

Sanctifying Jehovah in Worship (7) Scripture Reading

The Centrality of the Holy Scriptures in Worship

If this is the first time you are attending a worship service in a Reformed Church, you will be struck immediately that the Word of God is given great prominence. As you enter the sanctuary, you will immediately be reminded that the Bible is central. Often, Reformed churches will have a huge open bible in front of the pulpit. This signifies that in this church, the Bible is read and expounded.

And the Worship Service begins with the reading a verse or a short portion of God's Word, which constitutes a "call to worship". Then, there is salutation and vatum, where the minister of God's Word calls upon the holy congregation to look to the Lord for help. The singing is often from the words of Scripture. And before the preaching of God's Word there is the reading of the Scriptures with the view of preaching. And the Worship Service ends with the benediction, often from the words of II Cor. 13.14.

Scripture Reading is an Act of Worship

The reading of the Holy Scriptures is an act of worship. How is this so? From the Word of God, we learn how to approach God in reverence and awe because He is the Almighty, Sovereignty and Creator of heaven and earth. Furthermore, we worship God in the truth of God's Word in the singing of the Psalms, a song-book given to the church for the praise of His name. We use the very words of God to worship the Lord in praise and adoration to God. And so, without the Word of God present in the Worship Service, an important and indispensable element of worship is absent and God is not present in the Worship Service!

Benefits of Scripture Reading

The reading of the Word of God also prepares us to hear the preaching of God's Word. Often, a larger portion of Scripture is read and out of which a text for the preaching of God's Word is chosen. We must remember that the Bible is not just another book that you read, but it's the very Word of God. It is inspired or "God-breathed", infallible and inerrant Word of God. God himself speaks through the reading of the Holy Scriptures. And so to have an accurate translation is of great importance since we do not have the autographs today. Having a poorly translated version of the Bible leads us astray and gives us a wrong meaning. The Authorised Version or the King James Version is the most accurate English translation that is available in the market. It is one of the few versions that translate word for word from the original. Generally, the rest may be readable but it is not a word of word translation but part literal and part paraphrasing.

In the reading of God's Word, He has a word of doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction for us (II Ti. 3.16) so that we may be perfect and equipped to do all good works.

Scriptural Proofs

I offer the following proofs that demonstrate the reading of the Scriptures is an element in the worship service.

Luke 4.16 And he (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Acts 13.15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Col. 4.16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

I The. 5.27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Our attitudes towards Scripture Reading

When the Holy Scriptures are read we are to have an open Bible and we are to pay the greatest attention to the words as they are read as God is speaking to us through His Word. Furthermore, we are to follow the reading in a way so as to understand the passage, which is read. And our prayer to the Lord must be, "speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth". Amen.

May the Lord edify us through the reading of God's Word.

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