

Studies in Christianity Christian Worship #4

S#1.

Why the Five Acts of Worship

S#2.

Text : **Psalms 96: 7-13 , Hebrews 10: 19-31**

A. We are researching the topic of Christian worship.

1. We have seen that the overriding principle is developing a heart for worship.
 - a. Worship acknowledges God for who and what He is ... creator and sovereign.
 - b. Our worship expresses our attitude toward the Who and What that is God.
2. We have seen and will explore further that worship is not limited to an assembly.
 - a. The church assembles for many reasons and at a variety of times.
 - b. The text requiring participation in assemblies is not specific to Sundays.
Heb. 10: 23 – Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **S#3.**
 for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to
 stimulate (*motivate, provoke, prod*) one another to love and good
 deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the
 habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more
 as you see the day drawing near.
 - c. The essence of this command is more **horizontal** than vertical.
 - 1) Need to assemble to maintain your faith “**Let us hold fast the confession**”
 - 2) To encourage others to faithfully serve God. “**consider how to stimulate**”
3. The elders have both the right and the responsibility to call assemblies of the church.
 - a. Elders are commanded to exercise oversight over the congregation.
I Pet. 5: 1 – Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow **S#4.**
 elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, ... **2** shepherd
 the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under
 compulsion, but voluntarily ...
 - b. Christians are commanded to obey the elders.
Heb. 13: 17 – Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch **S#5.**
over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do
 this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.
 - c. Refusal to obey is rebellion against God-ordained authority. (*apply to church*)
Rom. 13: 1 – ... For there is no authority except from God, and those which **S#6.**
 exist are established by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists authority
has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will
 receive condemnation upon themselves.

**** The task of this lesson is to challenge you to study ? ****

B. This lesson asks, “Why perform only these five acts of worship?”**S#7.**

1. Where do we get the “five acts of worship.”
2. When are examples binding ?
3. Is it a sin not to perform all of the five acts of worship ?

I. Where do we get the “five acts of worship ?”**S#8.****A. There is no mention of the term “five acts of worship” in the scriptures.****S#9.**

1. There are no specific instructions on how to conduct an assembly of the church.
2. We skip through the N.T. looking for examples of how the early church did it.

B. The bible designates the purpose for the Sunday assembly – communion.**S#10.**

1. **I Cor. 11: 20** – Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,
2. The early church assembled on the first day of the week to break the bread.
Acts 20: 7 – On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together **to break bread,** Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.
3. Thus, we know the divine purpose for the holy convocation each Sunday.

C. Incorporated in this same verse is our authority for sermons on Sunday.

1. **Acts 20: 7** – On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. **S#11.**
2. The first century church dwelt on the Apostles teaching.
Acts 2: 42 – They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
 - a. Their assembly included the apostle's oral teaching ... i.e., sermons.
 - b. Their assembly included the Lord's Supper
 - c. It included fellowship
 - d. Also, it included *prayers*.

D. The taking collection of the tithes and offerings is patterned after the apostolic command to the church in Corinth and Galatia.

1. **I Cor. 16: 1** – Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. **2** On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. **S#12.**

2. Even in the O.T. God took up collections in the assembly.

Deut. 16:16 – Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. S#13.

3. When we put money in the plate, it is equivalent to putting an offering on the altar.

E. We have direct commands to sing.

1. **Col. 3: 16** – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Cf – **Eph. 5: 19**) **17** Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. S#14.

- a. Obviously, more than one Christian must be present to accomplish this.
- b. However, it is in the context of interpersonal relationships, not worship.
- c. This same context commands the giving of thanks.

2. Singing is commanded both in and out of the assembly :

- a. In the assembly :

Heb. 2: 11 – For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, **12** saying, " I will proclaim your name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise." S#15.

- b. Out of the assembly :

James 5: 13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. S#16.

3. Jesus Himself closed an assemble with a song.

Matt. 26:30 – After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

II. When are examples binding ?

S#17.

- A. In the late 1700s and early 1800s some religious leaders became disillusioned with the reformation movement and decided that the only way to achieve real reform was to go back a restore the church. S#18.

1. They saw the Christian religion being divided into ever smaller groups.
2. These groups became increasingly dogmatic about their niche doctrines.

- B. These groups of restorers united behind one common mantra :

“Speak where the bible speaks and be silent where the bible is silent.”

1. This is a good mantra, one which we endorse, but it was not the full answer.
2. There was soon a dispute as to **how** the bible speaks.
3. Some only accept that which the bible positively endorses as lawful.
Others affirm that all that the bible does not specifically forbid, it permits.
4. Some looked for bible authority in “necessary inference.”
If the bible says 1, 2, 3, ... 4, 5, 6 is inferred.
5. Others bind some biblical examples as doctrine, while not binding others.

S#19.

C. This system of hermeneutics is taken directly from Presbyterian dogma.

1. Many who advocated for the restoration of the church were trained in various Presbyterian seminaries where this hermeneutic was taught.
2. When the churches of Christ were re-introduced by the restoration movement, many of the reformers who became restorers had been taught this hermeneutic.
3. Thus, the Presbyterian hermeneutic was taught to our preachers during training.
4. This Hermeneutic caused at least one splitting of the church last century.
 - a. Most of our preachers are still taught this in school, I was.
 - b. When I got to more advanced studies I was introduced to a book that changed my thinking enough to motivate further study.
 - 1) That book was “*We Be Brethren*” by J.D. Thomas Ph.D.
 - 2) It is boring from cover to cover, but a logical and scholarly treatise.

D. No example can be bound as doctrine, i.e., as a command of God.

S#20.

1. God has the ability to clearly communicate His will.
2. An example may be a good and wholesome thing to do, but it is not a command.
3. There are several formulas taught to ascertain when an example is binding, but all can be proven inconsistent.
 - a. Not everything the Apostles did is good for us today even when obey a command.
 - b. Example : **Acts 19: 9** ... Paul was sent to Macedonia so he took a ship.
We read of Paul walking, but never rode a chariot.
Approved example : take a ship to do missions.

S#21.

E. Examples can show us things of which God approved at a certain time and place.

1. All of the things we do in our assembly are seen in the N.T. as worship so we can be confident that they are approved of by God.
2. Some things we see in denominational worship are not seen in the N.T. so they are immediately suspect. (*mechanical instruments of music .. direct command, sing*)

III. Is it a sin not to perform all five “acts of worship” at an assembly?**S#22.****A. We don’t do some things that were done in N.T. worship.****S#23.**

1. **I Cor. 14: 26** – What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. **27** If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn,

S#24.

2. We don’t have the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

- a. Special revelations or prophecies
- b. Speaking in other languages (*glossolalia*)

3. We don’t have individuals sing psalms.

- a. Psalms are scriptural praises which are sung.
- b. The singing of psalms is commanded in or out of the assembly.

Eph. 5: 19 – ... speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **20** always giving thanks for all things

S#25.

- * 4. Does our not doing these things mean our assembled worship is unacceptable ? Obviously not. We have done what was required and violated no command.

B. There are often things that can’t be done. Can we still worship?

1. What if we don’t have someone who can preach? *We just read the bible.*
2. **I Tim. 4: 13** commands to public reading of scripture. *What if no bible is available?*
3. What if the elements for the communion are not available?

C. We have made the assembly much more “up tight” than God made it.**S#26.**

1. God spent chapter after chapter itemizing worship in the O.T., but one chapter in the N.T. (*O.T. worship was very tactile and ritualistic.*)
2. Two verses encapsulate God’s attitude toward worship in the N.T..
 - a. **Rom. 2:29** – But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.
 - b. **Heb. 4: 12** – For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

S#27.**S#28.****CONCLUSION :****S#29.**

Worship is expressing of one’s heart to God – NOT JUST performing “*acts of worship.*”

Lesson Text :

Psalms 96: 7-13

1 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name;
Bring an offering and come into His courts.
9 Worship the Lord in holy attire;
Tremble before Him, all the earth.
10 Say among the nations, " The Lord reigns;
Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved;
He will judge the peoples with equity."

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar, and all it contains;
12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
13 Before the Lord, for He is coming,
For He is coming to judge the earth.

Hebrews 10: 19-31

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **27** but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. **28** Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **29** How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? **30** For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." and again, "The Lord will judge his people." **31** It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.