

The Broadmoor Bulletin

A Monthly Publication for the Christians at Broadmoor

June 2009

The Lord's Supper: Worshipful Environment

The worshipful environment to which those who serve at the Lord's Table can contribute is not without significance in encouraging a reverential attitude on the part of the communicants.

Those who lead the congregation in the giving of thanks for the bread and fruit of the vine have a weighty responsibility to pray so that they will help lead those who are present to the throne of God's grace with a profound sense of the sanctity and seriousness of the occasion. This can be done only as they speak audibly and clearly, and avoid vain repetitions and the trite, hackneyed, outworn words and expressions that are so characteristic of prayers which are merely parrot-like repetitions of prayers that have been used over and over again by others, which lack freshness, originality, and naturalness.

The mode of dress of those who serve at the Lord's Table also has significance in contributing to a reverential, worshipful environment. In the mores of our culture, special occasions demand special attire. For important occasions such as weddings, funerals, etc., the mode of dress for men includes coat and tie. But what about the communion service, in memory of the death of the Savior? There is something sadly lacking in the attitude of those who wait on the Lord's Table dressed in slovenly, untidy attire, like they were going to some kind of sporting match, who would not think of going to a wedding or a funeral service dressed in anything but what is considered appropriate for such important occasions.

In the building of a certain congregation where some who serve at the Lord's Table are often attired without coats, with unpressed trousers and open-necked, multicolored sport shirts, this writer recently attend a funeral service and noticed that every pallbearer was neatly dressed, including coat and tie (for that matter, every man present, without exception, was also so dressed). It was a serious, significant occasion, and those who participated treated it as such, thus contributing to the solemnity of the occasion.

In a sense, those who wait at the Lord's Table are pallbearers, carrying the emblems which represent the body and blood of the crucified Savior to the congregation. Should they not treat the service they render here with even more respect and seriousness than carrying the body of a dead human being, thus to contribute to a more reverential, worshipful environment for such a solemn, significant occasion? Indeed, when the entire congregation is assembled around the Lord's Table, those present are, in a sense, attending a funeral service, in memory of the crucified Savior. If their attitude is correct and they treat this occasion as being of very special significance, they will certainly show it in their manner of dress and in whatever else is pertinent to the occasion.

Our demeanor in the place of worship prior to services, as well as during services, is revealing concerning our attitudes toward the Lord's Supper and toward a worshipful, reverential environment. The boisterous noise that habitually prevails in some congregations before services is anything but expressive of

a desire to create a worshipful environment and to partake of the Lord's Supper in the right manner. How many funeral services have you attended that were preceded by such boisterousness? Every Christian who attends services should be granted the right by his fellow Christians to have an atmosphere of quietude in which he can reverently meditate in preparation for the worship of God in partaking of the Lord's Supper. Are you reverent in your preparation for services and the partaking of the Lord's Supper, thus contributing to an atmosphere that will help others to be reverent in their preparation for services and the partaking of the Lord's Supper?

James M. Tolle

What Do You Think of God?

Have you heard what some are saying about God? Because evil exists in the world, they believe He is either:

1. not good (or else, He would do something), or
2. not all powerful (or else, He would do something).

If God is cruel, unjust, indifferent, or unloving, then it makes no sense to serve Him. *But, before embracing a foolish conclusion, we must hear the other side.* At the very least, let's consider what is at stake:

1. If we give up on God, what can replace Him? G. K. Chesterton said, "It is often supposed that when people stop believing in God, they believe in nothing. Alas, it is worse than that. When they stop believing in God, they believe in anything." Gullible people become sitting ducks for every huckster.

We have heard of people who reject God and then turn to New Age nonsense that is totally devoid of evidence to support its claims. Others turn to paranormal frauds in an attempt to communicate with the dead. Still others seek comfort in drugs or alcohol and often end up losing everything.

2. If we give up on God, there are no rules. Anything goes! Do you really want to live in a world where there are no absolutes and everything is relative? Our society has already become so open-minded that its brains have fallen out. It defends terrorists and mass murderers. Why not? If there is no God, what is wrong with these things? Without God, there is no standard of right and wrong. Animals kill each other for food. If humans are animals, why shouldn't they do the same? Unbelief does not solve the problem of evil; it discards the objective standard that condemns it.

3. In view of what God has done for us, how could anyone possibly accuse Him of evil or indifference? He loved the world so much that He gave His only Son to die on the cross to save us from our sins (John 3:16). We cannot comprehend such love. We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). We don't know all the answers about evil in the world, but we can trust God because the answers He *has* given cannot be doubted.

Rick Duggin

SLAVERY OR LOVE?

A clergyman of a major denomination once told me, "You're a slave to the Bible; you don't love it. That's not right." Evidently, his idea of love is something that is inconsistent with submission and obedience. That idea is in stark contrast with Jesus' words, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Notice that Jesus connects love with obedience. Moreover, He does **not** say, "some of My commandments," or, "these particular commandments of Mine," but simply, "keep My commandments." Evidently, His intent is that we keep **all** of His commandments. That is, we are to submit to Him completely. Sounds kind of like a slave, doesn't it?

In fact, the apostle Paul uses that very expression to illustrate the degree to which Christians are to submit to God:

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:15-23).

So then, if we choose to continue in sin, we are involuntary slaves of sin, and we earn death. On the other hand, if we voluntarily present ourselves to God as His slaves, then He will cleanse us from our sins and grant us eternal life. What will you choose?

There may be some who are now thinking, "It says be slaves to God, not to the Bible." True enough. But if I am going to be God's slave, I need to do what He wants me to do. As the Lord Himself put it, I must *keep His commandments*. What are His commandments? Where are they recorded? According to Paul:

If anyone thinks Himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37).

So Jesus' commandments are recorded in scripture:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

If the scripture contains the *commandments of the Lord*, and is indeed sufficient to equip me *for every good work*, that tells me some things. First, I need to submit to what it says. Second, it tells me that everything I need to know to please God is in the Bible; I do not need to look for any instructions other than those contained therein.

The Bible, then, is God's word. To say that I am a slave to God, but not to the Bible, is to contradict myself. Jesus Himself calls upon us to express our love to Him by obeying Him, and He saw to it that His commandments were committed to writing. Unless

I think myself to be smarter than He is, I will willingly submit myself wholeheartedly to His written word.

Yes, I do love the Bible, and for that very reason I am a slave to it.

Jim Robson

Changes in Worship

The Bible is the Word of God. Careful reading of it reveals how we can please our Lord in all things - especially worship. This is precisely the problem among many professed disciples. They don't "carefully" examine the scriptures. As a result, the focus of their worship, the priority of Jesus' authority, and those who are to take the lead in worship are entirely missed. Let us consider God's will concerning each of these three areas.

The Lord is at the heart of our worship. A youthful Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself spiritually (**Dan. 1:8**). Jesus taught the Samaritan woman that God desires that our spirits commune with His (**John 4:23-24**). Paul warned that to eat the Lord's Supper without properly reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice would bring spiritual death (**1 Cor. 11:27-30**). In spite of these obvious truths, many change the focus of worship from the Lord to intellectualism or to entertaining others. We should give our best as we honor God. Yet, when we choose speakers based on their educational degrees or their turn of a joke, we are emphasizing the wrong things. When "worship" becomes "jazzed up" choruses, clapping or waving of hands, and appeals to emotions over God's Word, we have missed the focal point of "true worship." The Lord wants us to center our hearts on knowing and keeping His word so that "your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (**1 Cor. 2:5**).

Why do we worship the Lord in the first place? Fundamentally, we are made by God for Him (**Eccl. 12:13-14**). All of His commands are for our spiritual benefit (**Deut.10:13**). In every age God's people are expected to follow His directives. Adam and Eve ate of the "forbidden" fruit and were driven out of the paradise garden (**Gen. 3:22-24**). Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, violated the Lord's sacrificial system and were instantly killed by fire (**Lev. 10:1-2**). Timothy was warned about coming apostates who would give heed "to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." What are these horrendous ideas that would take them away from Jesus? They are the false concepts that it is wrong to marry and sinful to eat certain foods (**1 Tim. 4:1-3**). These regulations are man-made and not from God. Jesus said some would claim kinship to Him while not doing His will. One cannot properly honor a Lord they will not obey.

Worship in local congregations is to have a certain order. Obviously, Jesus is the head over His church (**Eph. 1:22-23**). He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors to help His people mature spiritually (**Eph. 4:11-12**). Men are to lead in preaching and other congregational leadership roles (**1 Cor. 14:33-34**). When it comes to acceptable worship who would know better than God Himself? Let us be satisfied with His ways and not ours.

David Hartsell