified**.’” And Aaron held his peace.*
- ▶ They went beyond the bounds of what God had prescribed. They failed to heed God’s warnings and to recognize the extreme care and reverence with which anyone is to come into God’s presence.

# The Way We Should Worship

- ▶ God wants our genuine love and obedience.
- ▶ Hosea 6:6 for I desire *steadfast love* and not sacrifice, the *knowledge* of God rather than burnt offerings.
- ▶ The N.T. gives a number of instruction for holding orderly and dignified corporate worship services.
- ▶ We are to **not neglect** gathering for corporate worship.
- ▶ Christian liberty never means liberty to offer strange fire.
- ▶ The way we worship must sanctify and dignify God.
- ▶ YES, God cares about the **way** we worship him.

# Covenant Worship

- ▶ God makes and keeps covenants with man.
- ▶ Setting apart and keeping of the Sabbath covenant command remains in effect, now on Sunday.
- ▶ Over time, God added to the scriptures telling his people *where to worship, when to go, what to bring, what to say, what to confess, who to confess to, and gave details on how to make proper sacrifices and offerings as required.*
- ▶ *Tithing* was commanded and what was left after making sacrifices was regulated as well.
- ▶ God established specific days of celebration and feasts.
- ▶ Specifics changed but the general elements remain today.

# The Regulative Principle for Worship

- ▶ Corporate worship is to be conducted according to scriptural principles and is not be added to.
- ▶ We have liberty in Christ but not license to do what is “right in our own eyes.”
- ▶ WCF Chapter 21 gives more details regarding regulated worship.
- ▶ Our text suggests 3 blessings derived from following the Regulative Principle

# Three Blessings From Following the Regulative Principle

- ▶ We are freed to please God through appropriate worship. We worship correctly when we truly know God and value him rightly. We please God by doing what we were created to do...worship and glorify him in Spirit and in truth.
- ▶ We meet God. We don't have to search for him. When we gather, he comes to us through the agency of "the means of grace" as applied by the Holy Spirit. His presence is especially evident or intense when we celebrate the Lord's supper.
- ▶ We benefit from Christ's leading by the appointment of Elders to guide and order our worship services. Christ has "gifted" the church by raising up men that are themselves gifted to lead and disciple the church. Thus, Christ and the Holy Spirit also work through church leaders to disciple and equip the people for proper worship and service in the Kingdom. The Elders have the Christ-given authority to order worship-including its elements and circumstances.

# Freedom In The Regulative Principle

- ▶ We are freed from crazy or sinful ideas and practices by the Godly Shepherding of Elders whom God calls and ordains for this purpose.
- ▶ Freed from being forced to do things that violate the scriptures or godly conscience.
- ▶ Freed from anyone's ultimate authority except Christ's as Head of the Church.
- ▶ Frees our worship planning from the endless need to be unduly creative or innovative or somehow wrongly attractive to the unbelieving world. We focus on God, not men. We are to be God pleasers, not men pleasers.
- ▶ Freed to exercise the authorized "means of grace" that carry us into the presence of God...who is waiting to meet us via these particular gracious means.

# God's Word Regulates Our Worship: An Interview with Dr. Derek Thomas.

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZZe8hdB0fs>