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'The Pastor and His People'

Study One

THE PASTOR AS SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

The "Pastor" is a shepherd (*poimén*), and the unique use of the translation "Pastor" in Eph.4:11 probably reflects the unique reference to function rather than office. A Pastor is what you are when you do it. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:25; Acts 20:28; Phil.1:1; 1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:7.

The Pastor Shepherds the Flock

In the New Testament the people of God are sometimes called a flock, *poimné* (Matt.26:31; Jn.10:16; possibly 1 Cor. 9:7), although the diminutive *poimnion*, "little flock", is also used (Lu. 12:32; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:2-3).

The Pastor is Christ's Gift

Christ is bringing his people to fulness and maturity (Eph.1:3-5, 10, 13-14, 22-23; 2:10-22; 3:16-19; 4:1-16 etc), and "Pastor" occurs in this context (Eph.4:1-14). Pastors and teachers are Christ's gift as the fruit of his triumph and as a manifestation of his ministry. "The good shepherd" (Jn.10:11,14), "the chief-Shepherd" (1 Pet.5:4) is at work.

Cf. Acts 20:28, "take heed to yourselves and to all the (little) flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers".

The True Pastor Reflects the Character of God

Ezek.34:(1-10)11-16. God is the true shepherd and so is he who bears the very stamp of his nature (Heb.1:3). As Christ, so the under-shepherds must reflect the character of the Shepherd (eg. 1 Tim.4:12). Cf. Isa.40:11 with 1 Thess.2:7; Jer. 31:10; Ps. 23:4 with 2 Tim.4:1-5.

The shepherd feeds the flock, so Ps. 23:1-2; cf. Eph. 4:11, where *poimén* is linked with teacher, the one definite article is used for both nouns, and we may possibly translate "pastors even teachers". Thus 1 Tim.3:2; 5:17; 2 Tim.2:14-15. The principle is not imparting information but the utterance of God (Deut. 8:3; cf. 1 Cor. 14:1-5 etc). The Pastor must function in the dynamic of the word in order that he may impart that. He dare not impart mere memories of the living word, either his own or others.

God, the Shepherd, is King

The language of shepherds and flocks does not derive only from quiet pastoral scenes. It was contemporary usage in the ancient world to describe the king and his people. Thus Ps. 23:1ff is a reference to God's kingship and its outworking (see also Matt. 9:36 cf. Num. 27:16-17). The references to "pastors" in Jeremiah (above) is a reference to kings. Likewise under-shepherds rule (1 Tim.5:17) although as examples of submission and godliness (1 Pet. 5:2-3; Heb. 13:17). The Pastor's authority is from God and his word the utterance of God. The people who set him apart can at best acknowledge this.

'Pastor and His People'

Ministering With God's Approval

Introduction

We may think we have God's approval because we have responded to his call upon our lives. In ministry we are frequently agitated by thoughts of whether we are succeeding or not. We can sour when we don't get the approval of our people. We are in danger of slipping into the shoes of 'people-pleasers'. Burnout often results from straining to be more than we are and from the fatigue which comes from inner conflict.

Jesus had his Father's Approval

- (1) At his baptism was the attestation of Jesus' Messianic vocation (Matt. 3:13-17). For the incarnate Son it declares his royalty, and the intimacy which exists between the Father and the Son (cf. Matt. 1:27; John 1:32ff.; 3:35; 14:11; etc).
- (2) What would it mean to have such approval?
- (3) For Jesus his baptism was his coronation where the incarnate Son who has come in union with our humanity puts himself on the same level as sinners (cf. Isa. 53:12). In solidarity with us, Jesus is baptized on our behalf. 'For us'.
- (4) With the Father's approval, Jesus would wholly do the will of God right up to, and in, the Cross (Luke 9:28-36). He would not seek approval or vindication from other human beings even though as a man he needed these things (Matt. 4:1-11; 16:21-23; John 5:30, 41f., 44; Heb. 4:15; 5:7-10; etc.).

Sinners are Justified in Christ, i.e. Given God's Approval

(Luke 18:14; Rom. 3:23-24)

- (1) Forensically, to justify is to condemn as well as to vindicate. It is the revealing of God's righteousness in judgement and in acquittal, and while it is according to the Law it is realized in the person of Jesus Christ.
- (2) God's justification is a personal, relational matter (Gen. 15:6; cf. Rom. 4:3). Justice has to do with relationships.
When Adam was credited as righteous it meant he was now in a true relationship with God and that with this new status he participated in God's righteousness (Jer. 23:5-6).
- (3) The Gospel is the astonishing declaration that a sinner's debt is cancelled, meaning that a judgement has passed upon his life (Rom. 4:1-8). In terms of our relationship with God it means acquittal from all wrong. As we are no longer guilty we are no longer offensive to God, and have his positive approval.

We are Justified by the Faithfulness of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16; 3:23; Rom. 3:21-26)

- (1) As our fraternal brother, Jesus is our 'Kinsman Redeemer' who stands in the place of the one who cannot redeem himself (Mark 10:45; Lev. 25:25-28, 41-54; Ruth 4:1ff.).
- (2) The incarnate Son Jesus is the one appointed from amongst men to act on our behalf, for us (Heb. 3:1; 5:7-10; I Tim. 2:5f.; etc.).
- (3) In solidarity with his brethren, Jesus worships God, obeys the Father, prays vocationally and offers himself to the Lord. He who becomes our flesh and blood also becomes our sin (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4f.; 3:13; Heb. 2:10-18; II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; I Pet. 2:24; John 1:29; Isa. 52:14-53:12). According to Romans 3:25 it is as one of us (and as our Head, Rom. 5:15), that Jesus experiences the inferno of our sin in judgement (cf. Lev. 16:1-34).
- (4) '...the Incarnation was the coming of God to save us in the heart of our fallen and depraved humanity.' 'This is a doctrine found everywhere in the early church in the first five centuries, expressed again and again in the terms that the whole man had to be assumed by Christ if the whole man was to be saved, that the unassumed is unhealed, or that what God has not taken up on the cross is not saved' (T. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*, p. 48f.).
- (5) In Christ the ungodly are justified by being judged. Sinners are not accepted by avoiding judgement, but by going through the judgement; the judgement provided by the grace of God (John 5:24; Rom. 6:6f.; 8:1ff.; Gal. 2:19-20; II Cor. 5:14-15).

Justification is the Bestowal of Positive Righteousness

- (1) The removal of our penalty and offence is in Christ, but also in union with Christ we participate in his humanity, his obedience, his righteousness, his sonship...(Rom. 5:18-19; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:6; I Cor. 1:30).
- (2) This we continue to have in Jesus Christ by his resurrection (Rom. 4:25) and his continuing intervention on our behalf (Heb. 7:24-25; 9:24). Thus we are not justified, as it were, initially and then have to spend the course of our lives justifying ourselves.
- (3) Through Baptism into Christ believers have the Father's approval (Gal. 3:27f.; Rom. 6:1ff.; I Pet. 3:21). In Christ we have gone through the waters of death and have entered the new age of the Spirit. Our ministry, with all of our deficiencies, is in Christ as we participate in him through the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

- (1) In veracity of God's approval we can live and tell the truth.
- (2) We do not have to prove ourselves.
- (3) We can face our sin and failure without being destroyed.
- (4) Dependency upon the approval of men and women can be replaced by dependency upon the God who has justified us.

STUDY THREE

THE PASTOR AND THE MINISTRY OF GRACE

Living in Great Grace

In the New Testament, there is no “doctrine of grace” per se, only the experience of grace which we, of necessity, describe doctrinally. Hence the observations of Acts 4:32-33; 11:23; 1 Cor. 1:4 etc.

Grace may be defined as “God giving himself for man’s good, to restore to man all that he lost at the fall and so to restore man to his created glory”. Karl Barth’s definition is good: “Grace is the distinctive mode of God’s being in so far as it seeks and creates fellowship by its own free inclination and favour, unconditioned by any merit or claim in the beloved, but also unhindered by any unworthiness or opposition in the latter—able, on the contrary, to overcome all unworthiness or opposition.”¹ Grace is primarily restorative, although it is antecedent to the fall (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim.1:9)

Such grace is far from patronising: God gives himself in order to take us up into himself (2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 3:19b). We are participants in grace (Rom.5:2; Phil. 1:7, or, ‘of my grace’) and cannot be otherwise, although note 2 Cor. 6:1. Hence the pastor’s concern of Acts 13:43. A true knowledge of grace is “doxological”, since it overwhelms us and all our sin (cf. Rom.5:17, 20).

The Pastor Who Lives in Grace

2 Cor. 12:9.

The pastor is only free in grace (cf. 1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Tim. 1:14). Eg. Stephen, Acts 6:3,8,10; and Barnabas, Acts 11:23-24.

The Cross as the focal point of grace (Rom. 3:23-25a). To live in grace is to live in the action of the Cross, since only the grace of the Cross establishes us for ministry (see Rom. 1:3-5; 1 Cor. 3:10; 15:10; Gal. 1:15-16; 2:9; Eph. 3:8) and thus evokes true grace-living (2 Cor. 1:12; Titus 2:11ff; 2 Pet.1:5-9). The result of such ministry is, then, the fruit of grace (Eph.2:8-9). Such liberated ministry contrasts with “law-ministry” which attempts to manipulate situations and circumstances to gain results ((Gal.5:4).

Knowing the Man of Grace

Jn.1:14; Titus 2:11. Jesus the revelation of grace. Lu.2:40; 4:18-22,30. His speech was the flow of liberating grace (4:22) and so carried full authority (4:30). Hence forgiveness, healing and liberty flow from him (note the identical words in Lu.24:47). This grace is continuous (2 Tim.1:9-10) ie. via the proclamation. Our ministries are in a continuum with his, and are actually his ministry continued through us (Acts 1:1; Jn.1:17; 9:4).

¹ Church Dogmatics, I,i, pg. 353.

The Flow of Grace

God is “the God of all grace” (1 Pet. 5:10), and we are stewards/administrators (1 Pet. 4:10) of that grace. Grace is manifold in view of the diversity of gifts, but all are God’s self-giving through us.

Eph.4:29 cf.Col.4:6 We are to speak “grace” to the hearers, cf. 1 Pet. 4:11, “the oracles of God”. Our word is Christ speaking (Rom.10:14,17; 2 Cor.13:3 cf. 1 Thess 2:13); thus our word is “the word of his grace” (Acts 14:3). The responsibility is great (eg. James 3:1) but the results are thrilling (Rom.15:17-18) as the victory of the Cross is communicated into the hearers.

TRUSTEES OF THE INHERITANCE

Introduction

In ministry of preaching and teaching has to do with enabling our people to know what their inheritance is, by grace, and to enable them to develop their inheritance and to bring them into the final inheritance.

God's Covenant People are His Heirs

- (1) Abraham believes the promise that he would be a great father who would inherit the land, and with the nations, the world (Gen. 12:1–3; 17:1–8; Rom. 4:13).
- (2) Israel, like Abraham, belonged to God by grace, and as God's son inherited the promises, which included redemption, the law, the promises and the land (Exod. 4:22–23; Josh. 15:1; Rom. 9:4f.).
- (3) What this means is that God has his covenant people as an inheritance and the covenant people have the Lord and all the earth as an inheritance.
- (4) The twelve apostles represent a true succession of the sons of Jacob who inherit the promises made to Abraham and Israel (Acts 1:26; Rev. 1:6; 21:11f.).
- (5) Christ is the true Son and the Heir (Ps. 1:2ff.; 110:ff.; Matt. 3:17; 11:25ff.; 21:39; Heb. 1:2).
- (6) In Christ's sonship all who are in him are joint heirs (Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:1–6; 3:29).

The Inheritance is Substantial

- (1) The references in the note above bring this out, but we need to emphasize that God's heirs inherit the earth and the future world (Matt. 5:5; Heb. 11:10, 16; 13:14; Rev. 5:4–10, 21–22). It is an 'Eternal inheritance', the fruit of an eternal salvation (Heb. 9:12, 15).
- (2) In the present the sons of God have inherited salvation, the Spirit, the Gospel, the law, the worship and a great ancestry. So rich is this that at Pentecost people sold their inheritance (Acts 2:41–47).

Teachers of the Covenant Inheritance

- (1) Fathers/parents are responsible to teach the children of the covenant the nature of the inheritance and the responsibilities entailed (Gen. 22:1–19; Deut. 6:20–25; Eph. 6:1–4).
- (2) The teaching ministry of Jesus was really a reading of the covenant promises and obligations to Israel.
- (3) II Timothy 2:1–2; 1:3f. insist that the Pastor is trustee to pass on the tradition and the doctrine to others for safe keeping and transmission. The elder must have an aptitude to teach (I Tim. 3:2).

- (4) Teaching the Word is of a high order (Acts 13:1ff.; 20:28; Matt. 28:18ff.; II Tim. 4:1–5; Titus 1:5–16; 2:1; Eph. 4:11ff.; Gal. 6:6; I Tim. 3:1–7; 5:17).
- (5) What this means is that Pastors must be ministers of the Word of God. In serving the Word they will be relating to the covenant people of God their identity in Christ, the grace of their salvation, the privileges of developing the inheritance in Christ, the relationship of the inheritance to repenting sinners and the great hope our children and our children's children have in Christ.

'It is not the ministry that is the successor of the apostolate, the ministry plus the true apostolic legacy of the Bible—the ministry of the Word' (P. T. Forsyth).

Study Five

THE PASTOR AND THE MINISTRY OF MERCY

Ministry by Mercy

2 Cor. 4:1. Paul saw his ministry as being by the mercy of God. This meant (i) that God in his mercy to Paul had given him this ministry, and (ii) that Paul's ministry was God's mercy to others.

God is the God of mercy (2 Cor. 1:3; Ex. 34:6-8). It must be recalled that mercy is not one item in isolation but an aspect of the whole person and character of God. Mercy cannot be known outside the whole of God's being (also Dan 9:9-10, 18)

Living by Mercy

Lam 3:21-23 points out that were it not for God's mercy constantly coming to us, we would be destroyed. We should note that here and elsewhere, mercy is in the context of God's wrath (see Hab.3:2; Isa.60:10), and so must beware the tendency to divorce mercy from its biblical context.

- (a) The reality of God's wrath : Rom.1:18-32; Pss. 5:4-6; 7:11; 31:10; 32:4; 38:3; 51:8; Wisd. 14:9-10, "For equally hateful to God are the ungodly man and his ungodliness, for what has been done will be punished together with him who did it."
- (b) The mercy of propitiation : Rom.3:23-26; 1 Jn.2:1-2; 4:10, thus Rom.5:9; 1 Thess 1:10.
- (c) Mercy comes to us in our misery : Gen.19:16; Eph. 2:-5 cf. Rom.9:6-26; Hos.1:6-7. Man in guilt is given up to his sin (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28) and so lives in the misery of his dislocation (Isa. 57:20-21). He lives with "frustration" (Rom.8:19-21) and the fear of death (Heb.9:27; 2:15). "We are slaves of fear, not because we have to die, but because we deserve to die".² Grace deals with the cause (guilt) and mercy with the consequences (1 Pet. 1:3; Titus 3:3-7).

Overwhelmed by God's Mercy

Although we may speak about mercy, we can never proclaim mercy until we are overwhelmed by it (cf. Acts 4:20; 2 Cor. 4:13 etc).

- (a) In gratitude and worship : Rom.12:1; Eph.2:4; 1 Tim.1:12-14, NB. Ignorance was not the reason but the context – contrast willful unbelief Heb.6:3-6 Mk.3:28-29. See also Heb. 4:15-16.
- (b) In showing mercy : Lu.10:37. Are we full of mercy, or are we angry people (deeply if not superficially)? Do we move out in active compassion or merely observe need (Lu.6:32-36; James 2:1-7; 13)
- (c) In ministry : 1 Cor. 7:25; 2 Cor. 4:1(above); Jude (17-) 23,

² Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1949, pg.172.

“A poor, guilty, secure sinner is like a drunken man that is fallen into the fire . . . A sottish drunkard, that is overpoised by his own excess, lieth where he falleth, and except some friendly hand lift him up, there he perisheth; and just so it is with sinners, they are pleased with their condition, and if they be not soundly roused up and awakened, they lie, and die, and fry in their sins. Oh! then, pluck them out of the fire, ‘warn them to flee from the wrath to come’ . . . Minister! art thou sensible of the danger of souls? Are thy words as burning coals? Do they fret through the heart of a sinner? Christian! art thou sensible of the danger of thy carnal neighbours? they are burning in their beds, and thou wilt not cry, Fire! fire! they are besotted with lust and error, and wilt thou let them alone? Oh, unkind!”³

The Danger of Hardness

Heb.3:13, 7,15 (Mk.6:52 etc) and Jer.9:1. When did we last weep over (our) people, moved by their need and by God’s mercy? We need to live in mercy, ie not taking mercy for granted (Lam 3:21-23; 2 Cor. 9:15).

Grace and mercy (and peace) go together. Grace is purposive (Gal. 1:15f). Hence 2 Cor. 4:1, “We might say that the greatest gift of mercy we can receive is ministry. If we keep seeing it as the gift of mercy then we keep in mercy and so remain merciful”.⁴ Finally, we must remember that mercy is eschatological, and so live in anticipation of the consummation of mercy (Jude 21, cf. 1 Pet. 1:13).

³ Thomas Manton, *Jude, Banner of Truth*, London, 1962 pg.361f.

⁴ Geoffrey Bingham, *For Pastors and the People*, N.C.T.M. Blackwood, 1989, pg. 230.

MINISTERING WITH GOD'S APPROVAL

Introduction

Pastors are integrally related to a worshipping congregation, a parish, and usually to the unbelieving world. Bringing the unbelieving world into the worshipping congregation is the pastor's work as evangelist. While we may divide the world of worship from that of evangelization, it is the thesis of this study that worship and proclamation are integrally one.

Everyone Worships

(Rom. 1:18–25)

1. The prime exercise of men and women the world over is to worship, because they are worshipping creatures. We either worship the image which we have made into surrogate gods to meet our needs or we worship the Creator God who reveals himself as Redeemer.
2. Our worship is either true, or false, depending upon its object. False worship leads to misery, whereas true worship is eternal life (John 17:3; I John 5:11f.).

Worship and Salvation are Inseparable

1. Israel is liberated from Egypt's gods in order to worship Yahweh (Exod. 3:18; 4:23; 5:1). God gave Israel the worship and in that gift he gave them the means to respond to him (Rom. 9:4; Exod. 25:40; Lev. 17:11; 10:17; Heb. 9:1f.). Thus Israel is saved from false worship and given the true, which is salvation.
2. Israel had the worship and the salvation of God (John 4:22). Paul declares to the idol worshippers the God who has made himself known redemptively in Jesus Christ (Acts 17:18, 23). This salvation means that wrong worship must be repented of because it is under God's judgement (Acts 17:30f.; cf. I Thess. 1:9; Acts 14:15).
3. The cleansing of the conscience saves those whose worship is dead, in order to 'serve (worship) the living God' (Heb. 9:14).

All True Worship is Contained in Jesus Christ

(Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:24)

1. This is the substance of Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan (John 4:19–26).
2. The Tabernacle, and then the Temple, was the sanctuary of God's presence, and the house of prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:17; II Chron. 7:12–16; Mark 11:17). Now Jesus is saying to the woman that all of Israel's worship is contained in him and that this Temple will be inclusive of all the nations (John 2:19–21; cf. Eph. 2:19–22).
3. The Samaritan sees and hears a man worshipping the Father which awakens her deepest emotional needs and draws her into saving worship. (So, also the Athenians hear a Christian who is worshipping God; Acts 17:23.)

Worship and Proclamation

(I Pet. 2:9–10)

1. The Samaritan is a wondering worshipper who proclaims this to her kith and kin (John 4:29f., 39–42).
2. With the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost the disciples praise of God is their confession, worship, and proclamation (Acts 2:11).
3. The worship of Paul and Silas was the proclamation of the Gospel to the prisoners (Acts 16:25ff.).
4. In the midst of the Temple of the living God, the prophetic word evokes worship from outsiders (I Cor. 14:24–25).
5. The worship of God's people is the prescribed, God-given means of the Eucharist, is a proclamation of the Gospel (I Cor. 11:26).
6. Wherever the true worshippers in the Temple move, and meet people at the cutting edge of life, they bring their lives of worship and service to God as a proclamation of the redeeming Gospel of Christ (Rom. 12:1ff.; Acts 1:8).

Study Seven

THE PASTOR AND THE MINISTRY OF HOPE

Knowing the Goal

Jas.5:7-11 says that the goal (Gk.telos) of God is to be known and the believers are to function in the context of that goal. Cf. Eph.5:17, where the “will of the Lord” relates to the eternal purpose of God (Eph.1:3-10 etc). The goal of the Lord includes our final revelation and vindication (Lu.18:1-8; Rom.8:18-21).

The Dynamic of Hope

1 Pet. 1:3-9: We have been born anew to a living hope, which contrasts with a dead hope (Wis.13:10 – “But miserable, with their hopes set on dead things, are the men who give the name ‘gods’ to the works of men’s hands . . .”; Heb.9:27 etc). Ours is a hope which will not perish or fade (Rom.5:5a). Cf 1 Pet.1:11, the “subsequent glory” of Christ; Lu.24:26, 44-46; Mk.8:31-33 etc. and of us, Heb.2:10; Rom.8:17-30)

Hope is powerful 1 Pet.1:13; 3:5; 1 Jn.3:1-3. It is the element which provokes interest (1 Pet.3:15), doubtless because of the strong contrast (Eph.2:12; 1 Thess.4:13; Prov.11:7; 14:12; Heb. 2:15 etc.).

Hope in the Old Testament

It may be possible to say that Adam had a hope. It may seem unrelated to hope as we know it, but Adam did know where he was going in life; he had his mandate (Gen.1:28ff) and could live under it without fear. However, Biblical hope is always related redemption

Throughout the O.T., the promises of God were a rich stimulus, eg. Abraham. There are repeated exhortations to hope in the Lord (Pss. 31:24; 33:22; 42:5,11; 43:5), to hope in his word (Pss. 119:74, 81, 114, 147; 130:5), in his steadfast love/mercy (Ps.33:18; 147:11; Lam.3:21-22) which relates to his salvation (Ps. 119:166 cf. Ps. 51:12) and thus to vindication (Pss. 17:2; 24:5; 26:1; 35:24; 37:6; 43:1; 54:1).

The prophetic hope: God is “the hope of Israel” (Jer.14:8; 17:13; 50:7) who gives hope (Jer.29:11; 31:17; Hos. 2:15). What was not immediately obvious was the way Israel’s hope was fulfilled in one person (2 Cor. 1:20; cf. Lu. 2:25, 38; 24:44-45).

The Cross and Hope

Rom. 4:13 - 5:5. The justifying faith of Abraham was faith in the promise of God, ie. his faith gave him a strong hope. That is the pattern for our faith. The Cross is both present reality and powerful promise ((cf. 1 Pet. 1:3 “through the resurrection”). It is only when we are gripped by the Cross and its justifying work that we are thrust into a rich hope (Rom.5:2, 5; 8:18). Each proclamation of the Cross is also a powerful promise (1 Cor. 11:26; Phil. 1:6)

Living in Hope

2 Thess.2:16-17. Anticipation of redemption of the body/resurrection (Rom.8:17-30; Acts 24:15; 26:6; cf. 28:20; based on Christ's resurrection 1 Pet. 1:3; Acts 2;26-27; Rom. 6:4-5; Phil. 3:10-14). The hope of righteousness (justification Gal. 5:5), salvation (1 Thess 5:8; Rom.13:11), eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7), glory (Rom.5:1-2; 8:18-25, 28-30; Col. 2:27; cf. Eph. 1:17f; 1 Jn. 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 2:6-10; Col. 3:1-4) and our inheritance (Col. 1:5; Eph. 1:18 cf. 1:13-14; Col. 1:12; 1 Cor. 1:7-9; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5).

THE LEADER OF WORSHIP

Worship is Offered and Led in Christ's Name

(John 20:30–31; I Cor. 1:2; Matt. 18:20; Heb. 13:15; I Tim. 2:1–7)

1. Worth-ship, service and thanksgiving is offered to God in Jesus' name, not in our name, and the worship is led under Christ's headship, not our mediation.
2. Confusion may exist amongst worshippers who consider the acts of worship the things which they do, and leadership in worship may become our performance.

Jesus Christ is the True Worshipper

(Gal. 4:4; Luke 2:49f.; John 5:19f.; 17:1–5; Heb. 10:7; 5:7f.)

Jesus was the man of worship in his obedience to the Father, in his keeping of the law, in his dependancy upon the Spirit, as the Man of prayer and by the offering of himself. As the true man Christ has offered the only true worship man has given, and we shall see that it is only in his Name, and through him, that we can now worship.

Confessing Jesus as Our High Priest

(Heb. 3:1; 4:14)

1. This acknowledgement is as momentous as 'Jesus is Lord'.
2. It is the confession of the Son's incarnation wherein God joined himself to our humanity, thus fully representing God to us (Matt. 1:23; John 1:14; Phil. 2:5–11; Heb. 2:10–18; 4:4–16).
3. In solidarity with us and as our Head, Jesus worships in our name and as our representative (Matt. 3:13–17; Rom. 5:19; Col. 2:11; II Cor. 5:21).
4. As our High Priest, Jesus offers himself for our sins, again in our name and on our behalf, and as that offering puts himself in the place of sinners (Mark 10:45; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 7:27; 9:11–14, 26; 10:10).
5. Jesus is the mediator who gives us access into the presence of God (Rom. 5:1ff.; Heb. 6:19; 7:27; 9:12, 24; 10:19ff.)
6. To confess Jesus as High Priest acknowledges his present mediatorial ministry on our behalf (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 5:9f.; 7:24f.

We Participate in Christ's Worship

(Heb. 8:1–2)

1. Hebrews 8:1-2 contrasts the Leitourgia of Jesus with that of men, and states that Jesus is the Leader of worship. This alone is the worship which is acceptable to God. Christ is the Head of the Church which is his Body, and he has given gifts of service to the Church (Eph. 4:11ff.; I Cor. 12:12f.).
2. It is not as if we were purged from our sins through Christ and then left to spend the remainder of our lives making ourselves acceptable.

3. Through the Spirit we participate in Christ's ongoing service and ministry given on our behalf (I Cor. 10:16f.).
4. The God of grace has redeemed us sinners, given us the saving true worship, and provided us with the means of responding to him. In Christ both the offerer and the offering are one.
5. Our priestly ministry is always in Christ's continuing priesthood and should not overshadow it, or displace it (I Pet. 2:9–10). What Christ does on our behalf is effected as our very own.
6. As leaders of corporate worship we are to help the congregation say 'Amen' to the ongoing service of Christ on our behalf, e.g. The *Sasum corda*. This then will be heavenly worship (Heb. 12:22ff.).