

We come to our final study in our series on Pressing Questions—I mentioned this morning there's a sense in which this evening's question continues the theme begun this morning, that is, the theme of faithful churchmanship—fundamentally, good churchmanship is focused on others and God—it has both horizontal and vertical aspects...

Now—I trust this is rather obvious, but let me say it anyways—the church is fundamentally about Christ—but the problem is, we have the tendency to make it about us, but like I said this morning, if we make the church about Christ and others, then of necessity we too will be taken care of, but it's all about perspective—we don't come to the church thinking, this is all about me—NO, it's all about Christ and others, and only then will we be truly content...

Thus, as I also said this morning—the purposes of the church are fundamentally two—loving others (those in and outside the church), and loving (or worshipping God)—dear brethren, we come tonight to the grand topic of public worship—now, what I said this morning with regards to the church in general, is true of public worship in particular, and that is, it has fallen on hard times...

But dear brethren, let me put this as plain as I can, your faithfulness as a church-member, is necessarily tied to your understanding of these two things—brotherly love and public worship—public worship is at the very heart of the church...

Now—before I go further let me briefly clarify what I mean by public worship—by public worship is meant, worship conducted by the corporate people of God, on God's day, according to God's word (it's regulated by Scripture)...

- I. The Text Explained—in two considerations
- II. The Text Expanded—by five propositions

I. The Text Explained—in two considerations

1. Here I want to especially explain the two descriptions of true worship in v23—Spirit and truth, but first suggest a few introductory thoughts...
2. [a] OC worship was restricted to one location, v21—"Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father..."
3. That is—NC worship will not be restricted to any physical location, but takes place wherever God's people gathers...
4. This is of course was in contrast to OC, for it was restricted to the physical tabernacle and then temple in Jerusalem...
5. [b] OC worship was restricted to one nation, V22—"You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews..."
6. That is—God ordained from the beginning, to bring the Messiah through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David...
7. Salvation is of or from the Jews, because Christ Himself was Jewish, and only the Jews had holy oracles of God...
8. The Jews alone, were privileged above all the nations of the earth—true worship was largely restricted to the Jews...
9. [c] OC worship was typical and temporary, v23—"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him..."
10. The hour or time came in Christ, when TRUE worshippers, that is, in fulfillment to the typical worship of the OC...
11. Some of you will remember, that John uses this word "true" or "truth" oftentimes, not in contrast to false but typical...

12. True NC worship, in contrast to OC worship, that was characterized by the temporal and typical shell of worship...
13. Now—before I go further, let me clarify, true OT Israel, worshipped God from the heart, in an acceptable way...
14. The OT elect remnant, worshipped the true God, as they gathered with the nation, through the OC ceremonial law...
15. The majority of OC worshippers were unconverted, but this would change under the superior New Covenant...
16. For NC Israel, or the church, would be comprised of those who have new hearts, know God, and have the Spirit...
17. [1] NC worship is in Spirit—that is—it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the hearts and spirits of men...
18. Perhaps the best way to explain this is to say—NC worship is spiritual—it's by God's Spirit, and with our spirits...
19. [a] It is by God's Spirit—NC worship is caused by the inward ministry of the Spirit working within our hearts...
20. Rev.1:10—"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day"—that is—he was worshiping God BY the Holy Spirit of Christ...
21. Phil.3:3—"For we are the (true) circumcision, who worship God in (by) the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh..."
22. The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary for every aspect of worship—there is no true worship without Him...
23. [b] It is with our spirit—that is, NC worship is with the spirit or heart—in contrast to mere external formalism...
24. To worship God rightly—we must worship Him with all our hearts—with all our minds, affections, and wills...
25. Ps.47:7—"For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding" Ps.86:12—"I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart..."
26. Ps.51:17—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise..."
27. [2] NC worship is in Truth—that is—in fulfillment to OC types and shadows and governed by NT revelation...
28. [a] It's in fulfillment to OT types—in Christ, the church, and NT worship, all types and shadows are fulfilled...
29. [b] It's in harmony to NT Scripture—that is—NT worship, like OT worship, is regulated by the Holy Scriptures...
30. Matt.15:7-9—"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men..."
31. [i] Failure to worship in spirit, v8—"these people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me..."
32. [ii] Failure to worship in truth, v9—"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men..."
33. Their worship was empty and useless, because their teaching was built on mere tradition and not holy Scripture...

## II. The Text Expanded—by five propositions

### A. True worship is built upon the person/work of Christ

1. This is obvious in that, if the entire OT typified and shadowed Christ, then Christ is essential to true worship...
2. Every person who truly worships God, enters into His special and covenantal presence, for the merits of Christ...

3. Let me ask you—when you enter into the presence of God, do you do so, conscious of Christ's person and work...
4. [1] He is the temple—both the OT tabernacle and temple typified Christ—they were shadows that pointed to Him...
5. Fundamentally, they taught, that God would take the initiative, and send to earth the means to return to Him...
6. Jn.1:14—"And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" Jn.2:19—"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (v21, but He was speaking of the temple of His body)..."
7. Think of it like this—the OC people of God, priests and otherwise, worship God in and through the temple...
8. [2] He is the cornerstone—here the imagery switches slightly, Christ is the temple and He is the cornerstone...
9. 1Pet.2:6—"Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame..."
10. The "chief cornerstone" has the largest stone, upon which the rest of the building was built, it upheld the building...
11. So too, Peter describes the church as "a spiritual house" that is, the NC temple, built upon the person/work of Christ...
12. Eph.2:19-22—"having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord..."
13. Thus—the same Scripture that describes Christ as the NC temple, also speaks of the church as the NC temple...
14. How can this be—how can both Christ and His people be the temple—well here's how, the two shall become one...
15. Christ and His church are in union with each other—and thus, they are spoken of in the very intimate ways...
16. Now—that Christ is the cornerstone at least means, the church rests upon Him, all that she is, she owes to Him...
17. It illustrates the intimate union that exists between them, but it also underscores their total dependence on Him...
18. [3] He is the altar and sacrifice, 1Pet.25—"you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ..."
19. Peter describes God's people as a spiritual "house (temple)" and "priesthood"—spiritual priests offer spiritual sacrifices...
20. What sacrifices do they offer—the sacrifice of praise, a broken and contrite spirit, and ultimately their entire lives...
21. But—it's in the context of public worship that they offer up sacrifices of praise as they worship God corporately...
22. How or why are these sacrifices acceptable to God—"[they] offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ..."
23. The imagery here is to that of the altar and sacrifice—all that the OC priests did was accepted because of the sacrifice...
24. OT priests, and their worship, was accepted because of the sacrifice, so too, NT priests are accepted because of Christ...

#### B. True worship is dependant upon the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is necessary for every aspect of true worship, without the Spirit, our worship is but formalism...
2. My dear friends, how often have we entered into the presence of God, without praying for the Spirit's blessing...
3. Every time in prayer we ask God to bless our worship, we are of necessity, asking for the Spirit's powerful presence...

4. Phil.3:3—"For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh..."
5. To worship God "in the Spirit" means—"to worship God BY the Spirit"—by His powerful inward ministry...
6. Perhaps I can put it like this—the Holy Spirit of Christ, is the facilitator of worship—He helps or regulates worship...
7. [1] He creates faith—the Holy Spirit works grace within the heart, the chief of all graces being that of FAITH...
8. Simply put, there can be no acceptable worship without faith, without this, all that we do is but vain worship...
9. Heb.11:6—"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him..."
10. [2] He reveals Christ—that is, the Holy Spirit reveals to our hearts Christ, in and through the Holy Scriptures...
11. Jn.16:14—"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you"—by "Mine" is meant, His word...
12. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ through and by the word, He takes Christ's word and reveals it to our hearts...
13. [3] He unites church—the Holy Spirit not only unites us to Christ, but He also unites us as individuals in one body...
14. Now—this is true in general—that is, the Spirit unites God's people into a single body, united in Christ Jesus...
15. But—it is also true in particular as we gather to worship—the Holy Spirit, uniquely and mysteriously unites us together...
16. Dear brethren—public worship is "corporate worship"—it's shared or communal worship—it's collective worship...

C. True worship is ultimately focused upon the Father

1. True worship ultimately entails, God's people entering into special and unique fellowship with God, through Christ...
2. Dear brethren, surely this is most wonderful, true worship entails God's people, having heart-dealings with God...
3. Thus—three times throughout this passage our Savior refers to "the Father"—the Father is central to NC worship...
4. The reason behind this has to do with the fully revelation of the NT Scripture, that portray the Fatherhood of God...
5. Now—this does not mean—that true worshippers in the OC didn't worship God or know God as their Father...
6. But—it is assert that within the NC there is a fuller revelation of the character of God as our gracious Father...
7. Thus—throughout the Psalms rarely, if ever, is God addressed as Father, but as God, Lord, Rock, Strongtower, etc...
8. But within the NC—God has revealed Himself clearer as our Father, in and for the sake of, the Lord Jesus Christ...
9. Let me simply say here as well—that true NC worship is worship of the Father through the Son, by the Spirit...
10. I fear that at times people forget about the Father—they come to worship Jesus—and think little of the Father...
11. Should Christ be worshiped—absolutely—but Christ must be worshiped as Mediator who leads us to the Father...

D. True worship is foremostly concerned with the heart

1. I trust this point is rather obvious—NC worship is spiritual and sincere—it's having heart-dealings with God...
  2. My dear friends, it matters little what you do in worship, if you do not do it with all your heart, soul, and mind...
  3. CHS—"God does not regard our voices, he hears our hearts, and if our hearts do not sing we have not sung at all..."
  4. [1] Awe-filled reverence—the Greek word rendered "worship" literally means—"to bow down before God..."
  5. Ps.89:7—"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around him..."
  6. [a] What we are to do, v7—"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him..."
  7. [b] Where we are to do it, v7—"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints"—that in the congregation...
  8. [2] Joyful adoration—joy and godly fear are two sides of the same coin, perhaps we call the coin of worship...
  9. Ps.118:22-24—"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it..."
  10. [a] A marvelous work of God, vv22-23—"the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes..."
  11. What specifically is he referring to when he says in v23—"this was the LORD'S doing" but the establishment of Christ as the chief cornerstone at His resurrection...
  12. Acts 4:10-11—"Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified...God raised from the dead...This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone..."
  13. The point being—the work referred to in v23 is the work of Christ's resurrection wherein He was given a name above every name...
  14. [b] A specific day of God, v24—"this is the day the LORD has made (the Lord's Day); we will rejoice and be glad in it..."
  15. Barnes—"The Sabbath should be a day of joy, and not of gloom; it would be the happiest of all days to weary and jaded people everywhere, if they observed it aright. In a world of toil and sorrow, it is among the richest of God's blessings to people; it strengthens, refreshes, and cheers the heart of burdened and sorrowful man here; it lifts the soul to joyous contemplation of that eternal Sabbath where wearisome toll and sorrow shall be no more..."
- E. True worship is governed by and focused on the word
1. True worship is word saturated—every activity is governed by the word, we only bring what the word commands...
  2. But true worship is also focused on the word, that is, every activity within worship points us to holy Scripture...
  3. In true worship the Scripture is sung, Scripture is prayed, Scripture is consecutively read, Scripture is seen (in the sacraments), and Scripture is preached...