

An Introduction to a Theology of Worship - Week 1

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Introduction and the Trinity

The first movement of Bach's Mass in B minor (whole piece comes in just under 2 hours) Kyrie Elieson (Lord, Have Mercy). One is struck by the grandeur and majesty- what was Bach trying to get at? And do we even need people doing what Bach did? Can't we just read about it, read systematic theologies? or listen to sermons and lectures?

Video of Kseniya Simonova's sand animation performance art (Ukraine's Got Talent, and forgive the cheesy crowd shots) a story of Ukraine and WWII
(ends with the message "you are always near")

what's the difference between this performance and a telling of the story? Or a reading of the story?

How does art go to a different place than words?

not beyond words, but a different sphere

Introduction:

Mark 14:1-11

Woman (the artist): wanted more of the presence of Jesus
not even any kind of disciplined or specified art work, demonstration of authentic Christ following

characterized by **love**

Judas (the terrorist): wanted none of the presence of Jesus
sought to betray and murder the one he should have been following

characterized by **hate**

Disciples (the *church*): flagrant pragmatists. What good is this? What good is art?

characterized by **snobbery**

The question of "Why art?" is a question of "Why life?"

Tolstoy: Art is not a pleasure , a solace or an amusement; art is a great matter. Art is an organ of human life, transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling.

Art is the task of using the world that is, and creating a world that ought to be. An attempt to create and imagine a better world.

In the reality of darkness and despair, art has the ability and the right to create positive moments that are free from mere escapism.

Art is society's existential statement, in answer to the question, "Why live?"

Art is making us look at the "unnecessary" parts of life. There are many flavors to food- but the body can survive fine without them, why are they there? They're unnecessary? Creation is not "necessary", but an overflow of the inter-Trinitarian love. We are not necessary- God is not ultimately dependent on us, His kingdom will move on, but God, in an abundance of Trinitarian grace, saw it fit for us to exist. We are unnecessary, but we exist.

To God, we are *not* unnecessary- God has purpose when he creates. He is not arbitrary. We may never be able to explain the *why*, but the situation remains: we exist.

Art calls us to look at this. Can humanity survive without art? It's part of our nature- the imago Dei necessitates that we be creative.

Jesus affirms the woman's attempt of basking in the presence of Jesus, calls it "beautiful"

for us:

May we not scoff at beauty, may we not want to remove the presence of the Lord

May we be able to humbly submit to what is beautiful, seeking to create that with our lives.

It involves **taking time**. Some of the pieces we encounter will be hard to get, hard to listen to, and maybe you won't get it right away, or even soon. But that doesn't mean it's pointless. Like anything hard/worthwhile, time is required by the participant.

It involves **active participation**. As we experience a broad range of theological topics and art, let's try to not keep a cold distance. Put yourself inside the

theology, inside the work. Let it affect you, that is, let your emotions become involved (as well as your brain).

outline of the class

Website info:

<http://www.gregwillson.com/intro-worship-class>

or go to gregwillson.com, listed under “resources”

Intro terms:

Three perspectives: God, Us (personally), our environment (including people, culture, history, etc.)

ought versus is and is

errors when sticking to one perspective: legalism, emotionalism, utilitarianism/situational ethics

Vertical and Horizontal:

vertical- our worship is directed to our triune God for his pleasure
beware false piety: we should suspend/not address all human needs in worship.
Our God wants to bless his people when they worship.
There is no dichotomy between worshiping God and loving people

Matt. 22:34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

also...

worshippers should not ignore the needs of the poor:

Isa. 1:10-17

1Jn 4:20-21

1 Cor 14:26

1Cor 14 is all about making the worship service itself understandable to all- especially to those outside the church.

I think we're afraid people won't see God if we "condescend" to this, but what does v. 25 say?

25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

We need to speak the language (and this is more than just speech)

"Worship that is unedifying or unevangelistic may not properly claim to be God-centered." Frame, WiSaT, p. 8

So how we do orient ourselves horizontally without creating man-centered worship?

Proper concern for worshipers does not mean catering to all their wants

this cancels out entertainment (or should). this also cancels out airs of self-righteousness (or should).

Focused on the gospel, worship means caring for each other, building up the unity of our fellowship in Christ

Transcendence and Immanence:

Rectangle Diagram

Christian worldview of transcendence: controller, *authority* (sovereignty)

non-Christian worldview of transcendence: too far away, unknowable (agnosticism)

Christian worldview of immanence: *presence* (Jn 1:14)

non-Christian worldview of immanence: God becomes creation (pantheism, etc.)

a biblical view of transcendence corrects the non-biblical view of immanence

a biblical view of immanence corrects the non-biblical view of transcendence

Broad and Narrow

Broad: Ro 12:1

Narrow: formal worship practices: Leviticus

God is never pleased with the narrow aspect of worship, if the broad aspect is overlooked:

Mic 6:6-8

hyperbole in Ps. 51:16-17

In OT, we get many specifics on how to do narrow worship, not so much in the NT. Not surprising, temple worship is no more, and we are all priests (1 Pet 2:5, 9) offering spiritual sacrifices

So all of life is worship

And when we meet together we can call it worship (as long as we have the right definition- it is not the music only)

It is the Sunday Morning Worship Service

The Trinity

Teaching:

in OT:

Ps. 110:1, Isa 63:10, 48:16 (especially as fully revealed in NT as messianic prophecy)

Prov 8:30-31: wisdom as Christ? but what about created? Heb. here is not bara, but qanah (occurs 84x, almost always means "to get, acquire") NASB rendering is best as "possessed"

in NT:

Matt 3:16-17

Father is speaking from heaven, Son is baptized then being spoken to, Spirit is descending from heaven to rest upon Jesus

1Cor 12:4-6

2Cor 13:14

Jud 20-21

Biblical summation

- 1. God is three persons.**
- 2. Each person is fully God.**
- 3. There is one God.**

1. God is three persons.

Son is distinct

Jn 1:1-2

"with God" shows distinction from the Father

1 Jn 2:1, Heb 7:25

distinct actions

Spirit is a Person

“he” Jn 14:26, 15:26, 16:13-14

teaches

bears witness

interceding or praying on behalf of others

searching the depths of God

distributing gifts

Thomas Tallis (medieval) - Spem in Alium (8 choirs of 5 voices each = 40 different voices!)

diversity can have coherence, beauty, peace

lyrics:

English translation

I have never put my hope in any other but in you,

O God of Israel

who can show both anger

and graciousness,

and who absolves all the sins of suffering man

Lord God,

Creator of Heaven and Earth

be mindful of our lowliness

2. Each person is fully God.

The Father is clearly God

Gen 1:1

Son is fully God

Jn 1:1-4

Jehovah's witness excursus

a god - an issue with Colwell's rule. This is the only place JWs take a seemingly random exception to the rule. All other places in John (vv. 6, 12, 13, 18) they translate "God." No Greek scholar has ever agreed with them.

A tract that they produced themselves explains the rule, but doesn't offer any reason for exception to the rule.

other evidence:

Heb 1:1-4 - "exact imprint" "exact representation" "duplicate being"

1:8 - Son is God

Ro 9:5

Isa 9:6

Spirit is also fully God

Matt 28:19 - classified on equal level

Acts 5:3-4 - Holy Spirit - God

Ps. 139:7-8 - divine characteristic of omnipresence and the Spirit, also equating Spirit with God's presence

3. There is one God.

shema

Deut 6:4-5

Isa. 45:5-6

1Tim 2:5

Ro 3:30

John Tavener- The Lamb example

purity of one-ness

Eastern Orthodox, chant influence

Hasegawa Tōhaku (16th century)- Pine Trees screens (six screens, ink on paper)

simplicity can have beauty and peace

The Trinity is not a pizza pie.

Each Person is fully God (each is the full being), not 1/3 God

The Persons of the Trinity are not toppings on a pizza.

Personal distinctions (the toppings) are not added on top to the being of God (the pizza)

The Persons of the Trinity are not just 3 different ways of looking at God.

Each is complete being in himself, each is distinct personality

Hard to understand because we do not have any experience like this.

The limitations of Trinitarian analogies (3 stages of water, etc.)

The limitations of using physical representation

only one thing can occupy one space at one time

Our predominant sense is sight: we use the physical plane more than any other, even in Protestantism

The possibilities with sound

more than one thing can occupy a soundspace at one time

fully God, yet distinct personality: there is a completeness of sound, and a separation of distinct personalities simultaneously.

Antoine Dufour - Funky Tonk Guitar Trio

Jon Butler Trio - Better Than first :20

Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15 - Allegro Ma Non Troppo

1. listen for the different parts
2. now listen for the sound as a whole

there can be one and many occupying one space at the same time.

Exercise with chords

play a G
have them sing a G

play a G major cord
have them sing whichever note they choose

That is the Trinity: one sound and 3 sounds at the same time in the same space.

Distinction in the same place, each voice is audible.

J .R. R. Tolkien in the Silmarillion, writes that the world was created by the singing of a song

Trinity's practical application to us: Community

The 3 note chord resonates outward. We are to be the song of God's own trinitarian life in the midst of creation, both inside and outside the church.

technology brings us together, separates us

the cell phone: efficiency of Nextel commercials and the community of AT&T commercial

the iPod thing on car road trips
myspace, facebook, etc. as mediated relationships offering false sense of intimacy

when we sing together on Sundays, we are not just asserting theological truth.

not only should the words preach to us, but the medium itself should preach to us. We are singing in harmony with our brothers and sisters.

Our sound on Sunday would be something different if you weren't there, or if one of your friends weren't there.

each voice is different (each Person is different, and so each person is different), but there is a unity in diversity. In fact, our unity is *dependent* on diversity. Christianity the only community where that is consistently true?

stops us from being a tribe of individuals- using community for an individualist's end