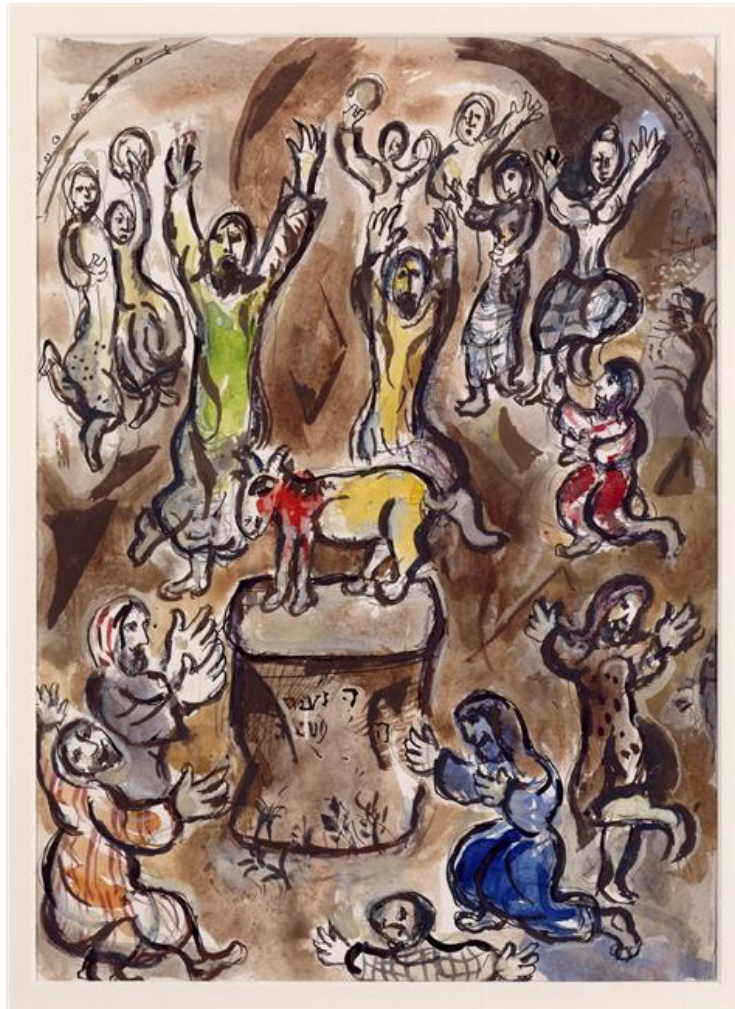


True Worship

What are we doing at Church?



Fall 2019

Purpose of this class:

- Understand the elements of true worship as revealed in Scripture;
- Draw insights about modern Sunday morning worship by considering ancient practices described in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the writings of the early church;
- Understand and appreciate the Reformation distinctive in corporate worship, especially in the practice of communion and preaching;
- Draw comparisons of practice between various worship traditions including Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox;
- Apply insights each week to our lives.

Schedule:

- September 15 – A class overview and “What is worship?”
- September 22 – Only the true God gets our worship
- September 29 – What is idolatry?
- October 6 – Worship and the place of liturgy
- October 13 – Worship and the place of sacrifice
- October 20 and 27 – NO CLASS
- November 3 – What did the early church do?
- November 10 – The Word and the oral reading of Scripture
- November 17 – The Word and the act of preaching a sermon
- November 24 – The Word and the role of music
- December 1 – Passover’s influences in the Lord’s Supper
- December 8 – Giving as worship
- December 15 – Similarities and differences between believers

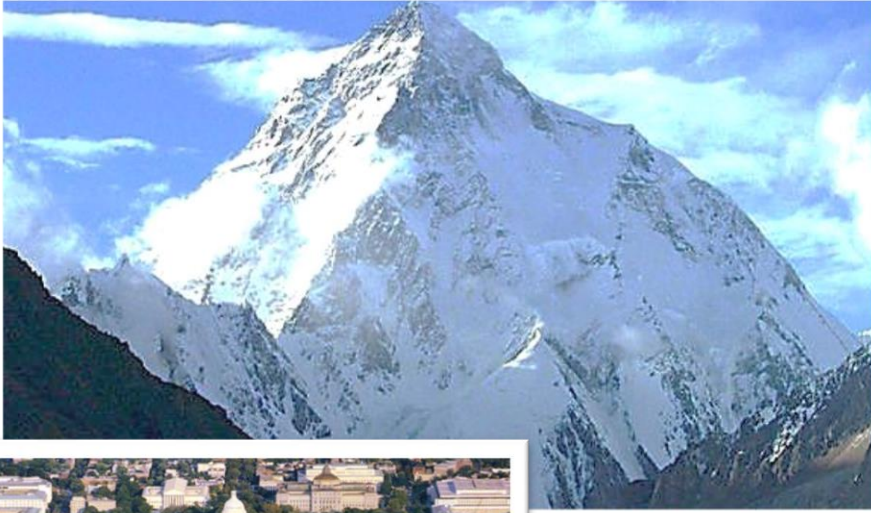
Materials:

- Weekly class handouts by Paul Edwards
- **OPTIONAL** -- *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* by Bob Kauflin, Crossway Books, 2008; or *Worship by the Book* by D.A. Carson, Zondervan, 2002

Get Acquainted:

- Please share your name, how long you have been associated with FCCH, and if you have previously studied worship in a class or seminar.
- What is one thing you hope to gain from this class?

Maybe it was by yourself or with others, describe a memorable worship experience.



Why would you call it worship?



What is worship?

The English word "worship" comes from two Old English words: *weorth*, which means "worth," and *scipe* or *ship*, which means something like shape or "quality." We can see the Old English word -ship in modern words like friendship and sportsmanship – that's the quality of being a friend, or the quality of being a good sport. So *worth-ship* is the quality of having worth or of being worthy. Worship asserts the reality of its object and defines its meaning by reference to it.

When we worship, we are saying someone or something is worthy. In Christianity, worship is reverent honor and homage paid to God. In the New Testament various words are used for worship. The word *proskuneo* "to worship" means to bow down to Gods or kings. The Bible uses this word in at least three ways:

1. Worship can refer to the whole life of the believer. We are to live our lives for God and under God. We should seek to have all we do become loving service to him. The Apostle Paul had this in mind when he wrote in his letter to the Roman believers:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, which is your reasonable service of worship. (Romans 12:1-2).

2. Worship can refer to those personal times of prayer, praise, reflection, or Bible reading when we focus on God. King David worshiped as he prayed and sang alone at night:

*On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.
Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. (Ps. 63:6-7)*

3. Worship can refer to times when Christians gather as a believing community to praise God. This form of worship is commended and commanded in the Scriptures.

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:25).

The Psalms celebrate this privilege of corporate worship:

Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. (Ps. 111:1)

In your experience why are all three dimensions of worship helpful?

You are an ancient Greek deity. Briefly describe the essential elements of satisfactory worship that you require.

How will a worshiper know you are pleased?

What are your ritual stipulations?

What special aesthetic requirements do you have – music, light, smells, etc.?

Any ‘no-nos’ when worshipping you?

Why do you require worship?

Where and when do you want to be worshipped?

What materials are acceptable to you as offerings?

Who is your preferred worship leader?



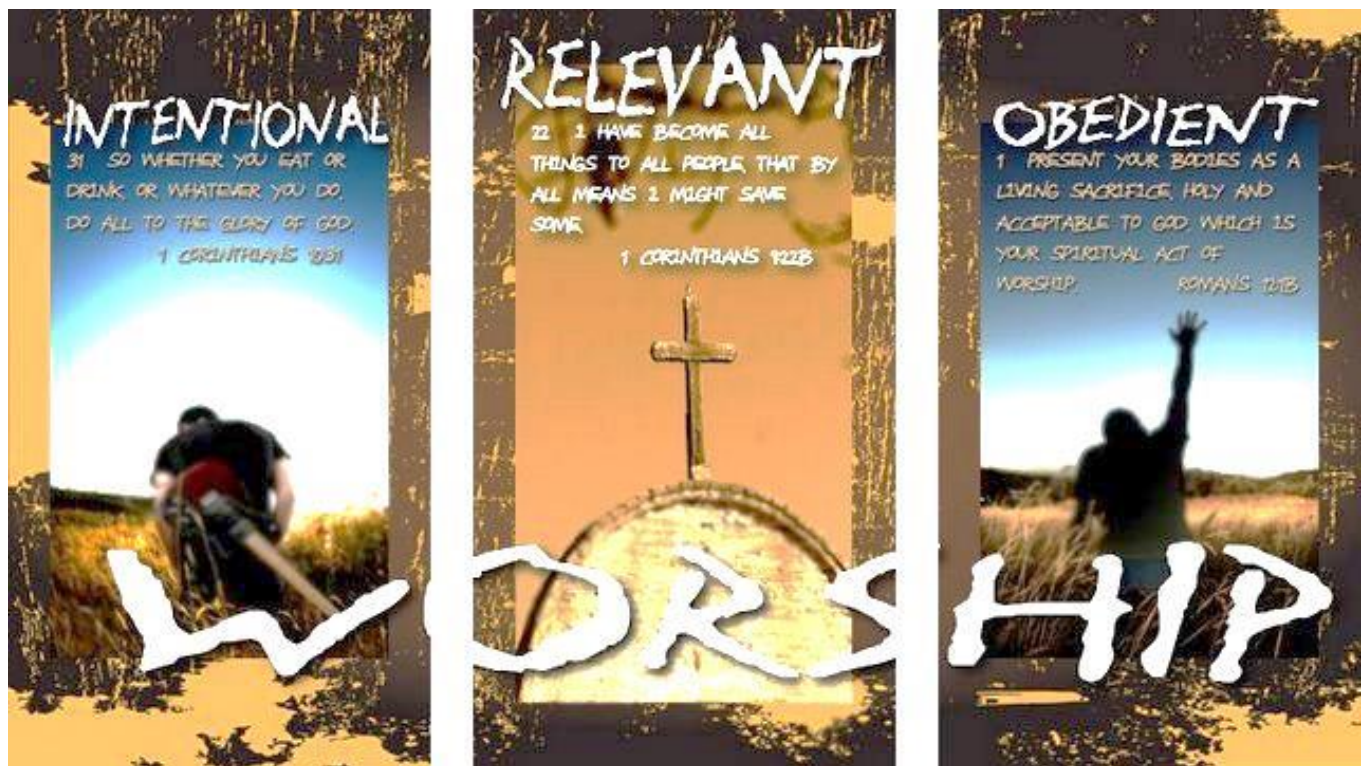
What will a worshiper get in return?

How frequently must you be worshiped?

Believers are to draw near to God through Christ. This is despite the fact that we experience a distance between ourselves and God that only the work of Christ can bridge. We draw near to Him personally and individually in devotion, meditation, and prayer; but we also draw near to him by meeting with Him in the fellowship of His people. It's here on Sundays, that God promises to be especially present (Matt. 18:20). We meet with God when the people of God meet together, pray together, sing together, and listen to his Word together.

At First Congregational Church in Hamilton, we get to cultivate a personal, whole-life and community-embracing experience of worship that is growing and developing. This journey is an old one, and congregations since the first century have seen this as the essential means God has given to help us grow. Here's how the writer of Hebrew put it:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-22)



In what ways is our worship intentional? How can our worship be made relevant to life? What does it look like to be obedient in worship?

A worship bibliography:

Space for God by Don Postema. Through readings, art, meditation, and prayer, this contemporary classic provides an inviting guide for spiritual living. Using the art of Van Gogh and the writings of John Calvin, Thomas Merton, Henri J. M. Nouwen, C. S. Lewis, and others, author Don Postema offers a series of meditative readings and spiritual exercises that deepen our faith

The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God: Their Meaning in the Christian Life by A.W. Tozer. This book causes our souls to meditate upon the wonders of God.

Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts by Harold Best. This book casts a grand vision for worship.

Next Generation Leader: 5 Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future by Andy Stanley.

Who Stole My Church? By Gordon MacDonald. This book gives an insightful glimpse into how the older generation feels about new waves of worship.

Knowing God by J.I. Packer. Similar to Tozer's classic on the attributes of God, *Knowing God* reminds us of the glory and essence of God, and how these bear upon our hearts.

Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the past for the present by Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey. A useful tool for anyone interested in crafting public worship services in the great tradition of the early Reformers.