

Sunday School, April 8, 2018 **Reformed Worship is Covenantal**

Review:

We have seen that

Reformed worship is Biblical: Scripture prescribes what we are to do

Reformed worship is Historical: it is rooted in Scripture, so it follows through history the patterns rooted in the church fathers

Reformed worship is Covenantal

“Covenant” is a sovereign bond in blood

The Sovereign enters into a relationship with a vassal

God enters into a relationship with us; there are conditions, obligations, consequences

Worship is shaped by the Covenant

It is a dialogue: God speaks, and we respond

We saw this in Exodus 24

God redeemed His people from bondage in Egypt

In ch 19-23 He gave the Book of the Covenant, essentially saying “I have redeemed you, you are Mine, this is how you are to live”

In ch 24, the people respond with a covenant renewal, done through a mediator (Moses)

Ex 24 review:

God takes the initiative

Sin is an obstacle for people to respond to the Holy God, so there must be a sacrifice in order to draw near to God

Blood was *sprinkled* on the people (Grk word *baptizo*)

Having been consecrated, the people are presented with the terms of the covenant

The people say they will keep it

There is blessing

Moses, Aaron the High Priest, his two sons, and 70 Elders (as representatives of the people) have a fellowship meal with God on the mountain; the fellowship meal is a sign that there is no hostility; the enmity between God and man has been removed.

They were in the presence of God, and God did not strike them down because of the sacrifice

Our service is similar:

God calls

We are consecrated

The Word is read and preached

We renew our commitment to the covenant

We have a fellowship meal (communion)

How else does covenant shape our worship?

Worship is a dialogue, God speaks and we respond.

God is not here tangibly, but He uses a mediator (the minister)

The role of the minister:

Stands in God's place – speaks for God

Note: the robe covers the man, enabling the people to focus on the words from God

The people respond

Who is the audience in our worship?

Primary: GOD

Secondary: Us

Tertiary: The world

God has to be the primary audience because we are in dialogue with Him.

If God isn't the primary audience, then it isn't worship!

This affects everything that we do.

Secondary – us.

We speak a common language and have certain cultural affinities. Worship has to be intelligible in our language, it has to engage the people, we have to be involved.

But it is always subservient to God as primary.

Third – the world.

The world watches

If they come into the service, they need to understand what is going on (e.g. the weekly bulletin guides worship)

What happens if we get things out of order?

If "US" is primary

The focus isn't on God

Who are we worshipping? Ourselves!

A "testimony" must be properly balanced: focus on God, on what Jesus has done.

Ex: many "bible churches" have a time of "praise" (they sing), followed by a time of "teaching"

There is a distinction between "teaching" and "preaching" – preaching is doxological, it is a word from God that glorifies God, not just teaches about God etc.

Preaching is teaching with a purpose of applying the gospel so that YOU change.

If "the World" is primary

Ex: "seeker sensitive" churches geared toward the outside world

Worship *should* feel alien because you have stepped out of this world, and you enter into the Heavenly realm; it's other-worldly.

If we do it properly, the world *will* see the glory of God. Worship should have a holy "other-ness" to it, and it should be strongly attractive.

What is the motivation of our worship?

To glorify God

God is the superior; He entered into covenant with us, and that covenant gets Him nothing, and in fact cost Him Jesus.

Gratitude is our response.

A desire to be with God, to fellowship with Him.