

## The Basis for Our Worship of God

We've been looking at Psalm 33 to get a biblically informed view of the importance of God's people gathering together to worship him. We began this series of articles by looking at times when the church has been 'at war' about worship connected to an unhealthy focus on different styles of music. We followed this by looking at the beauty of the worship of God. Our worship will be pleasing in God's sight as we seek to follow his beautiful plan for worship given in his word. Last time I began to look at the basis for our worship of God. The first basis that we see in verses 4-5 of this Psalm is that God is faithful. His word and work in our lives can always be trusted. Another basis for our worship of God is in verses 6-9 wherein we're struck with awe and reverence as we ponder God's creative and sustaining power. For example: "By the Word of the LORD the heavens were made....He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap....He spoke and it came to be; he commanded and it stood firm" (see also, Genesis 1; John 1; Hebrews 1:2-3; 11:3; 2 Peter 3:5). As we think about the truths that we see in this Psalm or any passage of scripture there are always a number of interpretive issues that need to be considered. For example, we want to interpret the text initially from the perspective of the original recipients; we also need to see its redemptive-historical trajectory in light of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's also necessary to try to see how the passage can apply to our lives today.

This Psalm is a hymn of praise to God who not only made all things, but rules over all things for his own purpose and glory. As Christians this side of the cross, our worship is always inclusive of the work of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament types and shadows could only point forward to the coming of Christ. We've been blessed to have a fuller revelation of Jesus Christ as well as of the work of the Holy Spirit. The fact that we have the final revelation given in the scriptures certainly means that we have more responsibility for gospel motivated worship of our Triune God (Luke 12:48). With this in mind, I want to make some points of application that I hope will encourage us in our worship of God.

—Purpose: Our primary purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. This is just to say that the most important thing in all of life is our worship of God. This is inclusive of corporate as well as individual, everyday worship as we focus on how our thoughts, words and deeds will bring him glory (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

—Presence: As we think specifically about corporate worship, in the Old Testament God promised his special presence when his people gathered in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. In the gospel of John, Jesus spoke of how he had come to be present with his people (John 1:14). Later, after his death and resurrection he would send the Holy Spirit (John 14:17; 1 Corinthians 6:19). Our Triune God is always with us and is especially present when we gather corporately on the Lord's Day for worship (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 14:20-25; Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Timothy 3:14-16).

—Preparation: It's generally true that we'll prepare in advance for anything that we believe is important. That should be especially true in our preparation for coming into the very presence

of God for corporate worship. It's a self-evident truth that there'll be greater joy and expectation in our worship of God when we come with hearts prepared.

—Peace: Our true peace and salvation rest is found in the finished work of Jesus Christ, not in our works of obedience. Because this is true, those who genuinely believe in and love Jesus Christ will take all of the teaching of scripture seriously (John 14:15), not least the command to worship. The apostle Paul encourages us in this as well: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Rev. Dr. Steve Jones is the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church PCA in Paxton, Illinois