

Theological Equipping Class - Gathering to Worship God

Gathering to Worship God

- Psalm 29:2 – *“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.”*
- *“Worship is declaring with our lives and our lips that God is more important than anything else in the world to us.”* – Ligon Duncan
- Psalm 150:6 - *“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!”*
- Idolatry (False Worship) - Romans 1:22-25 – *“Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”*

The Garden Gathering

- Garden “Worship Service” (Liturgy): Jonathan Gibson
 - God Called: Adam to worship at Mount Eden (Ezek. 28:14)
 - God Spoke: *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’”* (Gen. 2:16–17).
 - Response: Adam’s Faith and Obedience
 - Fellowship Meal: Dwell and Dine with God
 - *“Adam was commanded to fast from one tree in order that he might feast at another tree, and thus enjoy consummate union and communion with God – everlasting life.”* – Jonathan Gibson
- The Fall - Adam and Eve worship the creature rather than Creator
 - *“Ever since God’s people were banished from His presence after the fall in Genesis 3, God has been at work gathering them back to himself.”* – Bobby Jamison

Israel Gathered before God to Worship

- The Exodus was for Worship - Exodus 3:12-18 – *“He said, ‘But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.’ ...¹⁸ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’”*
- Gathering before God as sinful people
 - Psalm 24:3-5 – *“³ Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. ⁵ He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”*
 - God has to initiate and set the rules of how to enter His presence
- Israel Gathered at Mount Sinai (Tabernacle):
 - *“As Israel gathers at Mount Sinai, after being redeemed and rescued out of slavery in Egypt, a liturgy is formed that becomes the basic pattern for Israel’s worship in the future.”* – Jonathan Gibson
 - Worship Service of Mount Sinai:
 - Gathering (at Mount Sinai) (Exodus 19:1–3a)
 - Calling (by God’s word) (Exodus 19:3b–9)
 - Cleansing (through sacrifice) (Exodus 19:10–15)
 - Mediated access (through an appointed prophet-priest) (Exodus 19:16–25)

- Divine communication (Ten Commandments and Book of Covenant) (Exodus 20:1–24:2)
- Consecration (promise of obedience) (Exodus 24:3)
- Sacrifice (burnt offerings and peace offerings) (Exodus 24:4–5)
- Divine communication (Book of Covenant) (Exodus 24:7)
- Cleansing (blood of burnt offerings and peace offerings sprinkled) (Exodus 24:6, 8)
- Mediated access to God’s presence (Exodus 24:9–10)
- Fellowship meal (with God) (Exodus 24:11)
- Israel at Mount Zion (Temple):
 - Worship Service of Mount Zion:
 - Gathering (at Mount Zion) (1 Kings 5:2–3)
 - Cleansing (through sacrifice) (1 Kings 5:4–6)
 - Mediated access (through priests) (1 Kings 5:7–10)
 - Praise (with singing and music) (1 Kings 5:11–13)
 - Glory of God fills the temple (1 Kings 5:14)
 - Divine communication (Word of God through Solomon) (1 Kings 6:1–11)
 - Prayer of intercession (by Solomon) (1 Kings 6:12–42)
 - Fire and glory (from heaven) (1 Kings 7:1–2)
 - Praise (bowing and thanking) (1 Kings 7:3)
 - Cleansing/consecration (through sacrifice) (1 Kings 7:4–7)
 - Meal (feast) (1 Kings 7:8–10)
 - Blessing and dismissal (1 Kings 7:9–10)
- “Because of sin, new essential elements are incorporated into the worship of God’s redeemed people within the covenant of grace: gathering, cleansing, mediated access, divine communication, and cleansing/consecration.” – Jonathan Gibson

Israel, Idolatry and the Promise of True Worship

- Israel Gathering for False Worship (Idolatry) - Golden Calf (Exodus 32), Baal (Numbers 25:3, Psalm 106:28), Asherah (1 Kings 16:33)
 - The history of God’s nation repeats Adam’s idolatry. As with Adam, Israel hears an alternative call to worship—a word of invitation from the Baals and Asherim—and responds in faith and obedience to creatures, not the Creator. Israel feasts at the altars and high places of other gods and not at the temple of the one true God. – Jonathan Gibson
- Promise of True Worship:
 - *“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, ³and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” – Isaiah 2:2-3*
 - *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.” - Ezekiel 36:26–27*
 - *“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.” – Malachi 3:1-4*

Jesus – The True Worshipper

- Jesus is the Perfect Worshipper
 - “Where Adam, Israel, and David all failed, God’s final Son succeeded. Where the first Adam remained silent and bowed before the serpent, the last Adam rebuked the serpent and refused to bow: “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve” (Matt. 4:10; cf. Deut. 6:13). Where Israel and David (and his sons) promised they’d worship God with heart and soul and mind and strength, but didn’t, Jesus as the true Israel and David’s greater son worshiped wholeheartedly: “Zeal for your house will consume me” (John 2:17; cf. Ps. 69:9). Jesus was no idolater; he was no hypocrite. God finally had a Son who worshiped him alone.” – Jonathan Gibson
 - Jesus comes from the presence of God (John 1:1-2) to “Tabernacle” among us (John 1:14).
 - Jesus is the True Temple (John 2:19).
 - Jesus fulfills and replaces the earthly temple of Jerusalem. He is now the “place” where true worshipers worship God. – Bobby Jamison
 - Jesus will bring about true worship of the Father.
 - *“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”* ²¹ Jesus said to her, *“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”* – John 4:20-24
- On the Cross, Jesus takes the punishment for all our idolatry
 - Jesus is the Perfect, once and for all, sacrifice that makes Gathering in God’s Presence to Worship possible (Heb. 7:27)
 - Jesus removes the barrier of sin
 - *“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”* – Matthew 27:50-51
 - *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* – Hebrews 4:15-16
 - *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with 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 stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* – Hebrews 10:19-25

The Church Gathered to Worship God

- The Church of Jesus Christ Gathers to Worship God, through His Son, by the Holy Spirit.
- Order of Service (Liturgy):
 - 1. God Calls His People to Worship
 - 2. Song of Adoration
 - 3. Corporate Confession
 - 4. Assurance of Pardon

- Romans 8:1-2 – *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”*
 - 5. Song of Thanksgiving
 - 6. Pastoral Prayer
 - 7. God’s Word Speaks - Sermon
 - 8. Song of Praise
 - 9. Lord’s Supper/Baptism
 - 10. Commission/Benediction:
 - Other Elements:
 - Confession of a Creed
 - Reading of Scripture
 - Offering/Giving
- “If we think of ourselves as consumers, we will view ourselves as the audience, and the preacher and others assisting in leading the service (especially the musicians) as performers there to inspire (and perhaps entertain) us, rather than understanding that God is the audience and we are beggars, rebels, and enemies, made heirs, friends, and children of God through the Father's love, the Son's obedience, death, and resurrection, and the Spirit's new birth, and that we have come now, by his grace, to give something to God that he alone deserves and that we can only give him through Jesus Christ, in order that we might be what he made us to be (worshippers) and enjoy what he made us to enjoy: the greatest, deepest, best treasure in all the world (the triune God himself, and communion with him).” – Ligon Duncan

Eternal Gathering for Worship

- Revelation 7:9-12 – *“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”*

Practical Application:

- Prioritize the Gathering
- Prepare for the Gathering
- Pray for the Gathering
- Participate in the Gathering
- Be Discipled by the Gathering
 - “What’s unique about the church’s weekly gathering is not that it’s the time when we worship, but that it’s the time when we build each other up by worshiping God together.” – Bobby Jamison

Resources:

- *Corporate Worship* by Matt Merker
- *Christ-Centered Worship* by Bryan Chapell
- *Reformation Worship* by Jonathan Gibson
- *Remaking a Broken World: A Fresh Look at the Bible Storyline* by Christopher Ash