

Second Presbyterian Church
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New Members' Class

Lesson #5: Reformed Worship

Reformed Worship at Second

- Consumer-driven worship!
- Worship is *not* an *intransitive* verb!
- What is the goal of our worship?
 - Product: Glorification of God
 - Bi-products: Evangelism & Edification
- Question 1: Has God informed us as to what He desires us to do in worship?
 - Yes
- Question 2: Where has God informed us as to what He desires us to do in worship?
 - In the Bible

What Is Biblical Worship?

The Regulative Principle of Worship

- “Scripture insists that we must worship in a way that is acceptable to God. The simple test for good worship, then, is whether it conforms to the Bible. This standard has become known in Reformed churches as the *regulative principle*.” (D.G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe*, 77).
- Westminster Confession (21.1). “The acceptable way of worshiping the true God...
 - is instituted by Himself, and
 - so limited by His revealed will,
 - that He may not be worship according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan,
 - under any visible representation,
 - Or anything other way not prescribed in holy Scripture.
- Calvinist Regulative Principle contrasted with Lutheran *Normative Principle*

What Is Biblical Worship?

Scriptural Support for the Regulative Principle of Worship

- *Exodus 20:2-3, Command vs. worship of false gods:* "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. "
- *Exodus 20:4-6, Command vs. worship of the true God falsely:* "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. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God."
- *Exodus 32:22, Aaron's answer about the golden calf:* "You know how the people are!"
- *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."
- *Deuteronomy 12:31-32,* "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way... Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it."
- *Matthew 15:9,* "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."
- *Colossians 2:18-23,* "Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind... If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations... These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh."

What Is Biblical Worship?

- John Calvin on the Regulative Principle:
 - “Since God not only regards as fruitless, but also plainly abominates, whatever we undertake from zeal to his worship, if at variance with his command, what do we gain by a contrary course? The words of God are clear and distinct: ‘Obedience is better than sacrifice.’ “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men’ (1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 15:9). Every addition to his word, especially in this matter, is a lie. Mere ‘will worship’ (Col. 2:23)... is vanity. (John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* 7).
 - “First, it tends greatly to establish [God’s] authority that we do not follow our own pleasure, but depend entirely on his sovereignty; and secondly, such is our folly, that when we are left at liberty, all we are able to do is to go astray. And then when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions.” (John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, 6).
- How does the regulative principle work?
 - “The regulative principle simply states that whatever we do in worship must have support from the Bible. This is not to say that we have a proof text for everything we do in worship. Scripture gives the church no exact order of worship. But by good and necessary consequence we may deduce from God’s Word the necessary “parts of the ordinary religious worship of God” (WCF 21.5). (D.G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe*, 79).”
 - “The regulative principle helps assure that our corporate worship is Bible-filled and Bible-directed, that the substance and structure are biblical, that the content and order are biblical.” (J. Ligon Duncan, *Give Praise to God*, 65).

What Is Biblical Worship?

How Does the Regulative Principle Work?

- Elements, Forms, Circumstances: “The regulative principle aims to aid the church in ensuring that the elements of worship are unequivocally and positively grounded in Scripture and that the forms and circumstances of worship are in accord with Scripture.” (J. Ligon Duncan, *Give Praise to God*, 64).
 - Elements: Parts of the worship service
 - Forms: How the elements are done
 - Circumstances: The setting in which the elements are done.
- What elements of worship are prescribed by Holy Scripture?
 - Reading of Scripture Preaching of Scripture Offering of Prayers
 - Singing of Psalms, Hymns Giving of Tithes & Offerings
 - Solemn Confessing of Sin Confessing the Faith
 - Religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, & thanksgivings

Principles of Reformed Worship

- Biblical Worship (vs. Cultural Accommodation)
 - “Read the Bible, preach the Bible, pray the Bible, sing the Bible, and see the Bible”
 - Expository Preaching
 - Exposition of Whole Bible Books
 - Exposition of Preaching Passage
 - Provides balanced diet, teaches “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), and places preacher and congregation both under the authority of the Word
- Redemptive Worship (vs. Cathartic)
- Historically Rooted Worship (vs. Contemporary)
 - Transportable vs. Culturally Fixed
- Simple Worship (vs. Elaborate)
- God-centered Worship (vs. Man-centered)

“Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness!” (Ps. 150:1-2).

The Ordinary Means of Grace

How Does Worship Edify (Strengthen) the Believer?

"The assembly of God's people is not a time to recharge the batteries of all God's people so they can go out during the week and do the real work of the church either through personal evangelism or fellowship in small group ministries. Instead, worship is essential to the health of every believer. It is a time when Christians are disciplined by God's Word as it is preached, as it is signified and sealed in the sacraments, and as it provides the substance of the church's prayers. Worship is not merely wise; it is necessary for discipleship. (D.G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe*, 47).

The diet set before believers in worship is guaranteed to be nourishing because God himself has promised to bless and cause his face to shine upon those who worship him through the means of preaching, sacrament, and prayer. (D.G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe*, 134).

- God's Promised Blessing through the Word
 - "Sanctify them through the truth; your Word is truth" (Jn. 17:17)
 - "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2 cf. Ps. 1:2; 19:7-11; Isa. 55:10-11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- God's Promised Blessing through Prayer
 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).
 - "And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Lk. 11:9; Ja. 4:2).
- God's Promised Blessing through the Sacraments
 - "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16; cf. Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 22:17-19).

Worship Music

Why Second Is Committed to Classical Sacred Music, Psalms & Hymnody

- Draws from and continues the great music tradition of the Christian church
- Our aspiration for what is best, most beautiful, and most fitting to worship
 - How does the form of music move the heart?
 - What form of music is most appropriate for Christian truth?
- Does this declare all contemporary music wrong or bad? No.
- Our recognition of the corporate aspect of public worship
 - Is the music designed for solo performance or unison singing?
- Our desire for worship music that is catholic (universal)
 - Does it reflect the preferences of one group over another?
 - It is attainable by the great majority of worshipers?
- An approach to sacred music that is not driven by cultural trends and consumer segments, but that arises from and expresses the historical Christian music tradition.