

Sunday Evening, July 30, 2023

*WCF Chapter XXI - Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day (4)*

1. The light of nature shows that there is a God who has lordship and sovereignty over all, that he is good and does good to all, and that he ought therefore to be feared, loved, praised, prayed to, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God has been instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations or devisings of men, or the suggestions of Satan, or under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in Holy Scripture.

2. Religious worship is to be given to God alone—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is not to be given to angels, saints, or any other creature. And since the Fall, worship is not to be given except through a mediator, nor is it to be given through any mediator other than Christ.

5. The various elements of the ordinary religious worship of God are the reading of the Scriptures with reverence; the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; the singing of psalms with grace in the heart; and the proper administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ. Also, on special occasions and at appropriate times, there are other elements of worship, namely, religious oaths, vows, solemn fasts, and thanksgivings. These are to be used in an holy and devout manner.

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I. Scripture Is to Be Reverently Read      sect 5

A. Scripture Reading's Central Place in Old Covenant Worship

Exo. 24:12; 31:18; 32:15–16; 34:1, 28–32; Deut. 31:11–13; Ac. 15:21; Lk. 4:17–19

B. Scripture Reading's Central Place in New Covenant Worship

1 Tim. 4:13; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; Rev. 1:3

1. When We Hear the Word Read it Is God Speaking to us    1 Cor. 14:37

2. So When We Hear the Word Read We Respond as If God Is Speaking

a. How Should the Minister / Elder Respond?

b. How Should the Congregation Respond?

II. Scripture Is to Be Faithfully Preached    2 Tim. 4:1–4; 1 Tim. 4:13–16

A. Scripture Is to Be Faithfully Preached Because the Church Was Founded upon the Word of God

Ac. 2:42, 5:42; Ac. 20:7–9; Rom. 10:15; Eph. 4:11, 12; Rom. 10:14–17

Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23f

B. Scripture Is to Be Faithfully Preached Because the Church Is Addressed Through the Word of God

Rom. 10:14; Rom. 10:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:20; 2 Cor. 13:3

C. Scripture Is to Be Faithfully Preached Because the Church Is Nourished Through the Word of God

1. The Responsibility upon the Preacher - His Work to Prepare    1 Tim. 5:17

2. The Responsibility upon the Congregation - Their Work to Hear a Sermon
  - a. To Pray for the Minister Eph 6:19
  - b. To Prepare Our Heart to Hear
  - c. To Listen with Reverence Heb. 12: 28
  - d. To Listen to Understand Lk. 8:18; Matt. 13:19
  - e. To Confirm with Scripture Ac. 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21
  - f. To Respond with Faith and Obedience Heb. 4:2; Jas. 1:22

### *Quotes*

“Christianity has been, from the beginning a preached faith. It has a message to proclaim and that message is proclaimed by preachers. And once people have been called to faith in Jesus Christ, there is much to learn about what it means to follow Jesus and much of that learning has always come from hearing sermons, from listening to preaching.” Rayburn

“The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. Wherefore when this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word of God is proclaimed, and received by the faithful.”  
Second Helvetic Confession 1566

“The office of preaching is an arduous task. . . I have often said that, if I could come down with a good conscience, I would rather be stretched upon a wheel and carry stones than preach one sermon. For anyone who is in this office will always be plagued; and therefore, I have often said that the damned devil and not a good man should be a preacher. But we’re stuck with it now. . . If I had known, I would not have let myself be drawn into it with twenty-four horses.” Martin Luther

“We are told men ought not to preach without preparation. Granted, but we add, men ought not to hear without preparation. Which, do you think, needs the most preparation, the sower or the ground? I would have the sower come with clean hands, but I would have the ground well-plowed and harrowed, well-turned over, and the clods broken before the seed comes in. It seems to me that there is more preparation needed by the ground than by the sower, more by the hearer than by the preacher.” Charles Spurgeon

“Acceptable worship is impossible without preaching. For preaching is making known the Name of the Lord, and worship is praising the Name of the Lord made known. . . . The two cannot be divorced. . . Preaching is unique and irreplaceable. . . Preaching is indispensable to Christianity.” John Stott

“Modern man worships his work, works at his play, and plays at his worship.” David Whitney

“Ministers face such pressure today to make their sermons relevant. Of course, relevance is a fine thing. . . . but the danger we face is a too-narrow understanding of what relevant preaching looks like. You see, it is most relevant for a preaching ministry, over the long haul, to pour a steady stream of biblical truth into people’s hearts and minds. With the blessing of the Lord, such preaching prepares Christians for the future as well as arming them for the present. It is sometimes said that the minister must seek in his sermon to meet the people where they are. That is a noble aspiration, of course, but the minister’s job is also to get the people ready for where they will be.” Paul Wolfe