

Sunday School – March 11, 2018 **Reformed Worship is Historical**

We did not make up our liturgy – it is rooted in church history, which is rooted in the Bible.

We are looking at *Reformed liturgy in Strasbourg (Bucer) and Geneva (Calvin)*.

The Lord's Supper:

In the Roman Mass:

Christ would be sacrificed again; the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Christ.

The Roman church has a “tabernacle” in the sanctuary – recall that the tabernacle was the dwelling place of God in the Old Testament as the Hebrews wandered from the Exodus to the conquest of the promised land.

The left-over elements – being the literal body and blood of Christ – were placed in the “tabernacle” of the sanctuary by the priest after the Mass. Since they were the literal body and blood, they could not be thrown away.

In the Roman Mass, everything was created around the mystery of the Mass – the re-sacrifice of Christ – a medieval moment of magic.

The Reformation focused on undoing this.

Like the churches of the Reformation, we do the Apostle's Creed, a prayer of consecration, words of institution from I Corinthians fencing the table, and words of instruction.

Calvin wanted communion weekly, but the majority of Reformers did it rarely, in order to separate it from the superstition of the Mass.

The rarity of communion was an over-reaction to centuries of superstition in the Roman church.

Fencing / guarding the table shows that communion is meant for Christians only, not for unbelievers.

The Reformed churches dismissed non-believers, whereas the Roman church presumed that everyone was a believer.

Regarding instructions for communion: We are required by I Corinthians to examine our conscience; the believer should be in the right state of mind to participate in communion.

Communion is not a mere memorial: Calvin emphasized that Christ is actually present *spiritually*, not physically.

Communion is for believers only, who have confessed their sins and surrender all of their life to Christ as Lord.

The “Reformed” Sursum Corda

This is the “lifting up” of one's heart

Calvin introduced it

We look to the elements, but we lift our eyes to the *reality* that they represent

Unlike the Roman church:

We do not “genuflect” or worship the elements

We do not have a “chin plate” to catch crumbs; the Roman church is very concerned about crumbs – pieces of Christ’s literal body – falling to the floor and being stepped upon.

Calvin’s idea was to lift our hearts to the reality of Jesus – not the mere representative elements.

(We do not have a Sursum Corda in our worship at Christ Presbyterian Church).

Regarding Intinction:

Intinction – which we DO NOT practice – is the dipping of the bread into the wine.

In medieval practice, there was only one communion cup, and eventually, only the priest could drink from it.

The people were only allowed to dip their bread into the wine cup.

This is unfortunately becoming a practice in some PCA churches.

The Reformers *rejected* the practice of intinction. Why?

- (1) Jesus clearly gave two elements – “take, eat” and “this is the blood of my covenant, drink;” intinction clearly confuses this
- (2) In Leviticus, all of the sacrifices point forward to Jesus. Jesus fulfills the OT ceremonial law; every detail of the ceremonial law is pointed forward to Jesus.

In the sacrifice, the blood was separated from the body. The blood is the life – it must be removed from the body.

- (3) In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus’ sacrifice is represented; the body and blood are two elements that must be separated to qualify it as the ultimate sacrifice.
- (4) Intinction unites the elements, removing the symbolism of the sacrifice.

The Second Great Awakening pushed aside historic liturgy.

In the 1960s and following, the drive toward entertainment in all areas of life led to entertainment-driven worship, subjective-feeling-based worship.

Today, more Christians are aware of, and see, the shallowness of contemporary evangelical worship; they are looking for something deeper. However, since they haven’t been taught historic Reformed liturgy, they go astray.

Interestingly, many “millennials” today have a desire for “liturgy.” It is up to us to ensure they are educated about historic, Reformed, Scripture-based liturgy.

Our worship at Christ Presbyterian Church is the worship of the ages – from ancient liturgy to Bucer’s Strasbourg liturgy and Calvin’s Geneva liturgy.