

The Principles, Pattern, Parts, and Practice of Worship.

“Since we are receiving a kingdom that can not be shaken, let us have grace by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28,29.

Sunday morning, April 26, 2009

I. The principles.

A. Access to God and approaching God are not to be taken for granted.

1. Because of the great Creator - Creature distinction.
2. Because of God's holiness and our fallenness.

B. The regulative principle.

1. Because of the great Creator - creature distinction, and our fallenness access to God is on His terms only.
2. That is why we worship God, not with the devices of men, however well intended, but we draw near to Him and worship Him only in the way He has provided for us.
3. Remember the condescending of God, and His great grace and mercy, that

there

- should be such a way at all, opened up for us by the finished work of Christ
4. Beware of approaching the Lord by your own devices. Worship needs to be formed and informed by the Scriptures.
5. Beware of the attitude commonplace today that the Lord should be pleased that we come to Him at all.

II. The Pattern.

The patterns of worship are ever the same in Scripture; from the garden of Eden, to the tabernacle and temple, to the heavenly worship of the book of revelation there is the same pattern.

A. There is the entering into God's presence by way of dealing with sin.

B. There is the hearing, reading, and preaching of God's word. This is symbolically portrayed in the OT temple under the figures of the showbread and the candle stand. Christ fulfills these types as He says “I am the bread of life,” and “I am the light of the world.” The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of all of scripture.

C. The response of the worshipper, presenting himself to the Lord by faith and obedience. This is expressed in praise and prayer and offerings. In the OT

Israel

presented herself through the priest before the altar of incense.

D. There is fellowshiping with the Lord; communing with Him. For us at the Lord's table; for Israel by way of the peace offerings; in Eden it would have

been

by way of eating of the tree of life; in Revelation by way of the marriage supper of the Lamb. It is always done by way of eating and drinking in the presence of the Lord, and it is always followed by a going forth with the blessing of the

Lord;

the benediction.

III. The parts.

There are two kinds of parts.

- A. Worship is covenantal; it binds, two parties together; God and His people.
 - 1. The parts done on behalf of the Lord toward His people.
 - 2. The parts done by His people toward the Lord.
- B. Worship is responsive.
 - 1. God is the initiator; He gets the last word; Alpha and Omega; first and last.
 - 2. The Lord's people are the respondents.
 - Just a casual look at the liturgy of our church will reveal these features.

IV. The Practice of worship. Hebrews 10:19-25

This is the worship of the true and heavenly temple of which the Lord Jesus is the High Priest.

- A. Moses was shown this temple and its ministry Hebr. 8:5.
- B. He patterned the OT sanctuary and its ministry after that of the heavenly temple albeit in shadowy form. Here NT worship is in the OT concealed, and OT worship is in the NT revealed.
- C. It is no longer a representative priesthood; now all the people of God are the priesthood of the New Covenant. 1 Peter 2:9.
 - We are all called to minister in the heavenly sanctuary.
 - We are all called to be living stones in that spiritual house. 1 Peter 2:5.
- D. We worship by the provisions the Lord has made for us.
 - Three provisions.
 - 1. A new and living way into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.
 - 2. A High Priest, The Lord Jesus, who went before us; who we may follow as we enter the holiest, and who will hold us by the hand as we do so.
 - 3. A new boldness and confidence through faith in Christ.
 - Three responses:
 - 1. Let us do it; let us draw near, and let us do so by way of dealing with our sin. "Sprinkling blood, and washing water." See our liturgy's approach and entering into God's presence by way of confession. Vs. 22.
 - 2. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. Here is our confirmation by way of the ministry of the word. Vs. 23.
 - 3. Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some...
 - Here is our consecration to a life of humble service as an act of worship.
- E. Why the emphasis on the assembling of ourselves?
 - The book of Revelation shows us that both the redemptive works of God, and His judgments on the earth proceed as a result of the worship of His assembled people.
- F. Beware of making worship a consumer item. This is one of the great sins of our age. Taking of it as much as we desire; when we desire it; where we desire it; the way in which we desire it. In doing so we have wrested worship away from God; we have conformed it to our own desires, and we have enslaved the Lord to our desires. Look at what we have done to the Lord's day; to morning and evening worship; to the church, and to public worship? Shall we inherit the blessing of

the Lord this way?