

The Local Church 4 - Part 2

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of worship in the Christian life, highlighting its role in spiritual transformation and becoming like Christ.

Duration: 8:26

Scripture: Acts 20:28

Topics: "Church Ordinances", "Christian Worship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the significance of two key ordinances in the Christian faith: baptism and the Lord's Supper. It delves into the deep meaning behind the Lord's Supper, highlighting the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross and the call to remember His sacrifice. The sermon also transitions into the importance of worship, explaining how worship shapes and transforms believers to become more like Christ, drawing from 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Transcript

When you think of baptism, think of three letters, A, B, C, Allegiance, Baptism, Commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. The other ordinance of the Christian church is the Lord's Supper, and this is the central act of the church's worship. The central act of the church's worship.

It was instituted by the Lord, as you know, in Luke chapter 22, on the night in which he was betrayed, he gathered the disciples together. They had the last Passover, and then he instituted the Lord's Supper. He took the bread as the emblem of his body, which was to be given on the cross of Calvary, and he took the cup which contained the wine, a symbol of the blood that he would shed for you and for me.

I reproach myself for being able to stand here and say something and not be amazed, not be startled, not be dumbfounded. Do you realize what I just said? I said that Christ, God manifest in the flesh, went to the cross and gave his body and poured out his life for you and for me. Or to put it in a more startling way, your God died for you.

I tell you, if that truth would grip us, our lives would never be the same, never be the same. It's because we can take it and become casual about it that we can go on in our ordinary way of life. Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20, says, "...shepherd the flock of God which he purchased with his own blood." And I think that verse was put in the Bible to shock us into an awareness of what really happened at Calvary.

Shepherd the flock of God which he purchased with his own blood. That's what the Bible says. I must confess that one of my favorite hymns of the Christian faith is that one I started to quote in our previous session by Charles Wesley.

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? Died he for me who caused his pain? For me who him to death pursued amazing love? How can it be that thou my God should die for me? You know, we sing it, but we don't realize what we're singing. I've heard of people dying for their God, but I never before heard of a God dying for his people. Dear friends, that's what happened at Calvary.

And he asked that we should gather together and remember him in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup. Instituted by the Lord and practiced in the book of Acts. Practiced in the book of Acts.

Acts 20, 27, Paul's traveling. He knows where to go, where the disciples are going to be remembering the Lord on the first day of the week. And then of course expounded in the epistles.

First Corinthians chapter 11, as often as you do this, you show forth the Lord's death until he comes. Once again, it's just not a ritual that you do and that's the end of it. When we come together to break bread, we hear him say to us through the word, this is my body given for you.

Dear friends, it's total disrespect to leave the breaking of bread without looking up and saying to the Lord Jesus, Lord, this is my body given for you. It's the only proper response you can make to a love so amazing, so divine. And yet we hold back and we live our little lives the way we think they should be lived and fail to find out what his will for them is.

Two ordinances of the Christian faith, baptism and the Lord's supper. And that leads us in a very even transition to the subject of worship. Worship.

Worship is absolutely central. You read in John chapter 4, the father seeks worshipers. You look at that verse carefully.

It doesn't say the father seeks workers. The father seeks worshipers. And I've heard people raise questions about that.

Isn't that kind of selfish of God to want people to worship him? How would you answer that? Well, let me say this. Every command in the scripture is given more for our good than it is for his. Did you ever think of that? Every command of scripture, I don't care what it is, even if you go back to the Ten Commandments, they're given for our good rather than for his.

You say, well, what's our good when the father seeks worshipers? I'll tell you what's for our good. You become in life what you worship. That's why it's good for us.

It's absolutely a principle of the word of God. You become in life what you worship. And the more you worship the Lord Jesus, the more you become like him.

Does it say that in the Bible? Yes, it certainly does. 2 Corinthians 3, 18. Let me go over that verse just item by item.

But we all, all Christians, Beholding as in a mirror, the mirror is the word of God. Beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. We go and we read not only about his glory as a man here on earth, but his glory at the right hand of God just now.

The glory of the risen, ascended Lord Jesus Christ. And we sing gazing on the Lord in glory while our hearts in worship bow. There we read the wonder story of his cross, shame and woe.

Beholding as a glass, the glory of the Lord. Are changed into the same image. A marvelous transformation takes place as we worship the Lord.

Are changed into the same image. What does it mean? Becomes more Christ-like. That's what it means.

Becomes more Christ-like. From glory to glory. That means from one stage of glory.

It's not all just an instant transformation. It takes place in stages. From one stage of glory to another.

How does this take place? Even as by the spirit of the Lord. He works it in our lives. And this is one of the great foundational verses of the Christian life.

2 Corinthians 3.18. Changed by beholding. I've read of couples and they lived together so long that actually they began to look like one another. Husband and wife.

Have you heard that? Well, I don't know if it's true in the natural realm, but it's certainly true in the spiritual realm. So, worship is central. What worship is not? Worship is not listening to a sermon.

Today in the Christian world, and I don't feel harshly about this. Generally speaking, in churches today, the 11 o'clock service on Sunday morning is called the worship service. Where you go and listen to a man give a message.

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