

Podcast: Confessing The Faith

Episode 23: The Liturgy of Emmaus Explained

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Published: 06/30/2016

Q1: Does it matter what Christians do in corporate worship?

Christians have been called to God through Christ to offer worship to God in Jesus' name. It is true that we worship God as individuals in our day to day lives. But that fact does not do away with or minimize the importance of corporate worship.

Q2: Do the scriptures specify how we are to worship?

Yes. Think of the OT. Think of the NT.

Who is to be worshiped? The Triune God, in Jesus' name?

What are the elements of our worship? Prayer, reading and teaching of the word, singing, sacraments.

Where are we to worship? Neither on this mountain, nor that. In Spirit and truth.

When are we to worship? The congregation is to assemble on the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Why? Because God is Creator and we are his creatures. More than that, because we have been redeemed!

By the way, notice that worship involves much more than singing.

Q3: Is there any room for "creativity" in worship?

No, not in regard to the essential or core elements of our worship.

"Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD." (Leviticus 10:1-2, ESV)

Yes, in regard to determining how exactly those elements of worship are to be executed.

LBC 1:6 — "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. . . there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed."

What time should we meet? What instruments should be used in our sing, if any? How long should the service be? How much time should be devoted to singing, prayer, the reading and teaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments? How should we dress? Who should be involved in leading the various elements of the liturgy?

But even these decisions are in some ways constrained by general principles found in God's word.

In other words, it is possible to pray, read and teach the word, sing, and observe the sacraments wrongly, even sinfully.

This the regulative principle of worship. See ARBCA's position paper: ["A Position Paper Concerning the Regulative Principle of Worship"](#)

Q4: So prayer, the reading and teaching of the word, the singing of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and the observance of the sacraments are the elements of Christian worship. Is there freedom in regard to the order of worship, or liturgy?

Yes

But the scriptures do present us with a pattern for the worship of God.

Also, we should think about the worship service theologically.

Worship is a covenantal event. There is communion, or dialogue, between God and his people.

Q5: How is worship ordered at Emmaus? Why?

Announcements

Call to Worship

The people are called to God so that they might worship God. Think of the Exodus.

Theologically, we worship God in response to his call.

Example: "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."
(Psalm 100:1-4)

Prayer of Invocation

We are to call upon the name of the Lord, naming him and claiming him as our God, thanking and praising his name, uniting us as a congregation in the name Jesus.

Example:

"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens." (Psalm 8:1, ESV)

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'" (Matthew 6:9, ESV)

Singing

Reading of the Law, Confession of Sin, Assurance of Pardon

Reading of the Law

Hear now the Law of God:

"You shall have no other gods before me.'

'You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.'

'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.'

'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.'

'You shall not murder.'

'And you shall not commit adultery.'

'And you shall not steal.'

'And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.'

'And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.'

'These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.'" (Deuteronomy 5:6-22, ESV)

Confession of Sin

Minister: Have you obeyed this Law perfectly?

Congregation: We confess that we have violated this Law in thought, word, and deed.

Minister: Go now to the silent confession of your sins.

Assurance of Pardon

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that

the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1–4, ESV)

Singing (Usually a song that responds properly to the forgiveness we have just received/been reminded of)

Prayer of Illumination

Catechism Instruction (Ministry of Word)

Reading and Preaching of God’s Word

The Lord’s Supper

Instruction

Words of institution

Invitation

Fencing of the table

Prayer of thanksgiving; blessing upon those partaking; intercession for those abstaining

Partake

Prayer of Intercession

Singing (Doxology)

Benediction or Charge

Example: “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” (Colossians 2:6-7, ESV)

Conclusion

Come prepared to worship

“For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:18–24, ESV)