

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost - Year C

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

First Sunday of preaching series on worship

Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalms 66:1-9

Galatians 6:7-16

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

07/07/2019

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke:

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever

you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’”

¹⁶“Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.” ¹⁷The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” ¹⁸He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. ¹⁹See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

The Gospel of our Lord.

Prayer

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Worship, An Introduction

Good morning! What is the first thing you remember about worship? Seriously, take a minute and think about it. Close your eyes if you need too, let your mind take you back to that moment... maybe it’s just a flash, the smell of incense or a beeswax candle, or was it a sound? The sound of that lovely singer who sat near you and made you first enjoy singing a hymn. Heck, maybe it was the sound of someone who COULDN’T sing! Or was it taste? The way that fresh bread tasted, or the texture of those strange wafers. Maybe it was Mogen David or Manischewitz wine?

It’s tough to specifically name what was the first thing I remember. I have memories of church, some of Sunday school and coffee hour, but in terms of worship a

few jump out. The first scripture story I remember hearing was God calling out to Samuel in the temple. The first hymn that I recognized was *A Mighty Fortress*. But the memory that sticks out the most isn't so much a single incident, but that time EVERY week when the pastor stood up by that table and said some words and we had some responses and we STOOD FOREVER AND EVER!

I doubt that I'm the first, or last, person to be annoyed by the standing. It turns out that several of you had a few questions about all this standing and sitting too. Of the six forms I got back last week, only two had questions, and both of those questions were about standing and sitting. So, here's the short answer. We stand out of respect and reverence when we are praying, listening to the Gospel, or when we are singing. The other option is to kneel or to lay prostrate, which is what has been done throughout most of history. To be honest, we sit because it gives us a break. If you were to go to an Orthodox worship service you would notice one interesting thing... most of the worship spaces have NO seating. Sitting during worship is a relatively recent addition. Jews that gathered in the temple in Jerusalem would have stood the whole time, and for the early part of the Christian church the laity would have stood also.

It is important to remember what worship is, a time to gather together to praise and glorify the Triune God who has created all things. Merriam-Webster defines "worship" as "*to honor or show reverence for a divine being or supernatural power.*" And as "*a form of religious practice with its creed and ritual.*"¹ James F. White talks about the English word worship by noting that it is derived from an old English word

¹<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worship>

that translated literally would mean “worthy” ship. It’s the act of “*attributing worth, or respect, to someone.*”²

A word that I think would be more helpful for us is one that you may have heard but maybe didn’t understand: liturgy. In my seminary worship class Dr. Clayton Schmit said of the word that “*the term refers to any established form of worship. While some churches (such as Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Eastern Orthodox) have formal traditional liturgies, all churches have preferred forms of worship that are rightly called liturgies... it implies the corporate work of all people praising God in worship.*”³ The word liturgy comes from the Greek word *leitourgia*, and referred to a “public work performed for the benefit of the city or state. Its principle was the same as the one for paying taxes, but it could involve donated services as well as taxes.”⁴

And it’s this idea that we need to grab and remember. Liturgy, worship, is literally the work of a group of people, all of us, gathered together as a body. It is a work we all share together, in recognition of a God who has given us everything. That’s why it’s so important that as many people as possible take part in the different roles of worship. It is most definitely NOT a solo performance by the pastor or worship leader. We need all of us to make this happen, and the more people who participate, the more rich will the experience be!

² White, James F. *Introduction to Christian Worship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000. p. 27.

³ Schmit, Clayton. Spring, 2013. *Introduction to Christian Worship*, Course Reader. Glossary.

⁴ White, James F. *Introduction to Christian worship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000. p. 26.

So, if worship is the work of a group of people, what kind of work should we be doing? I'm glad you asked! If everyone could please take out one of the red hymnals in front of them. Take the "*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*" book, more commonly called the "ELW," and turn to page 92 and 93. PAGES, not hymn numbers, this will be towards the beginning of the book. If worship is the overall thing that we do, it could be most easily broken up into the four sections you have before you: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. Each part is vital to the whole, and together they form the most basic pattern of what worship, or our liturgy, looks like. The words, the prayers, and the hymns might change, but our pattern will still look like this come Sunday morning. (or whenever you worship.)

We begin worship by literally "gathering" together. "*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*"⁵ The two key parts of this section of worship are the greeting, which can be found on page 2 of your bulletin, and the prayer of the day. Another part of worship that most would consider critical is the gathering hymn. Traditionally, the purpose of the gathering hymn is to literally gather us together, to get us ready for worship. This is also where we have the Kyrie and the Cantic of Praise. The Kyrie, according to Dr. Schmit, is "*a latin term (that) refers to a prayer that is part of the ordinary of the mass... traditionally, it is sung three times.*"⁶ And it has the words Lord, have mercy in it. A Cantic of Praise is a piece of scripture that is set to music.

You'll notice that confession and forgiveness are not in bold on page 92 of the ELW. We have come to expect that worship begins with the corporate confession and

⁵ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006. p. 92.

⁶ Schmit, Clayton. Spring, 2013. *Introduction to Christian Worship*, Course Reader. Glossary.

forgiveness of sin, but these are traditionally things that would take place BEFORE worship begins.

After we gather together, we listen to God's Word, where "*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*"⁷ This is the focus of our second section. You'll notice that there is a lot of bold in this section, and it becomes a major section of our worship. We listen to a reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament, we sing or read a psalm (unless your a pastor like me who takes them out for the summer worship service), we listen to a letter from the Second, or New Testament, and then we hear the Gospel. The public reading of scripture is a wonderful chance for the whole group to participate, each of us taking turns reading. After we read the Gospel, it's time for everyone's favorite part of worship! The sermon! Sending young children and old men to sleep for 2,000 years and counting!

People learn in different ways, and so we read the Gospel, then the pastor (usually) preaches about that lesson to help us understand, and then we sing the hymn of the day which is another chance to focus the lesson of the Gospel in the form of music. Interestingly, the ELW argues that the creed is not a critical part of worship, but I would disagree. From there we offer up prayers for the world and come together for the sharing of the peace.

From here we move to the third section of worship, the Meal. It is here that "*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*"⁸ We have an offering, which is firstly the act of God's offering of bread and wine that becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We

⁷ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006. p. 92.

⁸ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006. p. 93.

collect gifts for the ministry of the church, and just like you do for any meal at your house, we set the table! From there we move to the Great Thanksgiving, and I'm going to devote an entire sermon later this month to the meal, so we'll skip some of this. One of the interesting things to notice about this prayer is that it is fundamentally an awkward event. We begin by praying to God, but when we get to the Words of Institution we shift to sharing a story, but then we go back to praying to God again. Following this we say together the Lord's Prayer and get ready to eat!

We conclude worship with our final section, the Sending. Where "*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*"⁹ We conclude worship with God's blessing, and a song. Most of the time the sending song becomes the final reminder of our mission to spread the good news in the world. It's the last hurrah before we leave. The service concludes with the dismissal, a reminder of whom we owe everything, we go in peace and serve the Lord.

THIS is the pattern we have for worship. May we all continue to find joy and purpose in God's wonderful and good work here in this world. Amen.

⁹ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006. p. 93.