

## God-Revealed Worship

### What is ‘Reformational’ or ‘Reformed’ Theology?

- **Definition:** All of life lived according to the Word of God, by the grace of God, through faith in the Son of God, united by the Spirit of God, to magnify and enjoy God.
- **Big Ideas:** God rules and controls all things in creation, salvation, and history (*the sovereignty of God*)  
The Bible is a single, unfolding story of God’s saving promises to man (*covenant theology*)  
The church is always striving to bring all of life in line with God’s Word (*always reforming*)  
Justification (being *declared* righteous) is distinct from sanctification (being *made* righteous)  
In sanctification we seek not just to modify behavior, but also to liberate our hearts from idols.

### Review: the Church as the Resurrection Community

- **Invisible church:** the church as God sees it; all true Christians in all of history.
- **Visible church:** the church as we see it; the current manifestation of the visible church in the world.
- Apart from extraordinary situations, Scripture never shows believers disconnected from the visible church.
- Every Christian needs an organic connection (membership) to the visible church for the sake of spiritual fellowship, discipleship, and accountability – and to participate in the church’s worship, work, and witness.

### Today: God-Revealed Worship

- One of the steepest “learning curves” for people entering a Reformational church is our way of worship.
- From where do we get our view of worship? Does it come from the Bible or tradition?
- Why do we do what we do in worship? Why does our worship feel so traditional?
- To answer these questions, we start with the most basic of all: what is worship?

### What Worship Is

- Our word ‘worship’ comes from an Anglo-Saxon word, *weorthscipe*, meaning ‘worthiness.’ This tells us that the essence of worship is to *ascribe worth* – to say/sing that God is worth praising for his goodness: “Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.” (Ps. 29:2).
- We get an even fuller picture of what worship is in Psalm 100:

Text	What We Should Do	How We Should Do
<sup>1</sup> A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!	<b>Make a joyful noise:</b> vocalize our faith <b>All the earth:</b> all the commands here are plural; worship is primarily a corporate action!	Intentionally gather together as a believing community. Public worship our 1 <sup>st</sup> priority.
<sup>2</sup> Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!	<b>Serve:</b> be serious, attentive, active; work at it! <b>Come:</b> gather together as his people <b>gladness... singing:</b> respond with joy & song!	Be joyful, serious, and sing – even if you don’t like to sing. Worship is a labor of love!
<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.	<b>Know:</b> God is our Creator and owner <b>his people:</b> worship in relationship with him	Be thoughtful (theology matters!) and relational (listen, think, trust, respond)
<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!	<b>Enter his gates:</b> come to designated places <b>with praise:</b> acknowledge who God is <b>Give thanks:</b> thank God for his gifts <b>bless his name:</b> attribute all goodness to him	Organize worship in known places; include in worship both praise and prayer; thank and bless God.
<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.	<b>(Know the gospel):</b> God is the LORD – the God who makes saving promises. He is good, and he will be faithful to his promises forever.	Worship with the gospel ringing in our ears; implication: hear it read and proclaimed.

- Worship is a joyful, serious response to the gospel with the service of heart and mind, prayer and song.

## How God Wants to Be Worshipped

- Worship involves heart and mind, yet heart and mind are infected by sin (Gen. 6:5, Jer. 17:9).  
How then can we know how God wants to be worshiped?
- The Bible is very clear that we are not to invent our ways of worshipping God:
  - God warns us against making images to use in worshipping him (Ex. 20:4-6, 32:4-5, Dt. 4:15-18).
  - God gave very specific directions for the design and use of the tabernacle – with exact details as to its dimensions, furniture, and even the materials used to construct its hooks (Ex. 25-30; cf. 35-40).
  - The first ten chapters of Leviticus tell the Israelites exactly how to offer sacrifices to God (Lev. 1-10).
  - The story of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2) shows that God rejects ‘unauthorized’ worship!
- Jesus said, “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Jn. 4:24).  
How do we learn what worship is spiritual and true? Not from our imaginations, but from God’s Word!
- If we think about it, this only makes sense. How could finite, sinful creatures ever figure out the right way to worship our infinite Creator, unless he told us? This truth is sometimes called the “regulative principle.” ‘Regulative’ here means “regulated by what God reveals” – or more simply, “God-revealed worship.”  
Bottomline: to worship God truly, we must only do in worship what we see done in the Bible!

## How We Worship

- Acts 2:41-47 gives us a picture of the worship and life of the early Christian community. Here we see:

<u>Acts 2:42-47</u>	<u>Other Scriptures</u>
○ Corporate gathering (v. 42)	Acts 1:14, 20:7
○ Gospel preaching and teaching (v. 42)	Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:26-32; 2 Tim. 4:1-2
○ Baptism & the Lord’s Supper (vv. 41, 42)	1 Cor. 11:17-34
○ Offerings (v. 45)	1 Cor. 16:1-2
○ Prayer (v. 42)	Mat. 6:9-13; 1 Tim. 2:1-2, 8; cf. Psalms
○ Praise (v. 47)	1 Cor. 14:26, Col. 3:16; cf. Psalms
- Biblical worship may also include confessions of faith (Dt. 26:1-10, Ps. 136), vows (Ps. 22:25), calls to worship (Ps. 100:1, etc.), and benedictions (Num. 6:24-26, cf. 2 Cor. 13:14, etc.)
- Every element that we use in worship on Sundays can be traced to elements used in the Bible!

## Why the Traditional Liturgy?

- “But all things should be done decently and in order.” (1 Cor. 14:40)  
“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:28-29)
- Although a formal order of service (‘liturgy’) is unfamiliar to many and uncomfortable to some, the goal is not starchy “tradition for tradition’s sake.” Our goal is orderly worship for the sake of reverence and awe. A written liturgy also assists those new to the faith in learning how to worship: every step is spelled out.
- In terms of musical forms and instruments, the Bible does not get very specific – and so we exercise Christian liberty and prudence. But we must be careful: music is very powerful and affective – it can manipulate our emotions in almost magical ways. Our worship is to be God-centered, joyful, and thoughtful; we must be careful never to permit our musical offerings to become distracting or diverting.
- Moreover, the inclusion of historical musical forms expresses our unity with the global/historical church.

## Sunday Starts on Monday

- Public worship is primary (Ps. 100), but it should be reinforced with family worship (Dt. 6:7; 2 Tim. 1:5, 3:15) and private worship (Gen. 24:63, Josh. 1:8, Ps. 63:5-6). Sunday starts on Monday!