

## Reformation Covenant Church Adult Sunday School

### Worship & Liturgy

#### Week 1: Worship – Purpose, Centrality, and the Regulative Principle

- I. Class Outline
  - a. Week 1 – What Worship Is, Centrality of Worship, and The Regulative Principle
  - b. Week 2 – Intro to CRW and Call to Worship
  - c. Week 3 – Confession and Consecration
  - d. Week 4 – Communion
  - e. Week 5 – Commission and some Odds & Ends
  - f. Week 6 – Vestments: A Biblical case
  - g. Week 7 – Vestments: Practical considerations & Q&A
  
- II. What is Worship?
  - a. *Ekklesia*
  
  - b. Hebrews 10: 19-22 *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*
  
  - c. Romans 12:1 - *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship*
  
  - d. worship is a \_\_\_\_\_ of God's people into God's special presence in order to offer our \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.
  
  - e. It is a ritualized opportunity to hear and obey God's commands and to be \_\_\_\_\_ by Him through the power of the Spirit
    - i. Examples:

III. Centrality of Worship in Scripture

a. Garden of Eden

b. Work of Jesus Christ

- i. Hebrews 12:22-24 - *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

c. Heavenly Worship

- i. Rev. 22: 1-2 - *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
- ii. Rev. 4:10-11 - *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord,  
To receive glory and honor and power;  
For You created all things,  
And by Your will they exist and were created."*

IV. Centrality of Worship in the life of the Church

V. Centrality of Worship in the Reformation

- a. For the Reformers, pure worship must be \_\_\_\_\_ and arising from \_\_\_\_\_

VI. Regulative Principle of Worship

- a. WCF 21.1: "the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture."
  
- b. Bucer: "Nothing should be introduced or performed in the churches of Christ for which no \_\_\_\_\_ can be given from the Word of God."

VII. Uniqueness of Lord's Day Worship

## Additional Resources

### **On what the purpose of worship is**

*Jeff Meyers, The Lord's Service, ch. 1*

### **On worship as the created purpose of man**

To name a thing, in other words, is to bless God for it and in it. And in the Bible to bless God is not a "religious" or a "cultic" act, but the very way of life. God blessed the world, blessed man, blessed the seventh day (that is, time) and this means that He filled all that exists with His love and goodness, made all this "very good." So the only natural (and not "supernatural") reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, to thank Him, to see the world as God sees it and - in this act-of gratitude and adoration - to know, name, and possess the world. All rational, spiritual and other qualities of man, distinguishing him from other creatures, have their focus and ultimate fulfillment in this capacity to bless God, to know, so to speak, the meaning of the thirst and hunger that constitutes his life. "*Homo sapiens*" (ed. "thinking man"), "*homo faber*" (ed. "creating man") . . . yes, but, first of all, "*homo adorans*" (ed. "worshiping man"). The first, the basic definition of man is that he is the priest. He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God

*Alexander Schmemmann, For the Life of the World, pg. 15*

### **On the richness of Scriptural teaching on worship**

"for us in Christ we "have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12). What this would mean then, is that it is in the revelation of God's will for our worship that we discover how he will have us worship him.

This revelation is found all the way through Scripture. We find it, for example, in the precepts of the Law. The Decalogue starts out with four commandments about worship. First, we are to worship and serve but one God; second, our worship is to avoid idolatry; third, it is to glorify God's name; and fourth it is to remember God's works of creation and redemption on the Sabbath in rest from human works. Then, as an elaboration of this basic law, there is the ceremonial law. While the church has never considered the ceremonial law to be prescriptive for her worship, it has often been studied for its insights into worship. All this liturgical law was expounded by the prophets and exemplified in the worship of Israel. The story of the golden calf and the disobedient sacrifice of Saul make clear what it is not. The prayers of Hannah, David, and Elijah make clear what it is. Above all, we see in Jesus the fulfillment of the rites and ceremonies of the Law. Jesus taught his disciples a great deal about true worship, and he often led them in prayer. He himself was baptized at the hand of John the Baptist. He often broke bread with his disciples, and in the Upper Room he gave them instructions about how they were to continue to break bread as a sacred memorial of his death and resurrection. In the Gospel of John we are taught to worship in Spirit and in truth. The book of Acts gives us several important insights into early Christian worship. We read there of a number of baptisms, and we find a rather thorough description of a daily prayer service. We learn quite a bit from this book about the ministry of the Word and almsgiving. The apostle Paul in his epistles gives us several important passages on prayer, on the sacraments, and on preaching. Chapters 10-14 of his First Epistle to the Corinthians is a virtual treatise on worship. Scattered throughout his various epistles we find all kinds of liturgical material. The scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are very rich in teaching us about worship."

*Hughes Oliphant Old, Themes & Variations for a Christian Doxology, pg. 9*

### **On our dependence upon God and His Word to teach us what right worship is**

The whole Bible testifies that in the work of our salvation the initiative belongs entirely to God. It is he who calls; it is he who justifies and glorifies his elect (Rom. 8:30). Natural sinful man cannot rise from or by himself to God in order to know him or to honor and serve him as he ought. Man cannot offer him something which belongs properly to God himself, for "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1 KJV). Man knows about God only what God really wants to reveal to him through his Word; and in his acts of honor and sacrifice, man can give to God only what God has given him already "For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (I Chron. 29:14 KJV).

Furthermore, man could not render God valid worship if already God himself had not consented and taught him. If man takes upon himself the authority to develop a body of cultic acts, conceived as an objective achievement, through which he can assure himself of the divine favor, he is flattering himself: indeed, this encounter that he seeks with God does not really take place. The appointment fails because it is up to God alone to initiate the encounter and to grant his grace when and as he desires. God can be the object of our worship only if he is first the subject, that is, the one who gives us the worship. We can only offer him our service if he himself inspires and orders it first of all.

*Richard Pacquier, Dynamics of Worship, pp 3-4*

## **CREC Memorial G. Worship**

A. We believe that Lord's Day worship is our highest privilege, our greatest duty, and our deepest joy.<sup>1</sup> God has created us for just this purpose: to worship Him, and to be transformed by Him as we worship.<sup>2</sup>

B. We believe that in worship the people of God are engaged by the Spirit and drawn into the Father's presence as living sacrifices in union with the Risen Christ.<sup>3</sup> In Lord's Day worship, God renews His covenant relationship with His people by serving them and them serving Him.<sup>4</sup> He draws near to us to draw us near to Him.<sup>5</sup>

C. We believe that in Lord's Day worship, we are gathered together in the presence of the living God among a glorious assembly consisting of angels, the church militant on earth, and the church triumphant in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

D. We believe that each week in worship, through the Lord's service to us and our service to Him, our Triune Creator and Redeemer gives us the covenant gifts of glory, knowledge, and life, in and through the assurance of our forgiveness, the preaching of the Word, and the partaking of the Lord's Supper.<sup>7</sup> While bestowing these gifts upon us in worship, at the same time, He graciously accepts our praise and thanksgiving of Him.<sup>8</sup> In re-orienting us around His covenant,<sup>9</sup> He empowers and calls us to live in terms of His new creation.<sup>10</sup>

E. We believe that God uses our worship to change us and the world.<sup>11</sup> We are transformed by the grace of God's presence,<sup>12</sup> and leave worship with a renewed sense of, and commitment to, mission,<sup>13</sup> discipleship,<sup>14</sup> and community.<sup>15</sup> Biblical worship results in changed lives, Spirit-empowerment, and impacts the world for Christ. Furthermore, God is pleased to hear and answer our prayers, particularly those that ascend in the Lord's Day worship of the Church.<sup>16</sup> He hears our prayers for the nations and in answering us makes manifest His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:8–11, Heb. 4:9; Heb. 10:25, Deut. 26:10, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 27:4, Ps. 65:4, Ps. 73:25; Heb. 4:16.

<sup>2</sup> Is. 43:21; 1Cor. 6:20; Rev. 4:11; Rom. 12:1–2; Jn. 4:23.

<sup>3</sup> Lam. 3:41; Ps. 25:1; 28:2; Eph. 2:12–22, Rom. 12:1–2; Heb. 12:18–25; Heb. 8:5; Rev. 4:1.

<sup>4</sup> Is. 66:20–22, Lk. 22:19; Lev. 1–5.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. 4:7; Rev. 3:20, Ex. 24:12; 2 Cor. 6:16b–18; Heb. 10:19 with Heb. 9:11,12.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. 9–12, Heb. 12:22–24, Eph. 2:6.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 3:23; 8:30; Jn. 17:22; Rom. 1:21–23; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:2,3; Ro. 2:7–10; 1Jn. 2:20, 27; Ps. 115, Rev. 21:11, Jn. 6:53–58, 1Pet. 1:23.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. 51:17, Ez. 20:40–41.

<sup>9</sup> Ps. 50:5; Mt. 26:28; Heb 8:6; 12:24.

<sup>10</sup> Mt. 28:16–20; Jn. 20:19–23.

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 22:25–27; Gen. 22:9–18.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 12:1–2; 2Cor. 3:18.

<sup>13</sup> Mt. 28:19a.

<sup>14</sup> Mt. 28:19b, 20a.

<sup>15</sup> Is. 55:12; Rom. 15:13–14; Mt. 28:20b.

<sup>16</sup> 1Kg. 8:26–53; Mt. 18:19–20; Rev. 8:3–6.

<sup>17</sup> Mt. 9:38; Mt. 6:9–10.

F. We believe that worship should be informed and governed by the Bible in its entirety.<sup>18</sup> In constructing our liturgies, we are to pay particular attention to those portions of God's Word that are specifically given to inform us of what God desires in worship. These portions include, but are not limited to, descriptions of patriarchal worship, Levitical worship,<sup>19</sup> and Tabernacle of David worship,<sup>20</sup> which all point toward the glorious advent of Jesus Christ, whose self-offering and victorious resurrection accomplished our salvation.<sup>21</sup> This final work of our Savior provides the basis for the resultant transformation of worship spoken of by the Apostles in the New Covenant.<sup>22</sup> We are, of course, prohibited from returning to the practices of animal sacrifices, for this would deny our faith in the perfect and complete sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

G. We believe that these portions of the Bible give us a divine pattern and sequence of worship,<sup>23</sup> and provide us a detailed understanding of the benefits of Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.<sup>24</sup> These benefits include purification from our sins,<sup>25</sup> transformation of our persons,<sup>26</sup> acceptance of our work and tribute,<sup>27</sup> and peace with God and men.<sup>28</sup> Through Biblical worship, the Lord assures us of the forgiveness of our sins,<sup>29</sup> the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of renewal in our lives,<sup>30</sup> the requirement and acceptability of vocation,<sup>31</sup> and the promise of the increase and maturation of Christian community.<sup>32</sup>

H. We believe that these portions of the Bible also teach us that each of these glorious aspects of worship are to be set in the context of beautiful music that is maturing in both voice and instrument, to the praise of Christ the King.<sup>33</sup> I. We believe that the proper implementation in love of the above requires a practical understanding of all that Scripture teaches, including an understanding of lesser and greater matters, Christian forbearance with our brothers, liberty in worship which is not self-willed, an avoidance of an over-scrupulous zeal, and a desire to maintain a Biblical catholicity as we build on the work of the historic church.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>18</sup> 2Tim 3:16–17; Is. 8:20; Ex. 20:4–6; Heb. 8:5.

<sup>19</sup> Lev. 1–7.

<sup>20</sup> 1Chr. 16:1 ff; 1Chr. 25; 2Sam. 6; 2Chr. 15:14–15; 23:18; 29:25–30; 35:15; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:45–46; Acts 15:16,17.

<sup>21</sup> Jn. 1:29; 1Cor. 5:7; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:11–14.

<sup>22</sup> Acts 15:16–17; Heb. 7:12; Heb. 8:5; 10:19–22; 9:23, 24.

<sup>23</sup> Lev. 9:22.

<sup>24</sup> Jn. 1:29.

<sup>25</sup> Lev. 4,5; Heb. 9:26; 10:12.

<sup>26</sup> Lev 1; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 4:16; Gal. 6:15.

<sup>27</sup> Lev. 2; Eccl. 9:7.

<sup>28</sup> Lev. 3; Rom. 5:1.

<sup>29</sup> Lev. 4–5; Col. 1:14.

<sup>30</sup> Lev. 1; Rom. 12:1–2.

<sup>31</sup> Lev. 2; 2Thes. 3:10–12; Rom. 15:27; 1Cor. 9:13–14.

<sup>32</sup> Lev. 3; 1Cor. 10:17; Eph. 4:11–13; Jn. 17:20.

<sup>33</sup> 1Chr. 15:16; 25:6,7; Ps. 98:4–6; 144:9; 150; Rev. 5:8; 14:2–3; 15:2–3.

<sup>34</sup> Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:2.