

# Reformed Worship: A Theology of Worship

## Lesson 5: God Renews His Covenant

### Intro

The worship service is a sacred moment when God condescends to His sinful people and *restores* them to Himself. Even though we don't deserve His favor—and have done plenty to warrant His wrath—God reminds us in worship that our relationship with Him is about *His* covenant commitment to us, not *our* performance before Him. For Christ's sake, in worship God renews His covenant faithfulness to us. He reminds us of the gospel. He calls us once again away from our works to His work, calling us to rest in His coming down and to stop trying to work our way up.

### Covenant Relationship

- I. As believers through Christ, God has entered into a covenant with us—a covenant in which He's promised salvation to all who, by grace, have called upon Him in faith, Ex 20.2; Lev 18.2; Isa 48.17; Jn 20.17
  - A. Worship takes place *in the context of this covenant*. Meeting with God in worship is to engage in a covenantal conversation with the Great King.
- II. In the garden of Eden, God constituted the first worship service when He began a covenantal relationship with our first parents, Gen 2.15-17
  - A. The liturgy of this worship service was simple. It entailed a *call*, a *response*, and a *meal*.
  - B. *However*, our parents perverted God's institution of worship by an act of idolatry—and that could've been the end. But God.
- III. God overcame our sin and rebellion with His grace and mercy and continued His covenantal relationship with us—this time through His Son as our Head and Mediator, Gen 3.15, 21
  - A. This gracious accommodation through Christ added two more elements to the liturgy: *cleansing* and *commission*, Eph 2.18; Mt 28.19-20
  - B. \*And this remains the basic shape of the covenant relationship that God has with us *as it is expressed in worship*: God *calls* us to Himself, He *cleanses* us of our sins, by His Spirit He enables us to *respond* to His Word in faith and obedience, He has a fellowship *meal* with us, and He blesses us and *sends us out* into the world to declare the glory of His salvation.

### Covenant Renewal

- I. What's the most amazing thing you see when you read the OT? That even though God's people continued to sin again and again, consistently breaking covenant, God *never* cast them out of the covenantal relationship they had with Him.
  - A. Consider the story of Israel's rescue from Egypt, Ex 19-24
    1. God *calls* them to Himself, Ex 3. Why? So that they might worship Him, 4.23
    2. Bringing them to Mt. Sinai for worship, He *cleanses* them, Ex 20.2
    3. Next, He *consecrated* them by His Word (Ex 20), enabling a right *response*, 24.3
    4. Then, He *communed* with them, 24.9-11.
  - B. What happens next? Israel quickly turn from God into idolatry, Ex 32.4. Amazingly, God renews the covenant, Ex 34.1-10
  - C. The same pattern occurs in 2Chr 29.20-36 when Hezekiah restores Israel's worship.
    1. He begins with a sin offering, for the people's *cleansing*.
    2. He offers up a burnt offering, for the people's *consecration*.
    3. And then a peace offering, for the people's *communion* with God.

- D. In Solomon's dedication of the temple in 2Chr 5-7 we see the same thing: calling (5.2-3), sacrifice and cleansing (5.4-6), consecration (6.1-11), communion (7.8-9), and sending (7.10).
- E. In all these instances, God was renewing His covenant relationship with a people who didn't deserve it, giving them proof, in worship, that He'd not left them.

### Covenant Redeemer

- I. Why didn't God give His people up?
  - A. Because of Jesus. God's people's sins against the covenant never annul the covenant because it was always His plan that *He* would keep it for them, Gen 15
  - B. God continually came back because He knew the things He required from His people would one day be accomplished by Himself in the person of His Son. He continued to renew the covenant because His Son's obedience and sacrifice justified it, 1Jn 1.9; 2.1-2; cf. Gen 3.15, 21. *Christ* stands at the *center* of every covenantal conversation God's ever had with His people.
- II. And this is the link to *our worship services today*. Our weekly worship as His People is where God renews (again) the covenant that we have broken (again).
  - A. God calls into worship in the name of Christ; we respond, through Christ, in faith and obedience; and He promises us life in Christ and fellowships with us in His Son's Supper.
  - B. Worship is definitely a time for us to *renew our* commitment to God; but more than that, it's a time for us to *revel in God's* unfailing commitment to us in His Son.

### Covenant Response

- I. What is the proper response to the wonderful work of God that goes on every week in worship?
  - A. Praise. That's our part in the covenantal conversation. We praise God, that although we deserve condemnation, He continually calls us back and proves His unfailing faithfulness in Jesus Christ. To the perpetual testimony of God's faithfulness to us in Christ, all we can do, the best we can do, is to utter our *Amen!* to it, 2Cor 1.20
  - B. Week after week, we rehearse the covenant faithfulness of God in His Son, we rehearse the gospel, which teaches us that there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, 1Tim 2.5