

How to Worship in Church

Acts 2:42-47

Introduction

Good morning, Lighthouse. Are you ready for the Word of God? Today's message is a continuation of last week's "how to come to church." Since you came back, the next step is understanding our worship to our God. Specifically, our formal acts of worship.

Worship is a word most often associated with religion. But worship can be found in the lives of secularists, agnostics and even atheists. The simple truth is that everyone looks to something or someone to give their lives meaning. Worship reveals the somethings or someone we value most. So, how is worship defined? Theologically understanding, there are many illustrations and ways worship is defined. Its described as a lifestyle, an attitude it and comes from within. A.W Tozers defines worship this way: "Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven."

The word most used and is used 60 times in our New Testament for worship is Προσκυνέω. The original word recognized by Greeks is a combination of two Greek words "pros" (toward) and "Kuon (dog)." The idea would be kissing the hand as a dog licking the hand of his master. Throughout the New Testament you will see it as falling to their face or their knees. When you see the word is used in direct worship to Jesus – all but one exception are the individuals on their face or on their knees. The exception is found in Hebrews 11:21 regarding Jacob.

(21) By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

When he was no longer physically able to get on his knees, he leaned on his staff. This is a practice you may have noticed we do at Lighthouse in our congregational prayers. Throughout the New Testament, you see 5 formal acts of worship from churches. 4 of them can be directly seen and the 5th embedded from the first church in Jerusalem after Pentecost. What better example to learn from as a church than our ancestors? Our main text today will be from Acts 2:42-47

Background

Author: Luke – While not named, Luke is the accredited author. He was apart of Paul’s company and later starts using first person language (we). There is also more medical descriptive situations; him being a physician would indicate for him to be the guy.

Recipients: Theophilus

Purpose: The book of Acts was written to provide a history of the early church between Christ’s ascension to the completion of the New Testament. The emphasis of the book is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Acts records the Apostles being Christ’s witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding world. That commission is still being fulfilled today because it was given to the first church in Jerusalem, and He promised to be with them always even to the end of the world.

Scripture

Act 2:42-47

(42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

(43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

(44) And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

(45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

(46) And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

(47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Outline

I. They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine (Preaching).

(42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. Doctrine simply means teachings. It was the preaching and teaching of the Apostles they continued in. They also continued in fellowship and what better thing for God's people to fellowship over than God's Word.

2. What is it that they were preaching and teaching? It was the Word of God.

3. What is it that we are supposed to be preaching? The Word of God – That is the Bible.

When Paul gave the charge to a young preacher named Timothy, did he simply tell him to preach or give a motivational message? He was commanded to preach the Word. That command is still obeyed today by preachers. I've heard plenty of criticisms towards us. I am grateful I have never heard the criticism of not preaching the Bible faithfully.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 (1) I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; (2) Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

4. During this time with the first church in Jerusalem, our NT and Bible – the 66 books.

Was not yet complete. They had the Old Testament Scriptures to go back on. And even then, to own an OT Scroll was expensive at the time.

5. This was the reason for the signs and wonders from the Apostles at the time. They would authenticate the messenger that he comes from God.

(43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

6. The Apostles were entrusted with preaching God's message. God's church at the time did not have a complete compilation of the Scriptures yet. God's churches recognized the message from the Apostles was indeed God's Word.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

6. Nothing against Pastor Dill, Ray or myself here, but we are not Apostles.
7. This here Bible is God's Word. This is what we are to be preaching.
8. Now, does that mean Pastor, me and Ray are the only ones who get to worship God this way since we are the ones who are up here in the pulpit? Absolutely not.
9. We all get to participate in the formal worship of preaching. By being attentive, maybe the occasional "amens", by committing yourself to applying the message being preached. Following along the Scriptures and not texting the whole time or playing on our phones.

II. They broke bread together (Lord's Supper).

(42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. The breaking of bread is referring to the Lord's Supper.
2. Remembering our Lord's death. This by far is one of the most important things we can do together as a church.
3. The Corinthian church is a prime example of what not to do as a church, especially what not to do for the Lord's Supper.
4. Paul writes to them and gives them correction regarding the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:17-30

(17) Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. (18) For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. (19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (20) When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. (21) For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. (22) What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. (23) For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (29) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (30) For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

5. At the last Passover Jesus and His disciples observed together, Jesus took the bread of the Passover the unleavened bread, gave thanks and broke it and said "Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."
6. Next, after the same manner, He took the cup of the Passover, the wine. He said "This cup is the new testament (contract) in my blood, this do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.
7. These are not the literal body or blood. Catholic church falsely claims through a process known as Transubstantiation the priests blesses it and it literally becomes Christ's flesh and blood. They view it as a re-sacrifice. This is false.

8. The Scriptures declare that the Lord's Supper is a memorial to the body and blood of Christ not the actual consumption of His physical body and blood.
9. There are some preconditions to partaking. 1. Saved. 2. Scripturally baptized (The Lord's Supper is for the Local church). 3. In fellowship with this body and in agreement with our doctrine. 4. Conflicts resolved with your brother. 5. A clean heart. To not meet these would be right to participate by observation.
10. There is one thing missing in the Lord's Supper we observe vs. the traditional Passover. It's the lamb; because our lamb has come.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

11. In our conviction at Lighthouse by the Scriptures and example from the early church, we observe the Lord's Supper every week. 9:30am. I encourage you to set aside time in your morning and observe it with us.

III. They prayed together (Prayer).

(42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. This is one of the most recognized acts of worship – Prayer.
2. Prayer is simply communication with God.
3. We are to be united in prayer and make our requests known to God.
4. In Scripture, there are 4 different words used regarding prayer.

1 Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

- a. Supplications - This type of prayer is making request towards God, specifically regarding yourself.
- b. Prayers - This is the generic use of prayers.

c. Intercession - This type of prayer is embedded with supplication type prayers, but it is on the behalf of others. We do this prayer often and no better example of this is from Jesus.

d. Giving of thanks/Thanksgiving – This should be the dominant type in your life.

5. How often do we miss out in God’s peace in our lives and are overcome with anxiety and prayer because we neglect prayer?

Philippians 4:6-7 (6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

IV. They gave (Giving).

(45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

1. This is not Christian socialism as some have abused this passage to be.
2. Consider the historical context of these people – Many of them have travelled far from home to participate in Pentecost. They’ve now forsaken everything to follow Jesus.
3. This of course would call for financial troubles. So many of them sold what they had and gave to the need. No one was forced to do so.
4. I am not suggesting this is what we ought to do here, but there may be day where this world gets heavy in persecuting Churches where it leaves us to this point.
5. The first step of our giving is to Tithe. This word means “tenth.”
 - a. It was practiced before the law, instituted in the law, and commended by Jesus in the NT after the He demonstrated the fulfillment of the law.
 - b. When we get our increase: we return the first fruit back to God. It is about honoring him.

Proverbs 3:9: Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

6. As the Lord continues to bless us, we give an offering above our tithe. We do so cheerfully.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (6) But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. (7) Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. (8) And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

7. Tithing is probably the easiest command to consistently follow. You just do it. Do it to honor God.
8. With or without money, God's work will continue. However, if every member were to neglect this command and form of worship – the church will cease.

V. They praised God (Singing).

(47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

1. Praising God is not exclusive to music and singing. If anything, it should be something more beyond the songs we sing. But we praise and worship God in our songs we sing to the Lord.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

2. The Psalms of course are filled with many instructions regarding praise and worship.
3. What kind of songs are we to sing to the Lord?
 - a. Hymns only?
 - b. Reject anything modern?

4. I want to read you a letter regarding trending Church music:

“There are several reasons for opposing it. One, it’s too new. Two, it’s often worldly, even blasphemous. The new Christian music is not as pleasant as the more established style. Because there are so many songs, you can’t learn them all. It puts too much emphasis on instrumental music rather than Godly lyrics. This new music creates disturbances making people act indecently and disorderly. The preceding generation got along without it. It’s a money-making scene and some of these new music upstarts are lewd and loose.”

Let’s do a poll: What era do you think this was written?

A. 2000s + B. 1970s-90s + C. 1940s-60s + D. None of the above.

If your answer is D – you would be correct. This is was written in 1723 by a Pastor in a U.S Newspaper in response to Isaac Watts – The hymn writer of Joy to the World and When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.

5. Truly is there is nothing new under the sun. The same arguments against worship and Christian music style has gone on with most generations.

6. Now, I will agree there is a lot of new stuff that is not glorifying to the Lord and filled with unbiblical lyrics. For this is reason, there are many songs we will not sing here. The same applies to Hymns too.

7. What we sing to the Lord should be Biblical, and God honoring. If you have noticed already, there are songs we have changed some lyrics too. Pastor Dill put it as sometimes songs need salvation.

8. Even if you think you sound bad – maybe you do sound bad, but that’s okay – you are to sing to the Lord. The Lord inhabits the praises of His people.

Psalm 28:7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

9. Sing the songs to the Lord as if it were your own personal song to Him. He is worthy of all our praise.

Psalm 90:1-2 (1) A Prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

(2) Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Application

Our 5 formal acts of worship to God. 1. Preaching 2. Lord's Supper 3. Prayer 4. Giving 5. Singing

God is not dependent at all on our worship, but He chooses to love us. He delights in our worship. Our worship is to flow from our hearts.

In John 4:23-24 Jesus said (23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

In Spirit and in Truth. This means we must first know Him. We must be born again. Without the Holy Spirit residing within us, we cannot respond to God in worship because we do not know Him. One of the many reasons we worship Him is because of what did for us to make that possible – He died for our sin and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. If you put your trust in Him to save you, you then will know him. The second part of true worship is worship “in truth.” All worship is a response to truth, and that which is truth is contained in the Word of God. Jesus said to His Father, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Psalm 119 says, “Thy law is truth” (v. 142) and “Thy word is true” (v. 160). Everyone is worshipping someone or something; Who will that be?

Prayer