

## Worship Essentials – Lecture #10

### *Applications*

#### Part 3

#### Issues of Style and Format

1. God is more concerned with substance than style.

“I would find it very difficult to argue that there is a single style which is correct, whether traditional or contemporary or mystical or liturgical. All of our styles of worship must be submitted to the test of substance. Is God plainly revealed through the elements of worship and are the people assisted in response to Him?”

2. We should appreciate the strengths of various styles.

“I remember a young man who went away from the youth group I served years ago. He went away to be with his family at their summer home. He came back after a couple of months away and told me he had been attending this little church in the summertime in New England. It was mostly older people. And I said, “How was it?” This 16-year-old boy said, “They just don’t know how to worship God there.” Well, it was a sad moment for me. I thought, where does a 16-year-old get off in determining who knows how to worship God and who does not. Then I remembered my own experience of having to learn this lesson, and relearn this lesson, many times. God, guard us, please, against becoming overly critical. In fact, if we are wasting our time being in a worship service primarily being critical while we are there, we are not likely engaged in worship as we ought to be.”

3. Format based on the design of the temple and tabernacle

“some argue that the design of the tabernacle and the temple can suggest to us a design for arranging our worship services. We gather in the outer courts, we enter His courts with praise, we move near the holy place through cleansing, confession, offerings, and finally we move into the holy place in the holy of holies through the blood of Jesus. Some try to design a worship service with that pattern.”

4. Format based on **Isaiah 6:1-8**

“First, a revelation of the holiness of God followed by a confession of sin, then a revelation of the redemptive action of God followed by a humble and thankful reception of His mercy, then a declaration of the ongoing work and will of God followed by a response, “Here am I, send me.” Maybe there is something there of a possible appropriate outline for our worship services. We gather together and with praise we are reminded of the awe and goodness and greatness and holiness and fullness of the character of God. Then, in light of His goodness and holiness and awe, we are reminded of our sinfulness. We confess it. We are then reminded of the Gospel and what was done for us in Jesus. ... Then we are reminded of the power of the ongoing work of God’s ministry of reconciliation in a broken world. We hear the word proclaimed and we respond by offering our bodies afresh once again as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable. Then we are sent out with the prayer of blessing and a word of commissioning, something to think about at least.”

“In any case, I think it is critical that our worship be **God-focused** and that it include elements of **revelation and response** that are biblically informed and biblically faithful as we grow in our understanding of those things.”

#### [Our Order of Service]

“God is indeed seeking worshipers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Somehow we need to balance those concerns for ourselves and for others. Worship that is spiritual, I think, includes the fact that it is directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It includes the fact that it is a 24/7 vocation of the believer, includes the fact that it is worship with the totality of our being, and worship that is according to truth. Truth needs to fill our worship experiences both corporately and individually, our intentional actions of worship and our ongoing habitual lifestyle of worship. We need to be lovers of the truth. It is impossible to be a good worshiper and be apathetic about the truth that God has revealed about Himself. Where there is not attention to [truth], there cannot be appropriateness of response. So God help us toward these ends.”