

Sermon October 2, 2016 - Pentecost 20

Healing Worship

Introit, Kyrie, Hymn of Praise

Selected verses



Dear Friends in Christ

Welcome once again to our sermon series on Worship. In the last few weeks we have been meditating on our liturgical worship services, its components, and why we do them. The first week we learned that Worship begins with God, it begins with his actions as he comes to us bringing healing of the soul, does leading us to worship in spirit and truth. Worship is not something we initiate but it is our response to God's goodness.

And because it begins with God worship is a mountain top experience. At least it is from God's perspective. A mountain top experience, because of what God does for us in our worship services. The letter of Hebrews explains it this way. Please let us turn to Hebrews chapter 12, would please somebody read Hebrews chapter 12, verses 22 to 24: ([Hebrews 12:22-24](#)) "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."

Now, as we have said before, this text refers to God's kingdom as a whole, but then again it is here in Church, in spirit and truth, that God's Kingdom reveals itself and comes to each one of us, which in turn enables us to live our lives in Christ, in faith and victory. Therefore this text in a way summarizes what we do here in Worship services every time we gather with one another.

Now as God brings us to the mountain top, a process develops and forms what we know as the liturgy, the order of worship, liturgy literally means "the works of the people" in order works our response to God's gifts and grace. This liturgy begins with the invocation, recognizing who it is that gathers us and in whose name we are gathered but also who we are individually, God's children marked with his name.

The liturgy continues with confession and absolution, a time for us to confess our sins and receive his forgiveness just as God's word calls us to do, remember the words from 1 John? [1 John 1:8-9](#) reminds to do so through these words: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And also from [James 5:16](#), hear these words: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."

Then after confession and absolution, the liturgy normally continues with the Introit, the Kyrie and the hymn of praise. Now, hymn of praise we understand, but the Introit and Kyrie? What do those words mean?

First, the "Introit" is basically a psalm; a psalm that in the Old Testament people chanted as they entered the Temple for worship, the worship leader would chant a verse and the congregation would respond with another. The practice was retained even in our modern day church as we enter or come closer to the mountain top. The word "Introit" is a Latin word that literally means "entrance" "entering."

Now the Kyrie is something else, and it is Kyrie eleison which is Greek for: "Lord, have mercy." It is a prayer thanking God for His forgiveness and asking him to help us in every need. Something like Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, said when he called to Jesus, the Gospel of Mark tell us the Story (Mark 10:47-48), would somebody please read: "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"⁴⁸ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

And when Jesus hears him he does something with him, let's hear again from Mark (Mark 10:51-52): " And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."⁵² And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way."

Now with those actions once again the Scriptures are fulfilled. Hear what the Psalmist wrote in one of his psalms, (Psalm 145:17-21) "The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. ¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹ He fulfils the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. ²⁰ The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. ²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."

Yes our mouths will speak the praise of the Lord for what he does. Think about this, he promises to bless us when we are gathered in his name, he forgives us our sins, and he has mercy on us. Those are mighty deeds, mighty works that he does for us. That's what we do when we sing the hymn of praise.

The hymn of praise in the liturgy is a time for us to praise God for the miraculous things He has done for us. A time to celebrate God's mighty Acts!

When we praise God for all he has done, each of us can develop a long list of blessings we have received. Yours might include family, safety, deliverance, a problem solved, whatever. But still near the beginning of the service as the lord bring us up to the mountain top, we start praising him for the greatest miracle of all, his mighty act of salvation. Most worship books offer two options for the Hymn of Praise. The first and most ancient song remembers the birth of the Savior and offers praise to Jesus for who he is and what he has done, it is called the Gloria in Excelsis. The second, "This is the Feast" remembers the victory of Christ in his death and resurrection. Whichever is used, the focus in on Jesus Christ, in whose name we are gathered in the Divine Service.

Now, do you know where the *Gloria in Excelsis*, comes from? It comes from the Gospel of Luke chapter two, where we hear these words (Luke 2:14), would somebody please read: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom

he is pleased!” Gloria in Excelsis, is Latin for Glory to God in the Highest, and recounts God’s plan of salvation through the birth of Jesus, as other Bible text come to mind as well.

But as we being the hymn, our minds go back to that moment when all is still, all is business as usual, but that gets interrupted by the great appearance of angels announcing that God himself has come to earth—and has come for you! What a thrill to hear these messengers of God sing “Glory to God”—and to be invited to join in singing with them in this hymn of praise in the Divine Service, Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

The angels’ song invites all who hear the message to give God glory—to praise him and to give him honor. The angels also pointed out that this newborn Jesus was bringing the gift of peace, *God’s* peace which surpasses human understanding, is better than just the absence of war. It actually changes people from loveless beings into people who love God and neighbor. This was a wonderful gift, one that only God could give—and He gives it through Jesus, the Lamb of God. And there is another verse, from John 1:29: “The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

The angels at Bethlehem announced the unfolding of God’s plan of rescue. While we were still trapped in our sin, God was providing a Savior, Jesus. Promised to Abraham and David and talked about by the prophets God had sent to Israel, the Savior was now here. Praise the name of the Lord! For he already delights in you through His Son Jesus, that’s what we heard last week, from the prophet Zephaniah 3:17 who said: “The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

The reason to praise God continues as we reflect on the other hymn of praise that our hymnals give, that hymn is “*This is the Feast*” “This is the feast of Victory of our God” it recounts Jesus victory over death, sin and satan.

Strait out o the Scriptures, from the book of Revelations chapter 5 (Revelation 5:12-13): “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!”¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!”

“This is the Feast” too draws on the song of angels, this time the one sung in heaven to praise God for his ultimate and final victory over death, once and for all!

“This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.”

When we sing these words in the context of the Lord’s Supper, the two together put us together at the height of the mountain top. Consider this for a moment: When Jesus instituted Holy Communion, he said that he would not eat of it again until the kingdom of God is fulfilled. (Luke 22:16). In other words until we all gather in His presence in Heaven where the Heavenly banquet will take place. And John in his vision of heaven hears the angel say, would somebody please read Revelation 19:9 “And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" Have you been invited already? Are you on the guest list? If you haven't done it before, I encourage you that whenever sing this song of praise, picture yourself already at the banquet in heaven. Why? Because you are his child, you are his forgiving child! That's why. Not just sing the song, just because it's in the liturgy, or that's what we do, or don't tune out either, some might say, this is too boring! If you think so, that's too bad and sad, really, for this song shows you, gives you a glimpse of what that heavenly banquet is going to be.

Now should we always use these two hymns as the hymns of praise only? Not at all, there are other hymns that reflect God's glory as well, reflect his saving plan, there are hymns that move us to praise God with all our hearts, after all that's what we ought to do, that we praise him.

In the New Testament the apostle James tells us this: James 13:15 "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."

And Paul tells us Ephesians 5:19-20 "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Do we have a reason to praise God? Or do we have a reason!! He has saved us, and more there are many things he has done in our lives, that we need to praise him for, there are many reasons, think about it.

And as you do, let us all say what the Psalmist said in psalm 145 - (Psalm 145:17-21) "The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. ¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. ²⁰ The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. ²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."

Let the praises be heard here, everywhere, today and always!
In his name, amen.