

God's Love Goes Out: Worship

Scripture: Acts 2: 42-47
Date: June 28, 2020

SEEKING

Maranatha CRC – YYC – has been on a journey in the last 6 months. A Vision quest to see God more clearly - who He is and what He's done and a quest to see ourselves more clearly - who we are and what we're called to do in response.

After Pentecost – we looked intentionally at the church - what was is about and what did that mean for us today? The disciples had the power and the promise of the Holy Spirit but what did the potential mean or look like. We noted that the early church was devoted & committed to a number of things – but where to start.

The church has grown through many phases and seasons through the last 2,000 years but it seems like the last hundred or so have been amongst the most confusing and chaotic. Over the next several weeks we're going on a journey to see if we can find clarity or a Vision 2020 in what the church is all about. We're building an illustration of the church using Acts 2: 42-47, using Maranatha YYC and using a simple structure to look at the parts of the church of how they work and how they interact.

There is an old church song or hymn - The Church's One Foundation Is Jesus Christ Her Lord. In other words – worship will become our foundation

SACRED

MONUMENTS

Now we know the world has difficulty with the idea of the church – many Christians do too !! Issues that the church is only used on Sunday mornings or that church buildings are often dated and old fashioned or that God is not limited to a building.

It's like the church is a monument to something old and gone. Now in 2020 we know that many monuments are a reflection of a world that is incorrect and ugly and sinful and many are being torn down.

It's true that the definition of a monument IS - a *representative of a person or event*. But the question before us is *IF the church is a monument – what is it representing*. IF it's representing Christians then it's quite likely missing the mark . BUT what if it's supposed to represent something more than the people but the God who has called the people.

In the text today from Acts 2 we can see the early church was devoted to attending church on a regular basis – daily in fact. There was something about going to the temple – the church building – that was normal even expected for them. If we read further back into the story prior to the Pentecost they were gathered in prayer daily at the temple.

There can be – IS – something about a church building that CAN be a representative of God Himself. Older cathedrals with their impressive artwork create a sense of awe and peace within the sanctuary – a space to get away from the chaos and the confusion of the world and connect with the blessings of God

MOMENTS

Last week we affirmed that part of the church's experience is sacred moments – holy moments. The presence of God in our world – even in the pain and suffering of the world – that God would still exist with hope, with healing, with redemption, with restoration, with love. They become times and places that stand out as affirmations that God IS.

The bible speaks of such moments through Moses in front of a burning bush, through Paul on the road to Damascus, through Elijah in a cave and through the disciples in a boat in a storm. The early church was in AWE of the signs and wonders done by the apostles – as they had been when Jesus did them

Today's text of Isaiah describes him having a vision before the Lord God almighty. A vision that drops him to his knees as he sees and recognizes God in all His glory. It becomes a sacred moment. Those sacred moments that are about God and not about us. Those times – big or small – where we recognize God more than we recognize us.

They are times that transcend knowing ABOUT God but rather being WITH God. They are times where we transcend speaking AT God but rather TO God.

STORY

WHY NARRATIVE

In Isaiah 6 God speaks but a response is called for. Isaiah offers up a confession in his new understanding and revelation of God. God forgives and then calls Isaiah into obedience. It's an interaction – an engagement between two parties. Two unequal parties yet two parties that are yoked through a covenant agreement.

It calls upon a response of yielding and surrendering to one that is greater. In reading Walter Wangerin Jr. devotional Gift and Task – I was struck that the one we worship is wholly beyond us in mystery - Yet - we are invited to join in the worship of the heavenly beings. So, we yield ourselves to the moment and to the monument (representative) of God in Jesus Christ.

The why we worship is based entirely on the person and the work of Jesus Christ. All the other aspects of church – all the other aspects of Christianity – derive out of this simple truth. That God is and God does and that response leads us into worship.

HOW NARRATIVE

Last fall we did a series of services based on the parts of worship. Part of the underlying thrust was a quote by Louis Giglio from a book entitled The Air I Breathe which is summarized as *Worship is a response (all we are and do) to God (for all He is and all He's done)*

Worship is a form of worth ship or giving value or worth. Worship should acknowledge, accept and affirming God's work for us – in us and ultimately through us. Worship is about giving God the highest priority, value and worth in our lives?

WHERE NARRATIVE

The church building is a gathering place – a connecting place and the worship service in the building empowers all this. Yet the building should not be the focus of the worship. As a monument – the church should not be the focus - neither the mission nor the ministries, neither the pastor nor the prayers or the praises. BUT rather the Christ who gathers the people, who guards the people and who guides the people. The church building is the building but the church people are the blessing.

Worship is also more than just music – more more than just a Sunday service. Romans 12: 1 speaks of our surrendered lives as acts of worship. Romans 15: 13 speaks of constantly bringing sacrifices of praise to God. The Westminster Catechism # 1 responds to a question of what is the chief end of humanity and the answer is *to glorify (worship) God and enjoy Him forever*

Covid 19 has kept us from gathering here BUT social distancing does not mean spiritual distancing. We have been unable to meet here at the building BUT that doesn't mean God has been unable to meet with you. Calling to a greater depth and passion of worship.

STABILITY

Worship is a foundational part of what church is and what church does. It gives stability to the church as it moves in all aspects of its calling. But worship is first and foremost focused on the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then is founded – in faith – as a response through the promise for what is yet to come for the kingdom of God through the church.