

Matthew 26:59-66

A. As we just read & studied prior¹— reading of Scripture, the hearing sound preaching, singing, & the sacraments **“are all parts of the ordinary [essential] religious worship of God.”**

1. I like to call them the essentials of worship.
2. In America the word “ordinary” has come to mean average.
 - a. The “ordinary” means here are actually extraordinary and supernatural & to be more desired than any riches this life has to offer.
 - b. That is why I like to make the distinction between the essential & less common acts of worship.

B. Tonight we will look at the less common acts of worship which include: “religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, & thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times & seasons, to be used in an holy & religious manner.”

1. Along with the writers of the WCF, I firmly believed that these practices are clearly derived from Scripture.
2. They are things as this section says are done less frequently, “their several times & seasons, to be used in an holy & religious manner.”

C. I want us to look at a historical example of a religious group that denied the use of some of these less common acts of worship which According to the WCF, “The infallible rule of interpretation of Script is Script itself...” (WCF 1, sec 9). People get in trouble when they depart from this rule:

1. One example I mentioned this morning was the Quakers who abandoned the sacraments & ordination of any clergy whatsoever.
 - a. They took isolated verses to extremes without consulting the rest of Scripture. That caused them to arrive at strange doctrines.
 - b. The Quakers also were opposed to taking religious vows & oaths because they took 1 set of verses without letting Scripture interpret Scripture. → Turn to **Mat 5:33-37.**
 - 1) I believe what Jesus was addressing was the practice of some who were so habitually dishonest, the only anyone could believe they were telling the truth was for them to make some great oath by evoking heaven, Jerusalem, or even God’s name.
 - 2) A godly person should not have to take oath for you to believe them. If Christ truly dwells in them, they should be honest enough that U can trust their “Yes” as “Yes” & their “No” as “No.” If U are a chronic or habitual, untrustworthy liar— you are of the devil!

¹ “Essentials of Worship” - <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=217222259134874>

2. The absolute undoing of extremists who deny all oaths & vows is **Mat 26:59-66**
 - a. Did Jesus forget His own teaching in **Mat 5:33f**?
 - b. He did heed to answering when the high priest placed Him under oath.
 - 1) That is what it means when we read how he said, **“I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God” (v63)**
 - 2) To **“adjure”** someone is to charge or place someone under a solemn oath.

D. What is the difference between an oath or a vow?

1. For an oath- think of being “sworn-in” before taken the witness stand in a court of law.
2. For a vow, think of your wedding day.
 - Regarding divorce among Christians, we need to look at **Ps 15**. Turn there → **Ps 15**

E. Solemn fastings are something our denomination still believes in!

1. Before the ordination of a new gospel minister, our Book of Church order recommends the congregation hold a solemn fast.
2. **Mat 9:14-15** **“Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, ‘Why do we & the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?’ ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, ‘The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, & then they will fast.’”**

F. Thanksgivings-

1. Some Reformed Christians say that Christmas is not a biblical holiday because of some of the history behind it.
 - a. There is some evidence that Christmas was used to supplant the pagan celebration of the winter solstice.
 - 1) Despite this history, there are good things to remember during Christmas
 - 2) I mentioned no one in our “circles” bows before Christmas trees as an object of pagan worship. I felt his reply was priceless: _____

 - b. We try to be careful not to mandate certain holidays as a day of worship when the Lord’s Day is the ordinary- essential day God has ordained in Scripture.
2. I had one such professor who held that position yet remarked how our celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday was the most biblical holiday we celebrate in America.
 - **Ps 50:23** **“He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; & to him who orders his way *aright* I shall show the salvation of God.”**