

# How God Wants Us To Worship Him, Pt 2

## The Regulative Principle of Worship

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*Biblical Worship*  
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**Bible Text:** Deuteronomy 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19  
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Well, last week—by the way, I have copies of our message from last week...

Last week just to summarize we said there are some churches that play rock music and where people dance in the aisles and speak in tongues and roll around on the floor laughing because they say they are under the influence of the Holy Spirit and people handle snakes and drink poison and cross themselves and kneel down and light candles and they have stage plays and dance in worship and drums and guitars and all sorts of things we don't do in the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

And we said is that because we are just more stuffy? Should we choose a church based on its worship style, where we feel the most comfortable? Where we feel the most spiritual, where we have the most friends, where we like the music the best?

We said there are two essential questions about worship that have been debated for hundreds of years and one of them is what is the proper way to worship God. And another one is what are the limits of church officers in opposing various forms of worship on church members.

Now there are a lot of Christians who believe as long as you are sincere God doesn't really care about the details. Maybe he did in Old Testament times, but we are living under grace now, not law. That is what they will say.

Well, they forget you can be sincere and still be wrong.

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."<sup>1</sup>

John 14:15. "If ye love me, [obey] my commandments,"<sup>2</sup> Jesus said.

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 14:12.

<sup>2</sup> John 14:15.

He said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father.”<sup>3</sup>

And we should always remember that we have no right to worship God. It is only because he permits us, gives us the privilege to worship him that we can approach him at all. And God forbid that we approach him on our own terms doing what we think is holy or proper without regard to what he has said in his holy Word.

What is the proper way to worship God? Well, there is really only two choices. We can create our own rules or we can follow the rules found in God’s Word. Of course, you know that we are forbidden to add to or subtract from the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 12:32, “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”<sup>4</sup>

Proverbs 30:6. “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”<sup>5</sup>

And, of course, the final, virtually the final verse in the Bible, “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”<sup>6</sup>

So we can’t add to or take anything away from God’s Word.

Now, since the commandments in his Word include how we are to worship him, if we add to his worship our own ideas and innovations and ceremonies we are adding to God’s Word, aren’t we?

The rule is, as we said last week, unless Scripture commands it, it is prohibited. This is called by theologians the regulative principle of worship. It is one of the foundations of the Reformation, *sola Scriptura*. Scripture alone is our rule book.

Most every church approaches worship, sorry to say, by twisting the rules to say that what is not prohibited in Scripture is permitted, which is backwards to the regulative principle. What is not prohibited is permitted.

This, of course, allows for almost unlimited latitude, virtually unlimited latitude of human innovation in worship. I mean, almost anything goes if you believe what is not prohibited in Scripture is allowed.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 7:21.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 12:32.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 30:6.

<sup>6</sup> Revelation 22:18-19.

True worship must be in spirit. The Bible says, “True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”<sup>7</sup>

True worship involves the inner man, the inner woman, demanding sincerity and love. We are not just talking about the externals here. Don’t think I am just focusing entirely not externals. Many times God has pronounced a curse against people who are wedded to empty forms of religion. The unbelieving Jews had all external ordinances down right, but they were condemned for having hearts far from the Lord. Our worship has to flow from our hearts of sincerity and love towards God our Savior.

That is worship in spirit. But worship also has to be in truth. Our worship must be in conformity to God’s written revelation.

“Thy word is truth.”<sup>8</sup>

There is, indeed, an outward measure for our worship. So we have to have right hearts, but we have to have the right practice.

Today it is common to hear a comment that the heart is all that matters. It does matter, but it is not all that matters. That is a mistaken concept that sincerity and motive and fervent emotion are the substance of genuine worship. But Christ doesn’t confine the essence of worship to worship in spirit. He adds that measure of truth.

Acceptable worship is more than the gushy effervescence of a fervent heart. Without truth, such fervor is an offense before God. It is, as it says in Romans 10:2, it is zeal, but not according to knowledge.

We said, finishing up what we talked... summarizing last week. It is always God’s objective Word and not your subjective feelings that assure you of God’s approval. That is always God’s objective Word and not your subjective feelings that assure you of God’s approval.

Now why have I chosen to preach on the subject of worship when it is such a controversial subject? I am brand new here. Am I crazy coming here and preaching something that is so controversial that I can be condemned for, stirring up controversy instead of talking about God’s love?

Well, I am talking about God’s love. But when every church seems to have its own ideas of worship, wouldn’t it be a good idea for me to just leave that subject alone and talk about something less controversial. I can understand that. I can understand thinking like that. A lot of Christians dislike controversy and especially dislike sermons about controversial subjects. And they dislike preachers who preach them. And that is all very commendable when we get to heaven.

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<sup>7</sup> John 4:23.

<sup>8</sup> John 17:17.

But the Church on earth is the mortal enemy of Satan. And he is doing everything in his power to destroy it from without and especially from within. So if you say, “I don’t like controversy,” you are denying that, aren’t you? You are denying that there is an enemy out there who loves controversy, who is the father of lies, who is the author of chaos.

You know, the old church fathers of centuries ago used to use this term for the Church on earth. They called it the Church militant. It is a term we ought to bring back. We don’t hear it that much anymore. The Church in heaven which is all the saints that have died and that will die and are now with the Lord, they call that the Church triumphant. But we of the body of Christ who remain on earth they call the Church militant.

Now many preachers act like the Church on earth and many Christians act like the Church on earth is the Church triumphant. No, we are the Church militant. The Church is to be the public witness bearer for Lord and his truth in a world that is the enemy of both. For us to avoid standing for the truth even when it is controversial, especially when it is controversial, when the world hates us for proclaiming it, even when we have to call other Christians who are in error according to God’s Word, we have to call them to account. For us to be afraid of that and retreat to our Christian bunkers and pretend that everything is sweetness and light and act like we are practically in heaven right now just treading water till Jesus comes back. Throw us a life preserver. That is simply to fall right into Satan’s trap. He just loves Christians who are afraid to stand up and aggressively battle the truth, Christians who hide out in their churches and listen to sermons designed to make them feel good. You know those kinds of churches.

One of the most controversial things discussed is whether they will have fried chicken or hamburgers at the church supper.

Well, Matthew 16:18 Christ said, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The gates of hell. Think about that.

The Lord promise that not even the very gates of hell shall withstand his Church. The fortifications of hell itself will crumble before the march of the Church militant on earth as it bursts through the gates of hell. Satan will be defeated. You know, the world thinks the assault on Iraq was shock and awe. They ain’t seen nothing yet. And the Lord has established a beach head right here in this town.

Throughout the history of the Christian church it has been controversy and dangers that have brought forth truth and made us flourish. In 1 Corinthians 11:19 Paul says, “For there must be also heresies...”<sup>9</sup> It could be translated divisions also sects, “...among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”<sup>10</sup> The purpose for that, so God’s people are shown against the relief of the heresies and sects and divisions.

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:19.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Paul said there would be all these divisions in the Church. That wouldn't come as any surprise to Paul. But there is a purpose. Not that we don't want the Church to be one. Of course, we look towards the day when we are all gathered together in the visible church as one. We pray for that. We pray for unity among Christians, but in truth, unity in truth.

At no era has the truth been more gloriously displayed or achieved nobler triumph than when dangers have called forth a vigorous defense from the Church. When the Church has been persecuted, when Christians have been jailed, tortured, murdered, that is when the Church has grown the most.

There is an old saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Christians who are afraid of controversy are being disobedient to God.

Christ said to the Church of the Laodiceans—and it is a warning to all believers.

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."<sup>11</sup>

If that doesn't scare you, I don't know what will.

And why have I chosen Leviticus 10, the story of Nadab and Abihu which teaches us lessons about worship as the text for my first sermon series here at Reformation Presbyterian Church. Because there is nothing more important than that we worship God in the way he desires to be worshipped with nothing more important than worship. May Christ never have cause to say about Reformation Church, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. "So then, [people of Reformation Presbyterian Church], because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."<sup>12</sup> Lord forbid that ever happens.

I solemnly pledge to you, the Lord willing, as long as he allows me to occupy this pulpit, Lord willing, you will never hear lukewarm platitudes or sermons that say nothing, that leave you scratching your head wondering what was the point. And never, Lord willing, never sermons that are designed to please men at the expense of pleasing God. And I pledge to you that as much as it is up to me and the elders that the worship of Reformation Presbyterian Church will be as faithful to God's Word as possible as we know how to do it.

You may remember this quote from last week. My hero John Knox, the heroic Scottish reformer said, "All worshipping, honoring or service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God without his own express commandment is idolatry."

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<sup>11</sup> Revelation 3:15.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

I want to remind you that God has a very interesting name for this idolatry. He calls it will worship. That is how the King James. I like that translation, will worship.

In Colossians 2:23, “These things have indeed...”<sup>13</sup>

Paul is talking about what we are talking about.

“These things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and humility.”

They have a show of will wisdom. They have a show of humility, these things that, oh, we are so pious. We are [?] beautiful hymns that we are going to sing now and, oh, it would be good if we got on our knees to praise the Lord. Let’s light some candles. Oh, I should be wearing beautiful vestments that honors the Lord.

These things look holy. God says they have an appearance of humility and of piety. He calls them will worship. What does will worship mean? It is worshipping your own will, your own pride. God says they are just for show.

When churches add to what God has commanded for worship God says, “Those who take part in such services are actually worshipping not him at all, but their own wills, their own pride.”

Think about that. You know, he could have said—and I have mentioned this several of you. I often read the Bible and think, you know, the Lord could have said this, but he didn’t. Why did he say it this way? What is the lesson that I can learn?

He doesn’t say as long as you are sincere in what you are doing, that is what matters. He could have said that. He doesn’t say as long as you have love for me that is the most important thing. He could have said that. He could have said as long as your heart is right, the external forms they don’t matter. He could have said that. He says the opposite. He says external forms do matter. Worship me in spirit and in truth.

When you do what is right in your own eyes in worship even though it is not commanded in Scripture, even though it seems very holy and pious to you and everybody else, God says what you are doing is worshipping your own will, your own ideas, your own pride. And that is nothing more than idol worship. The same as if you bowed down to a statue, no different at all.

Now Scripture is brimming over with examples of will worship. People who may have been very sincere about what they were doing, people who thought they were really honoring God, yet because they violated the cardinal rule of worship, what is called the regulative principle, as we said, what is not commanded by God’s Word in worship is forbidden. God would have none of it.

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<sup>13</sup> Colossians 2:23.

A chilling verse you have heard before, Proverbs 28:9, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”<sup>14</sup>

James Begg asks a question we should all remember in this book *Anarchy in Worship*. Is it possible to find a single instance in Scripture of accepted worship that was not prescribed by God? Is it possible to find a single instance of worship in Scripture that was accepted by God that was not prescribed by God? You will look in vain to find one.

In the first act of worship in the Bible after the fall of Adam and Eve, Abel’s offering was accepted and remember that? And Cain’s was rejected. Let’s look at Genesis chapter four. I am going to begin with verse three.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.<sup>15</sup>

Why did God reject Cain’s offering? Well, God had required an animal sacrifice. But Cain invented his own form of worship by offering grain, just as most churches today offer their own inventions in the worship of God. He presented a mere thank offering, not a substitutionary sacrifice for sin. His offering of grain did not point to the coming of Christ. It was not part of a sacrificial system God had instituted in the Garden of Eden when after Adam and Eve had sinned and tried to cover their nakedness with skirts they made out of leaves, God slew animals to make them coverings. God was teaching them it is only a blood sacrifice that covers sin.

First it was the blood of animals in the Garden of Eden and then the blood in the sacrifices in the Old Testament worship. For those many years God prepared and taught his people that only shed blood and death or a sacrifice is acceptable for the forgiveness of sins. We can’t cover them up with our own inventions, our own ideas about how to provide forgiveness for sin.

That lesson over the centuries prepared God’s people to understand when the Lord Jesus Christ came that it was his blood, the blood of the sacrifice, the blood of the Lamb of God, no longer an animal’s blood which cannot atone for the sins of men, but a human being’s blood, the sacrifice of one who lived a life without one single sin, yet suffered and died a blood death as a sacrifice. Not of his sins. He didn’t have any. But as a sinless

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<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 28:9.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 4:3-7.

clean vessel into which the Father poured out his wrath and his justice for the sins of his people.

That is what God had in view to teach. That is what the ceremonial sacrificial system was designed to teach the people.

Hebrews 9:22 puts it beautifully. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Now don't make the mistake, by the way, of thinking, well, Jesus is God. Of course he could live without sin. No, the Bible teaches he resisted temptation as a human being, not as God without drawing upon his power as God in any way to resist sin.

Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."<sup>16</sup>

As we are as men and women and children, not as we are as God. That would make no sense, would it? No, as we are as human beings he was tempted.

If he lived a sinless life calling upon his power as God to resist sin that could never mean he resisted sin in our place, could it? If he had suffered on the cross as God making the pain go away never really suffering, but just making it look that way, that would mean he never suffered in our place, would it? If he died on the cross as God, never really dying, God can't die. So he never really died as a human being does, just kind of looked like it. Well, that would mean he never died in our place. He wouldn't be suffering as the Scripture tells us as we are.

If he was resurrected because he was God and not man that would mean we would never be resurrected because only a God can be resurrected then. No. He was a man. He ate after his resurrection. God doesn't eat. We don't know a lot about his body, his resurrected body and that is the subject of another sermon.

But he had to live. He had to suffer. He had to die and be resurrected to live forever as a man to make his life, suffering and death and resurrection operative to our lives and acceptable to God the Father's perfect justice.

Now don't misunderstand. He was God, fully God and fully man with no intermixture of the two natures.

The Lord Jesus was tempted in all points, meaning tempted in every way as we are. Don't you think Jesus wasn't tempted to hate those who laughed at him, who hated him, who lied about him, who insulted him, who reviled him, who spat on him, who stripped him, who hit him in the face and mocked him, who beat him until he was a bloody mess, who took dry sticks with long sharp thorns and pushed them into his head and made him drag a huge wooden cross through rough streets, who made him lie down on that cross

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<sup>16</sup> Hebrews 4:15.



while they pounded rusty nails into his hands and feet, who left him on that cross in the intense Mideast sun, his hands and feet burning for the pain without even a drop of water knowing that when his arms got tired if he didn't have a stroke or heart attack first he would sink down and slowly suffocate, fighting for air, but too weak to lift himself up to get it?

Can I get a glass of water, please? I appreciate that.

Oh, I had no idea that would do that to me, absolutely none.

Cain's offering of grain did not teach that forgiveness of sin required the shedding of blood as did Abel's animal sacrifice. Explaining to Cain why God says, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."<sup>17</sup>

The result of Cain's will worship was literally death. Sin certainly did lie at his door. In the very next verse we read that he murdered his brother Abel and the inference is that he did so because his pride was hurt, will worship, idolatry and the end thereof was death.

At first the worship of God was with altars made of earth or stone. Then at the appointed time God gave specific instructions to Moses as to how he was to be worshipped. No longer were crude altars acceptable. He gave minutely detailed instructions for the tabernacle worship with types and emblems of the coming Messiah and his work built into the design. Absolutely nothing was left to the imagination of Moses even though the Bible calls him the most godly man on earth. That is what the Bible says. It says that Moses was the meekest man on earth. That means he was godly, wasn't he? His pride was so low compared to his love for God.

God said, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."<sup>18</sup>

You will look in vain in all the Bible for any example or any whisper that man is allowed to alter, add to, take away or modify the ordinances of the Lord.

Last week we said in our text in Leviticus 10 about Nadab and Abihu they were brothers. They were Aaron's sons. What was their sin? Well, it says so right in the text. They took their censor, a little shove, and they put fire in it and put incense on it and offered what the Bible calls strange fire which he commanded them not. And we said it doesn't appear that they were wicked men. There is no indication in the text other than that they did this that they were, you know, terrible, awful people. It seems that they were sincere in trying to worship God. But they changed the form of worship that God had commanded. They took liberties with God's Word. They used what the Bible calls strange or profane fire. They didn't use the holy fire that the Lord has already provided that was on the altar the previous chapter. He had just sent it down from heaven. They used a man made fire apparently.

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<sup>17</sup> Genesis 4:7.

<sup>18</sup> Deuteronomy 12:32.

Some say maybe the strange fire means they made their own incense, maybe thinking, well, this smells a lot better than the other incense.

No. They were not punished for doing what he had forbidden. They were punished for doing what he hadn't commanded. He hadn't expressly forbidden strange fire. And they weren't commanded to make an offering. They did anyway. And to compound their sin they came up with their own idea, what they probably thought was better worship. It would please the Lord even more. And they probably through their hearts were in the right place, too.

Whatever they used in their attempt to worship, one thing is crystal clear. It was something that they came up with, something they invented, will worship. Remember what the Lord calls that? Idolatry and the end thereof was death.

King Saul lost his kingdom because he violated the regulative principle of worship. Did you know that? Well, in 1 Samuel 13 beginning with verse eight "And he..." talking about Saul, "...tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering."<sup>19</sup>

Now he is the King of Israel, but he is not a priest and he is making an offering.

And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.<sup>20</sup>

Saul took it upon self to make an offering to the Lord because Samuel wasn't around to do it. But Saul wasn't a priest and only priests could make offerings to the Lord. And he lost his kingdom and he lost his life because of his rash act.

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<sup>19</sup> 1 Samuel 13:9.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Samuel 13:10-14.

Now verse five tells us that thousands of Philistines were poised to attack Israel. Scripture says there were so many they were like sand on the seashore. You couldn't even count them. We can almost hear Saul saying, "I had a sincere heart. All I did was ask the Lord for help. You are going to condemn me for asking the Lord to help his own people? The Philistines were about to overwhelm us. They [?] and we do. I was terrified. If anybody is to blame, you know, it is Samuel. He didn't come back when he said he would. He was late. And, hey, I didn't offer any strange fire. I know about Nadab and Abihu. I know what happened there. I didn't do that. I know it was technically wrong. Yeah, I am not a priest. So that is why I said I forced myself to do it. But the circumstances, well, they were extraordinary. I had the very best of intentions."

Once again, Saul, good intentions don't cut it. Now what you did was will worship. You said in your heart, Saul, "I have got to take it upon myself to act here."

Now Saul knew that only priests were to make an offering. That was part of the regulative principle of the Old Testament. You ignored the regulative principle and you paid for it. You lost your kingdom and your life, Saul, because of that. And, you know, Saul committed suicide. He fell on his sword. Actually he fell on his sword and apparently didn't kill himself. And someone else killed him, but he tried to kill himself.

Another example was King Jeroboam of Israel who invented his own worship of the Lord. The Scripture says in 1 Kings 12:33 that his worship, quote, "...he had devised of his own heart."<sup>21</sup> He ordained priests which he had no right to do. And the Bible said that whoever wanted to be a priest Jeroboam ordained in spite of the fact that God had commanded that priests should only come from the tribe of Levi. He was a violator of this regulative principle.

What happened to him, you may remember the story, he was standing by the altar when a man of God who is not named in the Scriptures, just a man of God prophesied that because he had done this, ordaining priests without authority that he would lose his kingdom. But not only that, the priests that he ordained would themselves be placed on the altar as burnt offerings.

The Bible says, "And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him."<sup>22</sup>

And the Bible also says that God destroyed the altar after that. Those priests were burnt offerings.

Jeroboam took the worship service God had ordained and added his own ideas to make it better just as we see a lot of churches doing today. His great sin led to the eventual

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<sup>21</sup> 1 Kings 12:33.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Kings 13:4.

destruction of Israel and the death and captivity of his people of her people. Jeroboam was guilty of will worship, idolatry and the penalty thereof was death.

Everything Israel did, every sacrifice, every sprinkling, every burning of incense had to be exactly as God dictated it. Everything Israel built for worship in the tabernacle and then the temple had to be exactly as God had commanded it. God had given the exact measurements in minute detail on the furnishings.

As we reading Leviticus, every song they sang was given to them from the Lord. Every holy day with every detail of what they were to do was given to them from the Lord. Nothing was to be added or subtracted. Nothing was to come out of any man's ideas.

Well, now, you might be thinking, that is all Old Testament. In New Testament times we haven't been given all those details. We are under grace and not under law. We have been given the freedom to worship God in the Spirit.

I am going to close with this thought. Lord willing, next week we will take up the New Testament regulative principle of worship and see how it is not just the Old Testament. It is the New Testament, even more so.

Now it is true that the ceremonial law which was a prophetic picture of Christ has been fulfilled in him and we are not to observe it any longer. Because Christ has come for us to return to Old Testament with its animal sacrifices, its priesthood, its vestments, its musical instruments, its incense, its golden altar and all the rest that testify to the coming Christ because Christ has come, for us to return to that worship would be to deny that Christ has come. All of that has been abolished.

Well, I will close here and pick up next week where we have left off here. And, as I say, we will take a look at New Testament worship.

Let us pray.

*Father, we thank thee for establishing Reformation Presbyterian Church. We thank thee for your Word. We ask that you would use this church and its people to thy glory, keeping faithful to your Word, the holy Bible, worshipping thee in spirit and in truth, teaching and building up the saints, reaching the lost, subduing every area of life unto the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, a church in which you will be well pleased. May we never hear you say this church or of any of us who are neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm toward me and I will vomit you out of my mouth. God forbid.*

*We ask that you would bless and protect this church from the wiles of Satan, that you would put a hedge around its people and keep us from falling into the hands of the evil one. Father, we are such a little flock. We are open to any wolves that would come along if it weren't for your protection.*

*We are little, Father, but we trust in you to bring in those who are being saved. We know*

*that unless the Lord builds the Church the laborers labor in vain. We know that if it is thy will that Reformation Presbyterian Church grows that Satan will be in full battle mode. Keep thy truth from the people.*

*And we know, Father, that the establishment of a strong and vibrant church bolding carrying forth the gospel and applying it to all areas of life is the thing he fears, Satan fears the most. Father, we know there will be rough times ahead, ploys devised by Satan expressly to divide and destroy this Church. We ask for thy grace to meet these challenges in a way that glorifies thee and not man.*

*As did Solomon in the prayer that you were so pleased with, we fervently pray for discernment. Father, give us all a heart to love thy truth more than Church growth. Grow this church in proportion to our faithfulness to thy Word. Let the leaders of this Church and the denomination forever be faithful to worshipping thee in the manner that thou hast prescribed in thy Word and in only that manner.*

*We ask thy blessings, Father, now upon Mary's mother. Lord, we know that she is in your hands, Father. The surgery that is coming, she is going to the hospital tomorrow, surgery on Tuesday. We ask that you would be with her and be with the surgeons. Give her comfort. Give her peace. This is scary for anybody to face surgery, Father. We know that. And, Lord, we ask that you would let her know of your presence. Father, most of all, strengthen her faith. Uphold her at this time and give Mary and the family comfort, Father, and strength. And, Lord we ask that the operation be a success and that she recover quickly.*

*Father, we lift up tiny Sarah Grace Walton that you would heal and strengthen this new covenant child and we praise you for the wonderful news that we received this morning that she is off the ventilator. She is breathing on her own. Lord, you are bringing her back to health.*

*We pray for Maryanne, that you would continue to restore her to full health and that she could be with her baby. Lord, we can't even imagine how painful this must be for her, her new baby and she can't be with her child.*

*We pray for Ray and the children that you would give them strength and love to minister to Maryanne and Sarah Grace and to each other.*

*Father, we ask also that you would bless my wife Alison and that this sickness be temporary and not being anything serious, Father, that you would restore her to health as well.*

*Most of all, Father, for all the people that we have prayed for in all situations we ask that you would glorify your name in those situations. Those who are not your children, we ask, Lord, that you would bring in your light.*

*Father, we thank you and praise you for the wonderful men's Bible study yesterday*

*morning. We ask thy blessing upon the families of this Church. May they continue to grow in thy grace and mercy, shining as stars in the universe, lights and witnesses to thy truth to this fallen world.*

*We pray these prayers in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*