

**Bible e-Study - “Living Life Worshipping God” #1**  
**Sanctuary – what is it and why do we have one**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.* Colossians 3:1-2

**NUGGET** – This week we start a new series “**Living Life Worshipping God**” - *The How’s and Whys of what we do on Sunday mornings and what that means in daily life.* Don’t overlook the last portion of that last sentence – ‘*and what that means in daily life.*’ We are going to be looking in detail at all the various things we do on Sunday morning in the context of what those things mean for us both in worship and in how we live the rest of the week.

So today we look at the nugget verse from Paul’s epistle to the Colossians and hear him tell us that Christ, seated at the right hand of God in heaven, is where we put focus, where we set our hearts. A sanctuary can help us do that. The architecture, the plan, the layout, how the space is used can all help us to follow the admonition of St. Paul. We have a living history of this when we look at the buildings, the cathedrals, churches and sanctuaries that past generations of faithful Christians have built. They were often built of stone or brick, permanent types of materials – and they used, among other features:

- high ceilings
- stained glass to enhance the light within the worship space
- the form of a cross for the layout

Some of these features could be seen both inside and outside the building. They were also often located on busy thoroughfares or in the center of the city or town.

St. Paul tells us to *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things* for the reason that that is where Christ is seated. How often do you drive by our sanctuary in the week? Or how often in the week do you look at the bulletin or prayer list and recall sitting in the sanctuary? Perhaps you start humming a hymn or song we sang and find your mind returning to worship. Our worship and how and where we do that all have the goal that Paul sets before us to *set your hearts on things above, where Christ is.*

As we venture into this review of worship and what we do, be mindful of this thought from Colossians. Much of what we will look at is ‘adiaphora’ that is ‘free or indifferent things’ in that there is no specific command of God regarding how we do what we do. But this word from St. Paul will often be the reason behind what it is that we do. And that reason is where we want to focus our hearts every day.

**APPLICATION** - Consider what benefits come to you by being in church regularly

1. Before coming to church – stop and pray and give some thought to who all meets you there?
2. Maybe when you arrive at church, stop before you walk in and take a good look at the building and the grounds. Give thanks to God for those who had the foresight and stewardship to provide this place. What legacy did they give us that we want to continue and pass on to future generations of Christians?

**PRAY** - Ask God to guide you in your worship this week – to help set your mind on Christ and the building of His church, His holy body, both here on earth in the fellowship of the saints and in heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God in the eternal Sanctuary.

## GOING DEEPER

“*Living Life Worshipping God*” - *The How’s and Whys of what we do on Sunday mornings and what that means in daily life.*

### Session 1

[John 4:19-26](#)

[1 Cor 14:26-33; 40](#)

[Col 2:16-3:4](#)

#### CONCERNING THE ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

The service now in common use everywhere goes back to genuine Christian beginnings, as does the office of preaching. But as the latter has been perverted by the spiritual tyrants, so the former has been corrupted by the hypocrites. As we do not on that account abolish the office of preaching, but aim to restore it again to its right and proper place, so it is not our intention to do away with the service, but to restore it again to its rightful use.

Three serious abuses have crept into the service. First, God’s Word has been silenced, and only reading and singing remain in the churches. This is the worst abuse. Second, when God’s Word had been silenced such a host of un-Christian fables and lies, in legends, hymns, and sermons were introduced that it is horrible to see. Third, such divine service was performed as a work whereby God’s grace and salvation might be won. As a result, faith disappeared and everyone pressed to enter the priesthood, convents, and monasteries, and to build churches and endow them.

*Now in order to correct these abuses, know first of all that a Christian congregation should never gather together without the preaching of God’s Word and prayer, no matter how briefly, as Psalm 102<sup>1</sup> says, “When the kings and the people assemble to serve the Lord, they shall declare the name and the praise of God.” And Paul in I Corinthians 14 [:26–31] says that when they come together, there should be prophesying, teaching, and admonition.<sup>2</sup> **Therefore, when God’s Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read, or even come together.***

This was the custom among Christians at the time of the apostles and should also be the custom now. We should assemble daily at four or five in the morning and have [God’s Word] read, either by pupils or priests, or whoever it may be, in the same manner as the lesson is still read at Matins; this should be done by one or two, or by one individual or choir after responding to the other,<sup>3</sup> as may seem most suitable.

Thereupon the preacher, or whoever has been appointed, shall come forward and interpret a part of the same lesson, so that all others may understand and learn it, and be admonished. The former<sup>4</sup> is called by Paul in I Corinthians 14 [:27] “speaking in tongues.” The other he calls “interpreting” or “prophesying,” or “speaking with sense or understanding.” If this is not done, the congregation is not benefited by the lesson, as has been the case in cloisters and in convents, where they only bawled against the walls.

The lesson should be taken from the Old Testament; one of the books should be selected and one or two chapters, or half a chapter, be read, until the book is finished. After that another book should be selected, and so on, until the entire Bible has been read through; and where one does not understand it, pass on, and give glory to God. Thus Christian people will by daily training become proficient, skilful, and well versed in the Bible. For this is how genuine Christians were made in former times—both virgins and martyrs—and could also be made today.

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<sup>1</sup> A conflation and free rendering of Ps. 102:21–22.

<sup>2</sup> When Luther refers to I Corinthians 14, he assumes that the Scriptures are read in Latin, a practice he associates with speaking in tongues. Hence teaching and admonition, i.e., explanation of the lesson, should follow for the benefit of those who do not understand the Latin. WA 18, 124–125; WA 12, 31.

<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to the two parts of a chancel choir which face each other in the stalls.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., the reading of the lesson just mentioned.

Now when the lesson and its interpretation have lasted half an hour or so, the congregation shall unite in giving thanks to God, in praising him, and in praying for the fruits of the Word, etc. For this, the Psalms should be used and some good responsories and antiphons. In brief, let everything be completed in one hour or whatever time seems desirable; for one must not overload souls or weary them, as was the case until now in monasteries and convents, where they burdened themselves like mules.

In like manner, come together at five or six in the evening. At this time one should really read again the Old Testament, book by book, namely the Prophets, even as Moses and the historical books are taken up in the morning. But since the New Testament is also a book, I read the Old Testament in the morning and the New Testament in the evening, or vice versa, and have reading, interpreting, praising, singing, and praying just as in the morning, also for an hour. For all that matters is that the Word of God be given free reign to uplift and quicken souls so that they do not become weary.

Should one desire to hold another such service during the day after lunch, that is a matter of choice.

And although these daily services might not be attended by the whole congregation, the priests and pupils, and especially those who, one hopes, will become good preachers and pastors,<sup>5</sup> should be present. And one should admonish them to do this willingly, not reluctantly or by constraint, or for the sake of reward, temporal or eternal, but alone to the glory of God and the neighbor's good.

**Besides these daily services for a smaller group, the whole congregation should come together on Sundays, and mass and Vespers be sung, as has been customary. In both services there should be preaching for the whole congregation, in the morning on the Gospel for the day, in the evening on the Epistle; or the preacher may use his own judgment whether he would want to preach on a certain book or two.**

**If anyone desires to receive the sacrament at this time, let it be administered at a time convenient to all concerned.**

The daily masses should be completely discontinued; for the Word is important and not the mass. But if any should desire the sacrament during the week, let mass be held as inclination and time dictate; for in this matter one cannot make hard and fast rules.

**Let the chants in the Sunday masses and Vespers be retained; they are quite good and are taken from Scripture.** However, one may lessen or increase their number. But to select the chants and Psalms for the daily morning and evening service shall be the duty of the pastor<sup>6</sup> and preacher. For every morning he shall appoint a fitting responsory or antiphon with a collect, likewise for the evening; this is to be read and chanted publicly after the lesson and exposition. But for the time being we can shelve the antiphons, responsories, and collects, as well as the legends of the saints and the cross, until they have been purged, for there is a horrible lot of filth in them.

All the festivals of saints are to be discontinued. Where there is a good Christian legend, it may be inserted as an example after the Gospel on Sunday. The festivals of the Purification and Annunciation of Mary may be continued, and for the time being also her Assumption and Nativity, although the songs in them are not pure. The festival of John the Baptist is also pure. Not one of the legends of the apostles is pure, except St. Paul's. They may either be transferred to the [closest] Sunday or be celebrated separately, if one so desires.

Other matters will adjust themselves as the need arises. **And this is the sum of the matter: Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that has been the rule up to now. We can spare everything except the Word. Again, we profit by nothing as much as by the Word. For the whole Scripture shows that the Word should have free course among Christians. And in Luke 10 [:42], Christ himself says, "One**

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<sup>5</sup> Seelsorge.

<sup>6</sup> Pfarrer.

**thing is needful,” i.e., that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and hear his word daily. This is the best part to choose and it shall not be taken away forever. It is an eternal Word. Everything else must pass away, no matter how much care and trouble it may give Martha. God help us achieve this. Amen.**

Why Lutherans Worship the Way we do. *The external parts of our way of worshipping*

1. *Where we do Divine Service*
  - a. Sacred space - Sanctuary
  - b. Nave
    - i. Bibles / hymn books
    - ii. Pews / Kneelers
    - iii. Baptismal font
  - c. Chancel
    - i. Altar / altar railing / cross
    - ii. Pulpit / lectern, candles, flowers
    - iii. Communion vessels
2. *How Divine Service is done*
  - a. Church life
    - i. Word and Sacrament ministry
  - b. The Church Year
    - i. Pericopes
    - ii. Propers
    - iii. Prayers
3. *What is included in Divine Service - Liturgy*
  - a. Preparation for Divine Service
    - i. Confession
    - ii. Absolution
  - b. Service of the word
    - i. Introit
    - ii. Kyrie
    - iii. Gloria
    - iv. Collect
    - v. Gradual
    - vi. Creed
    - vii. Hymn of the day
    - viii. Sermon
    - ix. Offering
      1. Offertory
    - x. Prayer of the church
  - c. Service of Holy Communion
    - i. Preface / proper preface
    - ii. Lord's prayer
    - iii. Words of institution
    - iv. Peace and angus dei
    - v. Post communion canticle / nunc dimittis
  - d. Benediction
    - i. Aaronic

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<sup>1</sup>Luther, M. (1999, c1965). *Vol. 53: Luther's works, vol. 53 : Liturgy and Hymns* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (53:11). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

ii. others

Today we are going to talk about our place of worship and why we have a sanctuary and introduce what its main parts are.

**Sacred space**

The area in front of the altar railing, the large part of the church with the pews in it, is known as the nave and it gets its name from the Latin for boat.