

**Please turn in your copies of God’s Word to Psalm 100. This morning we begin a new sermon series in which we will consider worship according to the Scripture. You may be wondering why we would take several months to go through what the Bible says concerning worship. Most of us here were not raised in Reformed churches, but came to this position later in life. That means for many here this sermon series will solidify what it is you have already come to embrace. But there may be some here who have yet to come to a conviction from Scripture concerning these matters. The children among us may have never been taught in depth why we worship how we do. The goal of this series is not to puff ourselves up, causing us to look down upon others for their impurity of worship. It’s also not so that we can justify the practices we have by reading them into the Scriptures. The purpose of this series is to strengthen the saints in their position regarding what Scripture says concerning worship, to convince those who are not familiar with the Biblical principles of worship, and to encourage everyone here to not hold these practices as simply tradition or preference, but to be convinced that the practice of this church is what the Lord commands. With that in mind turn your ear now to hear the Word of the living and true God from Psalm 100.**

**\*Read Psalm 100\***

**\*Pray\***

**Before we begin to look at the various parts of worship, we must first understand what worship is. Worship is universal, something that everyone around the world does whether they realize it or not. Many of the fans in packed out stadiums across the country are worshipping at the altar of sports. Many businessmen bow down before the almighty dollar. Any sort of devotion and praise given unto something is a form of worship. But that’s not what this series is about or what this sermon will address. It’s also not about the twisting of Scripture to say that everything in life is worship as men like John Frame says. Yes, in Romans 12:1 the Apostle Paul says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies**

of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” But to say this means that all aspects of life are worship neglects the plain Scriptural teaching that there is a special worship required by God of His people. When we speak of worship, specifically in this series, we’re talking about public corporate worship within the Christian church. One look at the church in America will show you that there is a great variety in what worship is. Catholics, Orthodox, and high-church Anglicans have their traditions and liturgy. Pentecostals and other charismatics have their free-for-all. Many evangelicals seem to just be trying to do what is trendy and cool in order to get people into the doors. Then there is us, those who are historically Reformed in practice, who have a very somber and, honestly, simple and plain service. Can all of these rightly be called worship? Yes and no. In a sense they are all worshipping, but is it right worship, worship according to what the Lord desires? To begin to answer that question we have to first answer the question what is worship. Denny Prutow, a retired minister in our presbytery, says, “Worship is the reverent fear and awe of God we express by bowing to Him in heart and soul.” Frank Smith, pastor of the Atlanta Reformed Presbyterian Church, defines worship as “coming into God’s special presence, listening to Him, and responding to Him in commanded acts of faith and love.” These definitions are good, but they show how difficult it is to succinctly define from Scripture what worship is. Our passage today helps us to show what worship is in a way that is helpful to orient us in our acts of worship. The exhortation to you this morning is to render unto the Lord the worship due His name. And we will consider three aspects to this from our text which will help us build a definition of what worship is: worship is service; worship is submission; and worship is satisfaction.

Let us first consider that worship is service. Look with me at verses 1 and 2, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.” Here we see that this psalm not only gives the command to the Old Covenant people of God to praise the Lord, but we see that

there is an anticipation and command for the whole earth to render praise. This is because the Lord Jesus Christ has purchased the salvation of people from all lands, and they now have the duty to worship Him. We see this in Revelation 5:9, “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Brothers and sisters, this ought to cause you to rejoice because that is you. You are “all ye lands.” You are “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” You have have been freed from all other lord who had dominion over you by the blood of the Lamb. You should now turn to serve the Jehovah, that wonderful Saviour who has made you free. You should serve Him with a willing heart, coming into His presence, and walking constantly before Him as His redeemed people. It is because of the great redemption which you have experienced in Christ Jesus that you now are called to serve Him, and to serve Him with gladness. Friends, when you enter into public worship you ought to enter with joy and gladness. Your service unto the Lord ought to be an expression of your deepest gratitude for what He has done for you. Let God be served with gladness. By holy joy we do really serve God It is an honor to Him to rejoice in Him. And so we ought to serve Him with holy joy. Gospel-worshippers should be joyful worshippers; if we serve God in uprightness, let us serve Him with gladness.

It’s also important to note that because worship is service it’s not about you. We are an individualistic pleasure-seeking society. Our culture around us says everything is about you and what makes you feel good. Friends, the only time this self-centered mentality is seen in the Word of God is in the temptations of Satan. Individualism, pleasure-seeking, and self-centeredness are wicked schemes from the pit of hell, and the wickedness is compounded when it is brought into the worship of Jehovah. Worship is service. “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Does a servant say to his master that he doesn’t like the way he is supposed to do his tasks? Does the servant get upset because he just didn’t get enough out of the duties

he was to perform? No. This thought is absurd. Yet time and time again I hear Christians complain that they didn't like a certain song, or the selection wasn't the one with their favorite tune, or they didn't get much out of the service. Friends, this may step on some toes, but if any of these thoughts ever cross your mind after coming into the presence of the triune God and offering your sacrifice of praise unto Him, then you must repent of your selfishness. The worship service isn't about you, it's about God. Hebrews 13:15 says, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." That is your duty in this service unto the Lord. It's not about what you like or what you can get out of it. It is about your sacrifice of praise giving thanks to His name. Never forget this. Never lose sight of this. Without this what you are rendering isn't worship but a vain imitation.

But that does not mean that the Lord's blessing will not be poured out upon you in rendering this service to Him. This psalm commands that we "come before his presence with singing." You cannot stand in the presence of the Lord, serving Him with gladness, singing unto Him while offering your sacrifice of praise and not be blessed by Him. This is what it means in Scripture that His face is shining upon His people, that His countenance is upon them. Friends, you do not stand before the Lord of glory and not leave blessed. Matthew Henry writes, "It is his will that we should serve the Lord, should devote ourselves to his service and employ ourselves in it; and that we should not only serve him in all instances of obedience to his law, but that we should come before his presence in the ordinances which he has appointed and in which he has promised to manifest himself." Brothers and sisters, the Lord has promised that He will manifest Himself in the assembly of the saints. Christ Jesus Himself sings in the midst of the congregation. You are being fed the bread of life. Come to worship on the Lord's Day, enter into His presence, serve the Lord with gladness and sincerity of the heart, and He will bless you. Render unto the Lord the worship due His name, and that worship is service.

**And just as this service must be done with gladness, it must also be done out of a recognition of who you are and who God is. Let us know consider that worship is submission. Look with me at verse 3, “Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” This statement ought to humble each and every one of us. There is such a great divide between the Lord and us that we cannot even begin to fathom it. Who are you, oh man, compared to the sovereign Lord of the universe? The Lord He is God. We are but mere dust compared to Him. What can dust do but serve and submit to the one who is sovereign over it? Friends, because He is our God, because He is our creator, because “it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves,” we must submit to Him out of humble recognition of the highest position He holds and the low estate we do. This must be done in worship, because He is our King and we are His subjects. A peasant does not go before an earthly king and demand things be done his own way, but instead he humbly submits himself under the rule of the king and obeys his every righteous command. If even the pagans understand this concept in a worldly sense then we ought to understand it in its religious sense. When we come into the worship service we enter into the throne room of grace and stand before the King of kings. How could we approach His heavenly throne in any way other than submission? To do so is not loving, it’s not honoring, it’s not service It’s rebellion, and the Lord will not allow it to continue. There is a reason why we see so many in Scripture bow their faces before the Lord. It is because they recognized that they are nothing compared to the Lord of glory.**

**The psalmist goes on to this imagery of being a people in subjection to a sovereign, but also adds the imagery of being sheep lead by a shepherd. “We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” Brothers and sisters, Jehovah is a good and gracious King. What does He tell us about Himself in Exodus 34, “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving**

**iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” This is the kind of King you are to submit to. He is not a tyrant demanding your submission so that He can crush you under His oppression. No, He is a merciful and gracious King, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Just as a loving shepherd cares for and tends the flock which are submissive to him, so too does the Lord care for and tend to His sheep who are guided humbly by Him. Charles Simeon writes, “We suppose that you are become the people of God, and the sheep of his pasture. But who sought you out in your wanderings Who brought you home to the fold of Christ? Who feeds you yet daily in green pastures? Who protects you from all your enemies? Who is the one source of all that you enjoy? Can it in any measure be ascribed to yourselves? Have you wrought it by any power of your own?” Friends, you did none of this on your own, but the Lord did it for you. What a loving and kind King we serve. Why would you not be in submission to Him?**

**Are you sitting here today unable to truly worship this great King because you are not of His people, you are not sheep of His pasture? If that is you then submit yourself unto Him. See the rebellion of your heart against the Lord of all creation. See how every thought, word, and deed throughout your life has been an affront to Him. See the wickedness of your sin and your need for a savior. Now fix your eyes upon Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who willingly gave up His throne in heaven to take on human flesh and dwell among a sinful people. See how the Son of God, perfect in every way, bore the sins of His people and died on the cross to purchase their salvation. Gaze upon the empty tomb from which He rose from the dead after three days, conquering death, hell, and the grave. Hear the call of the Lord today to repent and believe this Gospel which is set before you. Understand, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Submit yourself unto the Lord**

**and render unto Him the worship due His name, because worship is submission.**

**And finally, in service and submission to Jehovah, we find our satisfaction in Him, for worship is satisfaction. Look with me at verses 4 and 5, “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” Everything we need is found in Him because He is the giver of every good thing in this life. Because of that, we are eternally grateful, and we must enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Brothers and sisters, if you are united to Christ, if you are in Him, if you are His people and the sheep of His pasture, then you lack nothing. This world cannot offer you anything compared to what you already possess in Him. Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” If all spiritual blessing are yours in Christ, where else would you turn to in order to find satisfaction? Friends, what is man’s chief end? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. You cannot enjoy Him if you are not satisfied in Him. Hear the call of Scripture. Psalm 16:11, “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Psalm 17:15, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Psalm 22:26, “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.” John 4:14, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 6:35, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” The list goes on and on.**

**The Scriptures continually testify to the fact that satisfaction is to be found in the Lord. He is good. His mercy is everlasting. His**

truth endureth for all generations. If you are not satisfied in Him then there is a great problem and you must repent of your sin of dissatisfaction. Satisfaction in the Lord means satisfaction in who He is, in what He has done, and even in what He commands. This last point is where we are most tempted to be satisfied. We are selfish. We are individualistic. We don't like being told what to do. But, friends, you must be satisfied in the Lord in all things, even what He commands, and this includes the worship that is rendered unto Him. I know I am getting ahead of myself, because we will talk about that Biblical principle concerning what is to be done in worship in a couple of weeks, but this is important to understand now so as to lay the foundation for what comes ahead. If you are dissatisfied with what Jehovah commands in worship then you are dissatisfied with Jehovah Himself. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Worship must be done in the Spirit, through the empowering of the Spirit, but it must also be done in truth. Where do we find what that truth is? Christ answered that as well in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." If you are to worship God in spirit and in truth, if you are to be satisfied in Him in all things, if you are to bring a sacrifice of praise unto Him that is acceptable in His sight, then it must be as He commands. Anything else is nothing but an expression of the dissatisfaction of your soul concerning the Lord and the worship due His name.

So I ask you today, dear saints, are you satisfied in Him? Do you trust that He is a good and gracious King, that His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth to all generations? Do you truly believe that through the Holy Spirit uniting you in that mystical vital union with Christ that you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places? When you fix your eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ and offer praise unto Him you must be able to say in your heart, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies. Thou art beautiful, O my love." If you are truly satisfied in Him, if He truly is your beloved, then you must worship Him; you must enter into His gates with thanksgiving



**and into His courts with praise. Friends He must be your everything. There are no pleasures of this world which can compare to what is found in being united to Him. There is no blessing in this life that is found apart from the Spirit's pouring out blessing upon you. Do not depart from Him, for where else could you go. Be satisfied in Lord and render unto Him the worship due His name, for worship is satisfaction.**

**Brothers and sisters, this psalm, this sermon, they don't even begin to scratch the surface of the depths of what Scripture says concerning worship. Thousands of books can be written on this subject, in fact they have, and yet we still would not have plunged the depths of this great sea of truth. But we must start somewhere. As we move forward in this series considering what Scripture says concerning worship, this must be our foundation. This must be our starting point, because everything else that will follow in the upcoming months will be built upon this foundational truth. So what is worship? Worship is service rendered unto the Lord in humble submission to Him as the Sovereign over all things in which we express our deep and sincere satisfaction in Him. Friends, you must render unto the Lord the worship due His name.**