

Sermon September 18, 2016 - Pentecost 18

Healing Worship

The Invocation

Selected verses



Dear Friends in Christ,

Welcome once again to our sermon series on Worship. Last week we learned that Worship begins with God, and as he comes to us he does bring healing of the soul and even the body, we respond with praise and thanksgiving. We also learned that Worship has to be in spirit and truth, but in order for it to

be in spirit and truth God has to work first in our hearts. Worship then is not something we initiate but it is our response to God's goodness.

Last week we also learn that our worship services follow a liturgy, an order. Now, liturgy literally means "the works of the People." And today we shall begin examining and meditating on each one of the elements of worship, of our liturgical services.

Now, last week we introduced this diagram that illustrates what our worship services are all about, how each element has a purpose and what happens there, everything we do follows a logic process.

Really our worship services from God's point of view are a mountain top experience. Did you know that before? Yes a mountain top experience!

Let's turn to Hebrews, please, the letter to Hebrews chapter 12, verses 22 to 24, would somebody read it please: ([Hebrews 12:2-24](#)) "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 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, but also enabling 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.

In other words, every time we gather as a church around God's word, receiving his gifts, we come to Mt. Zion, we come to Christ. And that's the point of this illustration. During our worship Services God bring us up to him, to his altar. And as you know, when you climb up a mountain, there is a process. Here is the process:

First God gathers us, the Holy Spirit talks to us and moves so we can gather in his house, in worship. Then, we gather in his name. It is in his name that we worship and receive all his gifts.

Everything is done in God's name, just like the steward or the manager in our Gospel reading for today. Everything is God's we are only the administrators of God's richest gifts. That's why we begin with the invocation.

So we begin with something that you see on the screen or your bulletin, or the hymnal. It is the invocation.

The word "invocation" is Latin for "to call upon". And it is not so much that we ask God to join us in worship, "hey God we are here, come now," type of an invocation, no, it is something else as we shall see.

Every Sunday, or every time we gather for worship the pastor or the worship leader, begins by Making the sign of the cross and saying with these words: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." We do remember, we do invoke, we do recognize God's name, the one who has gathered in worship. God said in the Old Testament, in Exodus 20:24, that he is the one that cause his name to be remembered, these are his words, if somebody would please read Exodus 20:24: "An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you."

Then Jesus says in the Gospel of Mathew Chapter 18 these words... can somebody please read Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

Gathered in God's name, that's what we do, therefore the words of invocation. Jesus whose name we should use, let's turn to the Gospel of Mathew chapter 28, and verse 19, would somebody else please read... Mathew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

So we begin in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Now, that's good, good to know, but, what else does it have to do with me? How does the invocation help us, here and even in our personal lives? When the worship services are done, so what?

Now, just ponder for a moment, what goes through your mind when you hear the words: "in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"? Let's stop for a moment, think about it, let it those words talk to you for a moment, touch you if you wish, let's hear them again, "in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"

Can you grasp the meaning? As you see when we hear these words, we not only find ourselves in God, for as we promise, but there are also other implications.

First, these words remind us whom we belong, not only in whose presence we are but who we belong to, they reminds us that God has adopted us as his children, we belong to him. With these exacts words you were baptized and there adopted as a child of God.

Now, you probably have seen some church members make the sign of the cross as well. Why do they do it? This is the reason, they remember their baptism. It is not a required action, but we can certainly do it to remember our baptisms, here as we gather, and in each opportunity we have outside of a worship service. The invocation, helps us to see, helps us to be reminded that we are not just Christian people, but children of

God, children of the Heavenly Father. Children who have been born again, who have been renewed of the Holy Spirit, and children who are heirs of eternal salvation!

So, does this aspect in our liturgy bring us healing? Absolutely, not only because we pray for the sick in the name of Christ, but think about it, we are in the hands of the Father, in whose name we are gathered. That thought alone should inspire in us rest of mind and spirit, it drives away my anxieties for I know in whose hands I am, I know whom I belong to, God our father, our Creator. Also, because I know that Christ has dealt with my sins on the Cross of Calvary, and that he will forgive my sins, here and now. And because I know that although the future is uncertain, the Holy Spirit will comfort and guide me. That proves healing to each one of us, spiritually and even physically.

But there is more, because His word brings a healing balm as well, so it is not only the thought or the fact that we are here in this house of prayer but he speaks to each one of us, and what he speaks is true and wholesome! For he speaks words of life, true life! And then he seals His word with his own body and blood as we come to the altar to be fed by Christ himself.

Yes, at the Altar, from where we hear his words and where he reaches to us with his body and blood.

It all happens here in worship. At the altar!

Here once again what God says in Exodus 20:24, would somebody please read: "An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you."

It is at the altar that now we come for there the Name of God is present, there is where God provides.

Back in the Old Testament it was on an altar where people would present their offerings and sacrifices to get right with God again, it was there where God upon the sacrifice received would declare the sinner forgiven, redeemed and restored. And although we shall preach on God's altar in one of the next few Sundays, today it does good to us to remember God's word, that he said he will be there "In every place where" he cause his "name to be remembered" "I will come to you and bless you!"

And because we belong to Christ, then we with all freedom come to that place where he is causing his name to be remembered.

Hear what Hebrews 10:19-22 tells us, can somebody read please, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Can you hear it? With all confidence enter God's holy place. God's presence, in his name, and see him at the altar waiting for us to attend his invitation to come.

I hope and pray that each one of us respond, respond to his call, the call to worship and enter the heavenly realms, through worship, through prayer, and in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

May each of us say the same as the Psalmist, King David said: Psalm 84:3, let us all read and say: "My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and

flesh sing for joy to the living God. ³ Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!
In his name, amen.