

Title: The Regulative Principle of Worship

Scripture: 2 Samuel 6

Series: The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. **Definition:** The **Regulative Principle of Worship** is a principle that guides how Christian worship should be conducted. It is based on the idea that worship should only include what is specifically authorized in the Bible. In other words, worship should be regulated by what the Bible commands, rather than by what is culturally popular or personally preferred.
 - i. The principle is derived from the biblical teaching that God is holy and must be worshipped only in the way that He has prescribed. For example, in the Old Testament, God gave specific instructions on how the tabernacle and temple were to be built and how sacrifices were to be offered. Similarly, in the New Testament, there are guidelines on how the church should conduct its worship services.
 - ii. This principle preserves the purity of worship and guards against the introduction of unbiblical practices or innovations.
- b. The Bible teaches us the importance of appropriate worship:
 - i. The Bible teaches that worship must be according to God's commands in **Deuteronomy 12:32** "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.

1. This verse emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's commands and not adding or subtracting from them.
- ii. The Bible teaches that unauthorized worship is a severe offense to God in **Leviticus 10:1-2** 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 fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. (2) And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.
 1. This passage teaches the danger of introducing unauthorized practices into worship.
- iii. The Bible teaches that man has a tendency to try to modernize or change worship to suit his carnality. We read in **Matthew 15:9** in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
 1. When we add the thoughts of man to our worship, it becomes vain.
 2. This verse speaks against elevating human traditions and practices above God's commands.
- c. Today’s passage deals with this exact same issue. How would the people of God deal with the ark of the covenant, this piece of sacred furniture that represented, in the Old Testament, the very presence of God?

2. Verses 1-2 - The Centrality of God's Presence - David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.
- (2) And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim.
- a. David and a great crowd assembled to bring the Ark into Israel.
 - b. The Ark represented the very presence of God among the people. We read in **Numbers 10:35-36** And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you." (36) And when it rested, he said, "Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel."
 - c. We must ask, in what practical ways did it represent the presence of God?
 - i. The ark demonstrated God's rulership.
 1. We read about the Ark in **1 Chronicles 28:2** Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building.
 2. If the ark is God's footstool, then God must be King.
 - ii. The ark spoke of God's reconciliation because, on the annual day of Atonement, the high priest would sprinkle the blood of the sin-offering on the lid of the ark and in front of the ark.

1. **Leviticus 16:14-15** And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. (15) “Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.
- iii. The ark emphasized God’s revelation. The stone tablets containing the covenant commandment were placed inside the ark.
 1. **Exodus 25:21** And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you.
- iv. The ark was the place to receive God’s guidance. God would meet with Moses at the Ark.
 1. **Exodus 25:22** There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.
- d. By bringing the ark to Jerusalem, David was saying that God’s presence could no longer remain, on the side.
 - i. Notice what David says about this very episode in **1 Chronicles 13:3** Then let us bring again the

ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.”

- ii. The ark had to become the central focus and reality of the Davidic kingdom. David understood that the worship of God must be at the heart of Israel’s life.
 - iii. The ark in Jerusalem would proclaim that the majestic, pardoning, speaking God was in the midst of His people.
- e. Application:
- i. Beloved, do you see what 2 Samuel says to God’s people? All of David’s accomplishments up to this point do not matter. All his victories are rubbish. The success of God’s people is dependent upon seeking God’s face.
 - 1. **2 Chronicles 7:14** if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
 - a. This passage teaches that the success of God's people is dependent upon their willingness to seek God's face. It emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and direction in all things, and trusting in his faithfulness and mercy to bring about success and blessings in our lives.
- f. The Prophetic truth about the ark of the covenant.
- i. The ark is a shadowy figure of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Just like the ark spoke of God’s

reconciliation to His people, so Christ is our priest who brought His own blood into the sanctuary.

1. **Hebrews 9:12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.
 - ii. Does the ark, as God's footstool, proclaim His rulership? So Christ is our King in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all our enemies. It should not surprise us that this Old Testament furniture that speaks of God should point us to Jesus.
 - iii. How can we keep God's presence central in our lives and church?
 1. Let us turn our eyes upon Jesus!
3. Verses 3-10 - The Holiness of God - And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, (4) with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. (5) And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. (6) And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. (7) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. (8) And David was angry

because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. (9) And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?” (10) So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

- a. The initial scene in this portion of Scripture is chaotic, fun, and loud. There is dancing in the streets and singing. God’s presence will finally be with God’s people. The ark was finally traveling to Jerusalem. It was on a new cart being pulled by oxen.
- b. And then something unexpected happens. The oxen stumble, and Uzzah, afraid that the ark will hit the ground, reaches out to steady it.
- c. Immediately the dancing, singing, and party stop as Uzzah falls to the ground, seizing and gasping for breath. Uzzah dies within a manner of moments. God struck him down.
- d. It is at this point that we ask; does this initial reading of the passage offend you? It did David.
 - i. Our initial reaction is to be horrified. After all, how is this fair? Uzzah was only trying to help. What was he supposed to do, allow the ark to come crashing down unto the road? Which of us would not have done the same? Why was God so severe with him?
- e. However, if we react in this manner, we show a fundamental lack of knowledge in regard to the holiness of God. Beloved, because God is both absolutely holy and good, He had long ago given specific and clear instructions to Moses and the

priesthood about how the ark, among other items, should be transported.

- i. **Numbers 4:4-6** This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting: the most holy things. (5) When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it. (6) Then they shall put on it a covering of goatskin and spread on top of that a cloth all of blue, and shall put in its poles.
 1. The ark, which represented the presence of God, was supposed to be covered. In this way, God protected the Israelites from His absolute holiness.
- ii. **Numbers 4:15** And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry.
 1. Notice that a specific group of levitical priests were to carry the ark. And every Israelite was forbidden to touch the ark which represented the absolute Holy God? This was well understood.
- iii. Even a momentary glance at the holiness of God's presence was enough to kill a man. We read in **Numbers 4:20** but they shall not go in to look on the holy things even for a moment, lest they die."

- iv. Everyone knew that the ark was to be carried on the shoulders of the sons of Kohath. We read in **Numbers 7:8-9** And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. (9) But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the service of the holy things that had to be carried on the shoulder.
- v. Because God is kind, he warned the people in these verses. David and Uzzah, all of Israel, knew they were not supposed to move the ark on a cart or touch the ark. God was not acting arbitrarily.
- f. Application of these truths:
 - i. So let us return to the regulative principle of worship. God had specifically detailed how he was to be worshiped. David and his people decided to innovate worship to suit their modern times. They decided that a cart pulled by oxen was more suitable and quicker than men carrying the ark on their shoulders. In doing so, they show little regard for God's commands and little honor to His holiness. By placing the ark on a cart, they taught the people that God only needed to be partially obeyed.
 - ii. Beloved, God was absolutely just in striking down this false view of worship. God was absolutely just in demonstrating that man does not have the authority to renew, revamp, reconfigure, or redefine worship. When man

dares to do such things, as is happening so prevalently in modern churches today, then man can only reap the righteous and hot displeasure of God.

- g. But let us notice David's reaction to God ensuring that His name remains holy:
 - i. Sinful Anger - He thought that God was unfair.
 - 1. When we accuse God of being unfair, what we really are saying is that God should act according to what we think is right and wrong. We reduce God and set up our judgment above His sovereignty. This is a great sin!
 - ii. Unreasonable fear - David was afraid that God would kill him if he failed God. However, God, in His goodness, had given the regulative principle of worship to His people. The expectations for the worship of the Holy God were clear. Beloved, if we dare worship God according to what is prescribed we should never have any fear of judgment.
 - iii. Unwilling - David was unwilling to bring the ark to himself, and by so doing, he deprived the people of three months of blessing. The people continued without the presence of God as they had done under king Saul.
- h. Today's faulty and blasphemous worship of God can only serve to bring righteous judgment. We cannot be angry with God when it is our sin that seeks to belittle him in the eyes of His people and the sinner.

4. Verses 11-23: The joy of true worship: And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household. (12) And it was told King David, “The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. (13) And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. (14) And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. (15) So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn. (16) As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart. (17) And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. (18) And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts (19) and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house. (20) And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, “How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female

servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!” (21) And David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I will celebrate before the LORD. (22) I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.” (23) And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

a. David finally gets the point: God’s true intent is to bless not destroy His people, but His people must reverence God’s holiness.

i. **And it was told King David, “The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.”**

b. David also comes to understand His sin. We read in **1 Chronicles 15:11-15** Then David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab, (12) and said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites. Consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, so that you may bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. (13) Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, ***because we did not seek him according to the rule.***” (14) So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. (15) And the Levites carried the ark of God

on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

- c. Beloved, notice with what joy the people are able to worship God when they worship Him according to the rule.
 - i. Fearful respect for appropriate worship of God does not suppress joy, but rather it stimulates it.
- d. Michal - Michal is mentioned three times as the daughter of Saul. Michal's voice is the voice of the old age, of the former regime. Michal is concerned with royal dignity, proper decorum, and outward appearances. Her worship was cold and indifferent as can be seen in many churches today.
 - i. David had expressed his joy before the Lord, who had appointed him over Saul. David does not see himself as Israel's king but as Israel's servant, and humility is appropriate for any servant. David demonstrates humility by removing the royal garments and coming before the Lord as a worshipper. He blesses the people and calls them to worship God.
 - ii. Beloved, notice his response to the baseless accusation of Michal:
 - 1. **2 Samuel 6:21-22** And David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I will celebrate before the LORD. (22) I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But

by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.”

- a. True worship requires that we be humble in approaching God. To some, this idea is beneath them, and therefore they suffer a similar fate to Michal’s. They are put away from the King.
- iii. Michal and David then represent two different kingdoms.
 1. **Mark 2:22** And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.”

5. Benediction:

- a. **Psalms 119:104** Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

Public Reading of Scripture Proverbs 3:1-6