

The Focus of Worship

Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr.

As we think about the purposes of worship, there are several important principles to keep in mind. First, the object of our worship is the Triune God. We worship God the Father, through Christ the Mediator, by the Spirit (Ps. 100; Jn. 4:22-24). Hence, our worship must be God-centered and not man-centered. Is this truth not obvious? If we are to come into His special presence with the service of our worship, if we are to fasten attention on Him, to adore and praise Him, and to commune with Him, then worship must be God-centered. It is exactly at this point that many today have gone astray. There is much confusion today in worship because of the neglect of this principle. Many are asking, "What am I going to get out of it?" "What kind of buzz am I going to have?" "Am I going to be moved?" If we seek these things, we are coming for all the wrong reasons and are asking all the wrong questions. Our questions ought to be, "What glory will abound to God?", "How will His name be blessed, and His loveliness portrayed?"

When our worship is God-centered, a wonderful thing happens. We acknowledge that worship is not to be emotionless. As we fix our attention on God and seek His glory and commune with Him, we will be moved to the depth of our being; we will be exuberant; we will rejoice with trembling; we will serve the Lord with fear. Indeed, we shall be moved in the very depths of our being because we sought Him. Is not this analogous of a marriage relationship? If, in a marriage relationship, the spouse seeks his or her own satisfaction, well-being, and fulfillment, the marriage will be a wreck. But if, in the marriage relationship, the spouse seeks the well-being and satisfaction of his marriage partner, he will be fulfilled. Worship works on a similar plane. When we forget ourselves and seek God, He will be honored, and we will be blessed.

The second thing to keep in mind is that worship is by nature covenantal and not evangelistic. We are to come to God as Father. Again, the church is making the mistake of turning corporate worship into an evangelistic enterprise. This change of focus explains much of the confusion in worship. Christians wrongly are designing the worship service to be a means of reaching the lost; therefore, the worship service is structured with the unconverted in mind. No one should question the sincerity of such attempts, but I ask the very simple question: if an unconverted person comes to your worship service and leaves comfortable or feeling good, who has not been present? God! No unconverted person can come into the presence of God and feel good or fulfilled. He might leave hopeful, if he has begun to understand the hope of the gospel. But if the Holy Spirit does not work favorably, he will either be nonchalant (Matt. 13:19) or angry (Lk. 12:49-53). The Word of God suggests that people will be saved as we focus on God in our worship (1 Cor. 14:24, 25).

In May, 2004, I had the privilege of ministering in Israel. While there, I stayed with one of the families in the congregation. My first night in their home, they invited me to attend a birthday party for one of their children. I had a good time. But, you can imagine that I did not quite fit in. I do not understand Modern Hebrew, so I did not always understand what was going on, nor could I sing the songs. Some of their games were strange to me, as was some of the food. Now, imagine if, as the family thought about these cultural problems, they began to change the birthday party to suit me. That would have been great for me. But, by the time they finished, it would not have been a party for their child; it would have been a party for me.

When we change God's glorious and holy celebration into an outreach enterprise, He is no longer the center of attention. He is no longer honored and glorified in our worship. If we are going to worship well and correctly, we must recover the true purposes of worship and their attendant principles. We must understand that we serve the Lord in His special presence and we serve Him by adoring Him and giving thanks to Him, praising Him, and communing with Him. As we do so, He changes us. And thus, our worship will become increasingly God-centered and covenantal.

These principles do not give us an excuse to ignore the visitor that is unfamiliar with our worship. He will not understand what we are doing; consequently, it is incumbent on us to explain what we are doing, to relate what we do so he will understand. To return to the illustration of the Israeli birthday party, a member of the family sat with me to translate and explain the games. They made me comfortable without changing the focus of the party. When I preach in foreign countries, I need a translator. It is good to have a translator for those who visit our worship service: the one that leads worship can do that or others may sit with visitors and explain what is being done. But structure the service for God and not for men.

Announcements

- Prayer Meeting this Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.
- To volunteer to help clean the church property, please speak with Mrs. Pipa or contact the church at info@antiochpca.com.

Vision

Our vision is to see the historic Antioch Presbyterian Church revitalized as a worshipping community to be a blessing to every man, woman, and child in the growing residential hub west of Woodruff and south of Reidville, to the glory of God.

Mission

Our mission as a parish church at the crossroads of Greenville and Spartanburg Counties is the gathering and perfecting of God's people through biblical worship, evangelism, and pastoral care.

Areas of Ministry Focus

Expository Preaching

Biblical Worship

Parish Evangelism

Pastoral Care

Discipleship

Leadership & Accountability

As a *mission work*, Antioch Presbyterian Church (PCA) is governed and overseen by a *provisional session* of elders serving as a *commission* of Calvary Presbytery. The six men appointed to the *provisional session* are active elders within the bounds of Calvary Presbytery, and they have graciously agreed to serve "above-and-beyond" to encourage the revitalization of Antioch. They include:

Dr. Chipley Bennett, Ph.D. – Ruling Elder, Providence Presbyterian Church

Dr. E. Todd Buchner, D.Min. – Pastor, Reidville Presbyterian Church

Mr. Richard Hollifield – Ruling Elder, Roebuck Presbyterian Church

Mr. William Johnson – Ruling Elder, Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church

Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., Ph.D., D.D. – Professor of Systematic & Applied Theology, President Emeritus, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary;

Organizing Pastor & Moderator of Session, Antioch Presbyterian Church

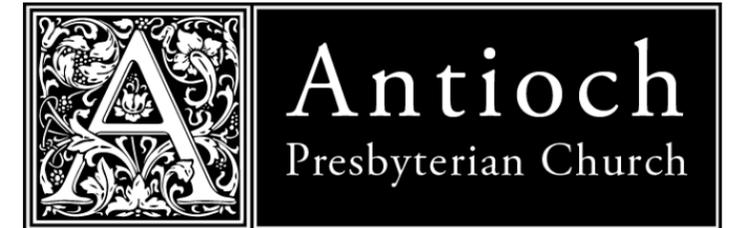
Pastor Richard Thomas – Senior Pastor, Mount Calvary Presbyterian Church;

Clerk of Session, Antioch Presbyterian Church

Church Staff

Mr. Zachary Groff – Ministerial Assistant

Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. – Organizing Pastor & Moderator of Session



The Lord's Day
October 11, 2020

"The Bounty of the Triune God"
Psalm 65

Mr. Zachary Groff

Worship – Sunday, 4:00 p.m.
Prayer Meeting – Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

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The Lord's Day

October 11, 2020

"The Bounty of the Triune God"

Psalm 65

Meditation

Psalm 65:11

You have crowned the year with Your bounty, and Your paths drip with fatness.

*Call to Worship

*Congregational Commitment

Minister: Congregation, in whom is your confidence?

Congregation: Our help is in the Name of the Lord, Who made the heavens and earth.

*Salutation

*Hymn of Adoration

No. 65A

Praise Waits for You in Zion
NYLAND

*Prayer of Adoration & Invocation

*Revelation of God's Will

Ephesians 5:1-14

*Confession of Sin & Supplication for Grace

O Lord, no day of our life has passed that has not proved us guilty in Your sight. Prayers have been uttered from a prayerless heart. Praise has been often praiseless sound. Our best services are filthy rags. Blessed Jesus, let us find a refuge in Your appeasing wounds. Though our sins rise to heaven, Your merits soar above them. Though unrighteousness weighs us down to hell, Your righteousness exalts us to Your throne. All things in us call for our rejection, all things in you plead our acceptance. We appeal from the throne of perfect justice to Your throne of boundless grace. Grant us to hear Your assuring voice: that by Your stripes we are healed, that You were bruised for our iniquities, that You have been made sin for us that we might be righteous in You, and that our grievous sins, our manifold sins, are all forgiven, buried in the ocean of Your concealing and cleansing blood. Keep us always clinging to Your cross. Flood us every moment with descending grace. In Your merciful Name we pray, Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

1 Peter 1:18, 19

¹⁸ Know that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Offering

No. 181

Now Thank We All Our God
NUN DANKET

*Prayer of Thanksgiving & Supplication

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn of Preparation

No. 78

O My People, Hear My Teaching
(stanzas 1-6)
LUX PRIMA

*New Testament Reading

Matthew 8:18-27

*Old Testament Reading

Psalm 65

Congregational Response

Leader: Man shall not live by bread alone.

Congregation: But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God!

*Prayer for Illumination

Sermon

"The Bounty of the Triune God"
Psalm 65

Prayer of Application

*Hymn of Response

No. 214

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above
MIT FREUDEN ZART

*Benediction

*Doxology

No. 564

Now Blessed Be Jehovah God
CORONATION

*Silent Prayer

**Congregation standing, unless physically hindered*

Main Proposition

God Who hears your prayers, saves your soul, and enriches the earth deserves your praise.

Outline

I. God Who hears your prayers deserves your praise (vv. 1-4)

II. God Who saves your soul deserves your praise (vv. 5-8)

III. God Who enriches the earth deserves your praise (vv. 9-13)