



ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bible Study

OCTOBER

2011

MORNING & EVENING SERMONS

A.C.T.S.

As part of our worship emphasis month, we take a short break in the sermon series on Timothy and Titus. We will follow the acronym of ACTS, representing the four major aspects of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

The first in this series begins by leading us into a biblical understanding of true worship which is, first and foremost, to acknowledge God as the subject of our worship. In the subsequent four weeks we will look at penitence and the forgiveness of our gracious God (Psalm 51). We will consider how gratitude and thanksgiving is central to our worship (Col 1:3-14). We will see how our whole lives should be an act of worship (Rom 12:1-12) and finally glorify in the justification that comes to us freely and reforms our lives through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (Rom 3:19-28, 2 Tim 3:10-17).

SERMON DATE **2 OCT 2011**

WORTHY OF WORSHIP

EXODUS 33:12-23; 34:5-7

SERMON DATE **9 OCT 2011**

CREATED FOR WORSHIP

PSALM 51

SERMON DATE **16 OCT 2011**

WORSHIP: OLD & NEW

COLOSSIANS 1:3-14

SERMON DATE **23 OCT 2011**

UNCEASING WORSHIP

ROMANS 12:1-21

SERMON DATE **30 OCT 2011**

REFORMED & REFORMING WORSHIP

ROM 3:19-28; 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

GENERAL SURVEY

Topic:

Key Verse:

Main Person/s:

Key Ideas and Questions:

INTRODUCTION

As part of worship month, we take a short break in the sermon series on Timothy and Titus. We will follow the acronym of ACTS, representing the four major aspects of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication for this month. The first in this series begins by leading us into a biblical understanding of true worship which first and foremost is to acknowledge God as the subject of our worship. When we are confronted with God, the holy God is simply too holy for us to 'see'. The first act of worship requires us to bow down and adore and acknowledge God's holiness and sanctity. On our own, we are totally unworthy even to come into God's presence. Our sinfulness prevents us from approaching God. It is God who takes the initiative to come to us and, by the blood of the Lamb, makes us worthy to worship God .

Background

In Exodus 32, we see that Israel had sinned against God by making a golden calf and worshipped it when Moses was away for 40 days in God's presence. Their sin of impatience to wait for Moses' return reveals their lack of true faith. Impatience and unbelief led to idolatry, and idolatry led to immorality (Rom 1:18-32) (Wiersbe, 1993, p.131). Moses had to plead with God for his mercy over their sins of idolatry and rebelliousness. In chapter 33, we see that God had rejected Israel, calling them a 'stiff-necked' people (v.3). He also refused to go with them lest he might destroy them in his righteous anger (32:9,10).

We also see how Moses gradually developed a very intimate relationship with God. He was initially resistant to being God's choice in leading the Israelites out of their slavery (4:10), but over time became one with whom God spoke to face-to-face as a friend (v.11). Like all relationships, we need to spend time with God to build a strong relationship. Let us learn from Moses what it means to be worthy of and in God's fellowship, to worship God.

Exodus 33:12-17: Seeking God's Friendship & Presence

1. Observe how boldly Moses spoke with God on the Israelites' behalf, seeking God's presence to go with them.
 - a. Make a list of what Moses said in these verses (vv.12-16).

 - b. What was Moses asking God to do for them (v.15)? How did God respond to his request (v.17)?

 - c. What could you learn from Moses' request concerning his walk with God? Would you dare to have such a bold and personal relationship with God? Consider this: Every one of us is as close to God as he has chosen to be (J. Oswald Sanders). How much are you prepared to be disciplined as you seek God's help and presence/fellowship in this aspect?

 - d. In what way are we so much more fortunate than Moses? What happened to change the relationship between humanity and God? How does this affect our personal relationship with God (John 3:16)?

 - e. For reflection: What you think would happen if Moses had chosen not to plead on the Israelites' behalf and instead accepted God's proposition to make Moses into a great nation (32:10)? What lessons can we learn from their sin which took from them God's presence?

Exodus 33:18-23: Seeking God's glory

2. Moses was not content just with God's promise of His presence with them. He wants to seek God's glory. Seeking God's presence is no small matter, 'for no one may see me (God) and live' (.v20).
 - a. How does God respond to his request (v.14)?
 - b. What does 'my goodness' (v.19) mean? Hence what does seeking God's glory mean? How much of God's goodness have you personally experienced and believe that you understand?
 - c. 'Moses only reflected God's glory and had to wear a veil (34:33-35) so that people could not see the glory disappear, but God's people today radiate God's glory from within as they see Jesus Christ in the Word (the mirror) and become more like Him (2 Cor. 3:12-18)' (Wiersbe, 1993, p134).

How is your life being transformed into God's likeness? How should you worship God (Rom. 12:1-2)? What do you understand by Wiersbe's explanation when God's people 'see Jesus Christ in the word'? What is the relationship of 'Christ in the word' with our becoming 'more like Him'?

Exodus 34:5-7: Seeking God's grace

- 3 a. List down the attributes of God mentioned here. What does each attribute of God mean to you? What can you learn from God's attributes in your desire to be transformed to be like Jesus Christ (God's likeness)?
- b. In 34:7, we see that the sins of our fathers have repercussions on future generations. This doesn't mean that we are condemned for their sins, but we may suffer because of those sins (Ezek 18:1-4). Would this deter you from sinning? In your weakness would you seek God's help and mercy?
- c. In summary, what is to live a life worthy in worship of God? Do you desire it? How can you do it?

DISCIPLESHP POINTERS

1. God reveals His presence 'in the secret place of the Most High'(Ps 91). Meditate upon this psalm. What comfort, assurance and insights can you take away from this psalm? – Indeed blessed is he whose 'delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.' (Ps 1:2)
2. 'God's ultimate goal is not merely to make us like Jesus in attitude and behaviour. The Spirit is making us like Jesus so we can have a love relationship with the Father - a relationship like the one Jesus has.' (McQuilkin 1993, p13) We can learn from the Israelites' sins which almost caused them to lose God's presence. Their unbelief is appalling to God.

Trust is central to our Christian experience. Trusting comes before yielding. We won't surrender to God until we trust Him. But trust follows commitment as well. Sometimes 'simply trusting' turns out to be not so simple! Since faith is a combination of yielding and trusting, we'll also consider what we can do to increase our faith. Trust, whether in human beings or in God, must grow.

Of course we can't trust someone we do not know. Faith implies knowledge. To have faith you have to know the Holy Spirit. You must know how He acts, whether or not He is dependable, and how to connect with Him. Ignorance can keep you disconnected. Thus the three elements of knowing, yielding and trusting go together. They build upon each other. Stated negatively, three roots can result in failure in the Christian life: ignorance, unbelief, and unyieldingness.' (McQuilkin, 1999, p17)

GROUP/FAMILY MOMENT

Share with your group or family at least one practical thing you can do in your daily life to glorify God (church-based activities not included!)

Reference:

Wiersbe, W., Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament, 1993 by Victor Books/SP Publications, 1993, p131, p134
McQuilkin, R., Life in The Spirit, LifeWay Press, 1999, p13, p17

GENERAL SURVEY

Topic:

Key Verse:

Main Person/s:

Key Ideas and Questions:

INTRODUCTION

This is probably the best known of the 'Penitential Psalms'. David composed this after Nathan the prophet had exposed David's adultery with Bathsheba and his conspiracy to have her husband, Uriah, killed so as to have her entirely to himself. This psalm is both personal and instructional but, as in all psalms, it is meant for worship. Hence, this psalm helps worshippers to appeal to God's gracious character in their cries for forgiveness. It requires, however, a truly penitent heart and humble spirit.

1. The Title

- i. Read 2 Sam 11. How would you describe David's behaviour (particularly v.15 and v.27)?
- ii. What happened to bring David to the point of penitence? (2 Sam 12:1-7)
- iii. Who is speaking through Nathan?
- iv. Have there been occasions in your life when someone has said something to make you aware of your guilt? Have you ever felt God speaking to you and accusing you of wrong-doing?

2. Appeal (vv.1,2)

- i. With what words does David begin his appeal for forgiveness? And to what quality of God does David make his appeal?
- ii. What does David ask God to do? (v2)
- iii. In the light of what the New Testament now tells us about Jesus Christ, what do we now understand through Col. 2:13-14 and Heb. 9:14 as to how sin can be 'blotted out'?

3. Confession (vv.3-5)

- i. Against whom has David sinned? Does this mean he did no wrong to Uriah? Discuss.
- ii. How does David receive God's verdict? (v.4)
- iii. What is David saying about sin? Is there any way of avoiding human sinfulness? (v.5)
- iv. Ultimately none of us can avoid sin. What comfort do we as Christians gain from the New Testament concerning our sinfulness? (1 John 2:1-2)

4. Restoration (vv.6-9)

- i. What is the significance of the use of the herb hyssop? (see Lev. 14:4ff, Num. 19:16-19).

- ii. What is the meaning of the metaphor 'whiter than snow'? (Isa. 1:18, Rev. 7:14)

- iii. Why can David now rejoice? (v.8)

5. Inward Renewal (vv.10-13)

- i. David now feels ready to pray. Three times David mentions the Spirit in these four verses. How important is the God the Holy Spirit in this renewal of David's relationship with God?

- ii. There is a close connection between a joyous faith and an infectious one. In experiencing restoration what does David say he will now do? (v.13)

6. David is now ready for humble worship (vv.15-17)

- i. v.15 is used by many liturgical churches at the beginning of worship. What has vv.15-17 taught you is necessary before God will accept our request that he 'open my lips'?

- ii. But worship is still meaningless and offensive to God without certain very specific sacrifices. What are they? (v.17)

- iii. What does it mean to have a 'broken spirit - a broken and contrite heart'? Discuss.

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Psalm 51 takes us right through the 'process' of (i) remembering our sinful actions, (ii) appealing to God's mercy, (iii) confessing our sins, (iv) accepting God's forgiveness and (v) asking God to cleanse our hearts and enable his Spirit to work in us. Only after each of these stages has been completed are we ready for God to open our lips in praise.

As believers in Jesus Christ we have a wonderful consolation as we know that 'if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins'. (1 John 2:1-2)

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Gratitude ought to be expressed appropriately. Gratitude to God for what God has done or given ought also to be expressed with faith, hope and love. The emphasis in this passage requires worshippers to express gratitude to God because we know who the God and Lord of our lives is. Gratitude is first and foremost an expression of our relationship more than just being beneficiaries of blessings from the Almighty. In our thanksgiving, let us truly learn to worship God because we know who we are in relationship to the King of kings.

1. We always thank God...

At the start of his letter, Paul gives thanks to God for the Colossian Christians. Why? List the key points. If Paul were writing about you do you think he would say these things? (vv.3-8)

2. We have not stopped praying...

Paul continues by telling the Colossians of his prayer for them. He prays that God will fill them with all spiritual knowledge in order that

a. They may live a life that is ____ (v.10), which results in ____;

b. They may receive God's power so that ____ (v.11);

c. They may joyfully give thanks because_____(vv.12-14).

3. Worship in thanksgiving

We are encouraged to worship with joy and gratitude. The following passages give some of the situations in which we should worship with thanksgiving: What do these passages tell us about when we should offer thanksgiving?

1 Thess. 5: 16-18

Col. 1: 24

1 Tim. 2: 1-2

1 Peter 4: 12- 13

Rom. 12: 15

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

In a traditional Christian marriage the couple vow: 'I take thee, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish...' We expect marriage to survive through good and bad times. Yet some of us do not expect this when it comes to God.

We are grateful to God only when things go well. We only thank God for the good things not for the bad things that happen to us.

This is not the right attitude. Like marriage vows, accepting Jesus and our Lord and Saviour applies in all situations – 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health'. The Apostle Paul understood this; He rejoiced in his sufferings when his sufferings were because of the gospel (Col 1: 24; Rom 5: 3).

Let us learn to express gratitude to God in all circumstances. Let us praise him for what he has done in the past. Let us praise him for what he is doing today. Let us praise him for the future he has for each one of us. There is much we can praise God for, if only we would look!

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

Tell your family or group about something in your life that has not worked out as you had hoped. Are you still able to be grateful to God despite problems or disappointments?

Reflect:

Is sitting back in church a biblical option? To what extent are your gifts from God for the benefit of others?

III. Worship: evident to the community (9-21)

Summarise the behaviour which believers should or should not display in their lives in the table below:

Should be/do	Should/do not

Ponder:

How will you adopt one thing you should do, and refrain from one thing you should not do? Share also why.

DISCIPLESHP POINTERS

Christians worship God with their totally-transformed lives, including how they use their minds and bodies, how they serve in church, and in the nature and quality of their relationships within and outside the church.

Worship may be defined as engagement with God through faith in Jesus Christ and what Jesus has done for us. Rom. 1:16-17: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'

How have you been worshipping God? Are you right with God? How have you been sharing the gospel with others around you?

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

Consider each person in your family or group. Encourage every person by telling that person (i) what you appreciate about him or her, (ii) what you have learnt from that person, and (iii) what has been your lesson about interdependence in your family or group.

GENERAL SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

Whether we are under the law, like the Jews, or not under the law like the Gentiles; we cannot avoid God's condemnation. The purpose of the law is simply to help us understand that we cannot be justified by whatever we try to do on our own. We all need the only justification that comes from Jesus Christ who died on the cross. Hence the saving righteousness of God has made us right before God and is reforming us into God's likeness. We may now return to God and have that open access to our Creator and worship him freely. God's transforming power continues to work within us through the power of his word which will eventually change us to be like him through the reforming work of the Word of God.

1. The Paradox of the Law (Rom. 3:19-20)

- i. In the Jewish religion of the Old Testament it was necessary to try to please God (to restore our broken relationship with him) by keeping the law. What is the problem with trying to please God by keeping the law?

- ii. As we become aware of the impossibility of keeping the law, what does this imply for our relationship with God?

- iii. As we struggle unsuccessfully to keep the law, what aspect of our human nature becomes clear to us? (v.20)

2. God reaches out to humanity (Rom. 3:21-28)

- i. God provides humanity with a different basis for relationship with him. What is this? (v.24).

- ii. Find some examples of how this is 'attested by the law and the prophets' (v.21).

- iii. What must we do to grasp hold of this access to relationship with God? (v.22).

- iv. Why is 'boasting' excluded (v.27), what's the link between boasting, faith and keeping the law?

- v. Read v.27b: 'by that of observing the law? No' Does this tell us that our Christian faith means doing nothing? Discuss.

3. 2 Tim 3:10-17

- i. Have you been inspired and strengthened in your faith by a Christian leader? Did this person show some of the same characteristics as Paul has detailed in v.10? Share something about this person with your group.

- ii. Paul experienced persecution but still found cause to thank the Lord. Why? (v.11)

- iii. Belief is associated with _____ (vv.14,15)?

- iv. All Scripture is useful for four things: a. _____, b. _____, c _____, d._____.
In what ways has scripture reformed these functions in your life?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

We are all involved in teaching. But teaching about the Christian faith can only work if we, like Paul, display other characteristics for those we teach to see. What do others see, and what does it teach them about the Christian faith when they observe you:

- Conduct:

- Aim in life:

- Faith:

- Patience and steadfastness:

FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

What have you learnt about the Christian faith, doctrine or living the Christian life from other members of your group or family? Share with one another what you have learnt.