

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

Worship with others in the Chapel

Pentecost Sunday

Ezra 3:1-3, 6-7, 10-13

May 28, 2023

Communion: Robert Domingos

1. 🎵 **Doxology 815**
2. 🎵 **Eternal Father 808**
3. 🎵 **Father, I Adore You 191**
4. 🎵 **Anthem (Bulletin)**
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Ezra 3:11 (NASB)

They sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, saying, "For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

Today is Pentecost Sunday.

Of course you all know the significance of Pentecost to we disciples of Christ.

It is the day the church of Christ came into being.

Pentecost (also called Whit Sunday, Whitsunday or Whitsun) is a Christian holiday which takes place on the 50th day, the seventh Sunday, following Easter.

It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1–31).

Prior to the day of Pentecost, worship had centered in the Temple, and was based on the torah, the Old Covenant, the LAW.

With Pentecost, that all changed.

The risen Christ began His Kingdom, referred to as the Kingdom on earth and the Kingdom of heaven.

The disciples of Christ began a new building program.

The disciples focused on developing a relationship with the risen Christ.

It was time to rebuild.

And rebuild they did.

God created His new temple.

1 Cor. 3:16 (NASB)

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

A new order of priests were created.

Every follower of Christ is now a priest, not just men, and not just the descendants of Aaron.

1 Pet 2:9 (NLT)

you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

But to rebuild the new kingdom, the Holy Spirit had to rebuild a lot of lives, including yours and mine.

We are called to be light and light needs power.

Mt 5:14, 16 (NASB)

You are the light of the world. 16let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Some people are trying to power themselves, and it's not working!

You realize you don't have much power in your life.

They don't have power to love, power to live, power to forgive.

And you may think all the resources you need are hidden somewhere deep inside you.

Instead, you need to realize there is a source of power available to you that is generated far away from here and in a way you don't understand.

It's the supernatural power of the Almighty God, and that power is available to you!

2,500 years ago, when God's people returned to Jerusalem after almost a century of being exiled in Babylon, they found their city in ruins.

The Temple of God, where they believed God lived, had been destroyed.

The Book of Ezra tells how God's people plugged in to His supernatural power.

This is a story about worship in the new temple:

This message will follow what happened in Ezra 3.

When we come to **verse 10**, we discover there was an important activity that allowed them to plug in to God's best.

They decided to rebuild the Temple, so they gathered for a ground-breaking worship service.

In our minds, let's go back in time and try to see, hear, and experience what happened at that worship service:

Ezra 3:10-13 (NASB)

10When the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their positions to praise the LORD, as David king of Israel had prescribed.

11And they sang responsively with praise and thanksgiving to the LORD: "For He is good; for His loving devotion to

Israel endures forever.” cThen all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD had been laid. 12But many of the older priests, Levites, and family heads who had seen the first temple wept loudly when they saw the foundation of this temple. Still, many others shouted joyfully. 13The people could not distinguish the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people were making so much noise. And the sound was heard from afar.

If you want to plug in to God’s best for you, you must make a commitment to worship—to celebrate God’s goodness.

I didn’t say make a commitment to attend worship—but a commitment to really worship God.

Worship not only honors God, it will refresh your life and be a blessing to others.

One question I’m asked is: "What worship style do you use?"

I know what they mean.

They want to add an adjective in front of the word worship.

They want to know if we use contemporary worship;

or blended worship;

or traditional worship;

or casual worship;

or charismatic worship;

or liturgical worship.

I don’t like those adjectives, because they are all are so distractive of true worship.

Compared to the New Paris, Ohio, Church of Christ, where I once ministered, we are wildly contemporary.

But compared to some of the Christian Churches that cater to Boomer or Gen-X folk, we would be stiffly traditional.

I find myself using those adjectives, but I have a conviction about the danger of adding a man-made word to a word that is all about God – worship.

So I try not to use any of those adjectives to describe our worship.

If they keep pressing me for an adjective to describe our worship, there is only one adjective I prefer to use.

Biblical.

We are striving for biblical worship.

We try to pattern our congregational life on the New Covenant, and we try to build our church on the pattern set by the first century Christians.

We deliberately try to be Biblical in all our Christian life.

We try to use Bible words to describe Bible things.

We try to be Biblical in our worship.

If you aren't sure what biblical worship is, let me give you an idea of biblical worship we find in Ezra 3.

What we learn is that Biblical Worship Follows the directions of the Bible.

That may sound redundant, but much of what people call biblical worship has more to do with their own traditions than the Bible.

Ezra 3:10 (NASB)

***10**When the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their positions to praise the LORD, as David king of Israel had prescribed.*

Why did they use trumpets and cymbals?

Because the Bible proscribed their usage.

Psalm 150:3-5 (NASB)

Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. [4] Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. [5] Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

Their worship guide was the Bible.
We have the same worship guide they had.
The Bible makes it clear that there are two avenues of worship.

There is Private Worship

Worship is not just for Sunday!
We should worship every day of our lives.
You should worship God in your daily quiet time.
You should worship God in your car.
You should worship God when you are washing dishes.
The Bible shows us the importance of both private and group worship.

Psalm 34:1 (NASB)

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

That means you praise God when you wake up, and when you take your shower, when you sit down to eat, when you are preparing for bed.
It's living a life of worship.

There is Corporate Worship

We see the invitation to corporate worship in ...

Psalm 34:3 (NASB)

O magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together.

Heb. 10:25 (BSB)_

25 Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

I need you in worship, and you need me in worship.

I know there are some Christians who are incapacitated and are shut-ins who can't attend corporate worship.

There is a kid's song I suspect you all know and have sung. "The More We Get Together" is a popular English children's song originally written by Irving King in 1926 for a British charitable organization for children.

It is based on an old Viennese tune, "Oh du lieber Augustin". The song encourages people to work together to make their community cleaner, friendlier, and safer for everyone.

*The more we get together,
Together, together,
The more we get together,
The happier we'll be.
For your friends are my friends
And my friends are your friends.
The more we get together,
The happier we'll be.*

There is no such thing as a Christian who can be in corporate worship and chooses not to participate.

As Sister Wendy Beckman so eloquently put it, when you choose not to be in corporate worship it makes God sad.

If you are going to be a disciple, you have to take your relationship to God seriously.

You need BOTH private and corporate worship.

In your private worship you will be more meditative.

In your corporate worship you will be more celebrative.

You need BOTH worship expressions.

We live in a dangerous, noisy world, so God says to us--

Psalm 46:10-11 (GW)

10Let go [of your concerns]! Then you will know that I am God. I rule the nations. I rule the earth. 11The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold.

What's God saying?

He is saying in the midst of earth shattering troubles, be still, and know that He is God.

Every time I get alone with God for private worship that's what I try to do.

And you need that quiet time with God, where you acknowledge His sovereignty.

Sovereignty!

That's a word we don't often use, so what is sovereignty?

It is nothing less than supremacy in rule and power.

It is the power to govern without external control.

And truth be told, we don't take God's sovereignty seriously.

Remember Matthew telling us

Mt 7:28 (NASB)

28When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, 29because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Amazed

Dazed

Knocked out of our senses

That is why we need our private time with our Sovereign God.

He created us.

We belong to Him.

And we need time to reflect on our relationship with Him.

If you aren't worshipping God privately on a regular basis where you get still, read His Bible, and listen to His still small voice, chances are you won't be especially tuned in to corporate worship.

You'll find yourself more of a worship spectator than a worshiper.

Your private worship feeds your corporate worship experience.

You need to rebuild your private and corporate worship experience.

Biblical Worship Is Expressing Praise To God

Worship is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling you have for God.
Worship is an expression of your adoration or praise to God.

Ezra 3:11 (GW)

As they praised and gave thanks to the LORD, they sang antiphonally: "He is good; his mercy toward Israel endures forever." Then all the people shouted, "Praise the LORD," because the foundation for the house of the LORD had been laid.

The words they sang were taken from

Psalm 136:1 (NIV)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.

That phrase is used 43 times in the Bible, and in Psalm 136 it is repeated 26 times.

Since God is the ultimate author of the Bible, that says something significant about His relationship to us.

Singing is not the only expression of worship, but it is one of the most important.

Music is an amazing force.

Certain songs carry memories with them.

A widow can hear a song she and her husband danced to fifty years earlier and it will bring tears of joy to her eyes.

Every time I hear *Eternal Father, strong to save* it takes me back to attending worship in the Marine Corps.

I like all kinds of music.

When I'm by myself, I really enjoy Baroque and Classical.

But I also enjoy Country Music like Blue Grass.

But when it comes to church music, I confess I like the oldies best.

I prefer the old songs because they put me in a nostalgic comfort zone.

They bring back memories to me.

For instance, I love the song, “**How Great Thou Art.**”
I still remember the first time I heard it sung by Cliff Barrows
with that marvelous voice he has.

I’m sure there are memories you have attached to certain
familiar songs.

That’s why we like to sing them.

They’re like a comfortable pair of slippers.

That’s why there’s so much opposition to new music in church.

I came across an interesting article written by a leading
clergyman who compiled six reasons for opposing the trend of
new music in the church: (**see if you agree with his
observations**)

1. It’s not as melodious as the more established style.
2. This new music creates disturbances and causes people to act
in an indecent and disorderly manner.
3. It places too much emphasis on instruments rather than on
godly lyrics.
4. The lyrics are often worldly, even blasphemous.
5. It is not needed, since preceding generations have gone to
heaven without it.
6. These new musicians are young upstarts and some of them
are lewd and loose persons.

<http://earlyamerica.com/review/fall97/sing.html>

<http://www.aisna.org/rsajournal10/10ossato.html>

Well, did you agree or disagree with those six items?

I suspect you might like to know it was written in 1783 as a
statement against the use of hymns, such as “O for a Thousand
Tongues to Sing,” which was written by Charles Wesley.

If we aren’t careful, we will start judging the value of praise
songs based upon how they make us feel rather than whether
they direct praise to God.

So PLEASE keep in mind that the goal of worship is to honor
God.

NOT to please the worshiper

It would be great if each of us could just toss out everything we've ever heard, done or thought about worship our whole lives, and just commit ourselves to worship the way the Bible tells us to worship.

Some Christians say,

“Oh, but Psalms are the Old Testament. And we aren't under the Old Covenant anymore. I want to worship the New Testament way.”

I've had people actually say to me we shouldn't worship the way the Psalms teach us.

Why?

Because that was for Jews, and that's not part of our “tradition.”

I am regretful that this issue of music split the most dynamic, fastest growing, most unifying Christian movement of our American history.

There are those who are so much against dancing, who say dancing is sinful, that they say those passages in Psalms about dancing unto the Lord just have to be wrong.

There are those who say “lifting hands to the Lord” is only for charismatic who speak in tongues and get slain the spirit.

And some maintain all those passages about lifting holy hands unto the Lord were just for the Jews.

And, our tradition says we sit or stand, but we don't “bow down before the Lord” that's for the Jews, or maybe those Catholics.

But those opponents will close their eyes when they pray, as if it's a sacred act when the Bible never speaks of closing your eyes or bowing your head!

I agree that we aren't under the Old Covenant, and we don't have to obey all the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament.

But Psalms isn't a book of the law—it's a worship book.

And the New Testament even confirms New Testament Christians under the New Covenant are still to use the Psalms.

In fact, Paul gives us a simple music plan for New Testament worship in Ephesians.'

Eugene Petterson paraphrases it

Eph.. 5:19 (MsgB)

Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ.

Perhaps you are more familiar with that Scripture read this way:

Eph.. 5:19 (NASB)

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord

Psalms means singing the scripture.

Psalm 98:4 (NLT)

Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!

We should sing -- because it's taken right out of scripture.

One of Bach's more famous songs was ***Ode to Joy***.

What is an ode?

Greek odes were originally poetic pieces performed with musical accompaniment.

As time passed on, they gradually became known as personal lyrical compositions whether sung with or without musical instruments, or merely recited and always with accompaniment.

The primary instruments used were the bagpipe like aulos, and the lyre.

The latter was the most revered instrument to the ancient Greeks.

The definition is

Ode n

1. A lyric poem of some length, usually of a serious or meditative nature and having an elevated style and formal stanzaic structure.

2. a) *A choric song of classical Greece, often accompanied by a dance and performed at a public festival or as part of a drama.*

b) *A classical Greek poem modeled on the choric ode and usually having a three-part structure consisting of a strophe, an antistrophe, and an epode.*

Hymns (Greek ode) are songs carefully composed to give praise to God.

Martin Luther sat down and took time to write, “*A Mighty Fortress is Our God.*”

This song has been called “the greatest hymn of the greatest man of the greatest period of German history” and the “Battle Hymn of the Reformation.”

It was sung at the funeral of President Dwight Eisenhower at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, March 1969.

But where did the tune come from?

As a young student, Luther earned money to pay his school fees by singing in the streets of Eisenach.

Luther played the lute, and singing always was an important part of his life.

The tune was a popular bar song, and was one of the favorite tunes being sang and hummed by the German folk.

Eph.. 5:19 (NASB)

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

"**Spiritual songs**" are like choruses because they are songs often created when someone is singing spontaneous praise to God.

How would you respond if President Biden suddenly walked in and sat down in the back row?

And yet every single time we gather together, there is someone here who is far more important than any human celebrity?

Let's try to bring praise back into the temple.

*O fill me with Thy fullness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'er flow
in kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.*

Let's start today on this Pentecost Sunday to rebuild our praise to God.

Prayer and Invitation