



Sermon Growth Guide

January 28, 2024

Church On Purpose – Worship the Lord with Me

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 3:7

“So neither the one who plants, nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”

Big Idea: The object of our worship must be God alone who has saved us. True worship witnesses to the saving power of God.

Foundations

As Paul continues his letter to the church at Corinth, he gets increasingly critical. Speaking the truth in love, he describes what has gone wrong and why. When we read his words at the end of chapter 2, we should be greatly encouraged by a sense of wonder at what the Lord has given us.

That gift is the mind of Christ! Paul says this way of thinking is available to us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When we depend on the Spirit to guide our thinking and behavior, we will live according to the will of God. Our spiritual nature will be revealed by the way in which we treat one another in the Body of Christ.

In his sermon, Pastor Tim mentioned that while the Corinthian church had begun to worship together, they had “carted in all sorts of patterns from their past lives.” Thus, Paul concludes that while they are Christians, they are “worldly” Christians.

Something needs to change so that the way in which one lives is pleasing to God. But when we live like Jesus, we are, like the apostles and the saints before us, servants of the gospel.

The manner of our lives, personally and corporately bears witness to the new life God has made possible by the saving work of Jesus on the cross. When we trust in that, true worship is possible.

Understanding God’s Word

Read together 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.

In admonishing this congregation, Paul does not say that their behavior indicates that they are not Christians. Rather, he describes them as “worldly” (or as the King James says, “carnal”) Christians.

How does their worldliness manifest itself? Paul says that in their spiritual maturity, they can only receive “milk, not solid food.” What do you think is the “milk” he is talking about? What do you think would qualify as “solid food?” (See Hebrews 11:5-6:3)

Applying God’s Word

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul also instructs about the spiritual life. Read Galatians 5:13-26. Paul tells us that when we live according to the Spirit, we will love our neighbor and serve one another “humbly in love.” In what ways do you think life in the Spirit will affect the worship of a congregation? How can that spiritual worship draw in others?

Witnessing God’s Word

Refresh your memory of the woman at the well in John 4. When you think of her witness and worship, in what ways are you motivated to invite others into life with and worship of Jesus?

We are planting a new church! It's called First Pres, and it meets right here. I've asked you to imagine we're launching a church, a new movement to reach Colorado Springs for Christ. Here is our method, this cheater card, our way to do **Church on Purpose**. Community Members become Participants. But the biggest shift, the most monumental change that can happen in a person's life, is when someone comes to call Jesus Savior and Lord, they become a new person. That's not an exaggeration. A new believer is an entirely new person. It is a complete conversion of a person. Only then can a person become a Worshiper. I say "become" a Worshiper, but the truth is we all worship something. We are all worshipers. When's the last time you threw your hands in the air and shouted or hollered? We worship football, or music, or love, or money, or something that isn't truly worthy of soul adoration and whole-heart worship. Only when you know Jesus and when you are born again do you see, and understand, that God and God alone is worthy of praise. Only then can you say come and Worship the Lord with Me.

Worship is the purpose of church. It's the main thing we do, gather together to glorify and worship God. We often run past worship as though it is the least impactful, least important thing we do. But is the most important thing we do. When you detach from worship, even to perform Christian service, to go on staff, to perform your ministry, to make a difference in the world for Jesus, when you detach from worship you detach yourself from the very lifeblood of the Christian life, from the engine that drives all the gears, from the heartbeat that oxygenates all the blood. Church is about worship. And that, to the world around us, even to the Participants, is the most foolish and ridiculous thing yet. Why on earth would you want to tank a beautiful Sunday, drive downtown, and sing songs with people instead of, say, skiing? You might remember a time when it felt like the whole city went

quiet on Sunday mornings. Everybody was at church! Not anymore. About 17% of households go to church on a given Sunday. To most people, nothing is stranger than a group of people who decide to dress up, gather downtown, sing songs and read from an old book. But for many of us, it is just about the most important, purest-motivated, most life-giving thing we do all week. What is the difference between these two views? Conversion. Knowing Christ. Being saved. We are talking about an absolute and complete, categorical change in a person's life, a renewal of their life. Jesus called it being "born again."

Worship the Lord with Me. The Corinthian church was starting to gather regularly for worship. But as they did, they carted in all kinds of patterns from their past life. Paul didn't hide his frustration. They wanted to be addressed as the spiritually wise, but Paul said, "Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready." (1 Corinthians 3:1-2) How did he know he was dealing with immature believers? They were quarrelling and divisive. They were acting like, well, like people! "You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?" (1 Corinthians 3:3) Wait a minute, aren't they humans? I don't give you a hard time about being human, do I? Why does Paul? What does he expect? He expects that they, we, might grow into more than an ordinary person. We might no longer reflect the same ideals, the same inclinations, the same selfish tendencies, as the world around us. We might be made different as we worship and grow in Christian community. We might see that we are not a loose conglomeration of individuals each scratching their own itch and getting their own needs met. We might find that we have become a part of something

bigger, and in the care of the Lord, we are growing together and laboring together in the mission God has given us as a church. “For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” (1 Corinthians 3:9)

We will talk about how we grow as Christians next week. But for right now, don’t miss the headline. These new believers are...new! The reason Paul says I address you as infants is that they are infants. They have been made new; a new life has begun for each of them. Grown men and grown women, now they are like babies opening their eyes for the very first time; taking only milk; stumbling forward on first wobbly steps. Don’t miss this. In Jesus Christ you have the opportunity to begin again entirely, to become a new person, to be born again. And that is exactly what has to happen to be able to enter into worship in the right way, to leave behind selfish interests and glorify God who is worthy of praise in one voice, as one body, His church. That is what must happen for you to be saved. That is what must happen for your neighbor, your friend to be saved. How will the people you know come to know Jesus? You and they must be born again.

When I say we are here to reach Colorado Springs for Christ, understand, we are not trying to convince someone to add church to their calendar. We are not here to ask people to consider a Christian way of life, or even to accept a Christian belief system. If you don’t understand this, you won’t understand anything about the Christian life. It isn’t about adding Christian things to your life, or Christian thoughts to your worldview; those things follow on behind. It’s much more than that. The invitation is to cast your life, your entire life, into the hands of Jesus, to give Him your life trusting that Jesus knows what to do with it and will return it to you even better. To give your life to Christ, to lay down your life before Him. That is the invitation. To believe and trust and hope in Him, only in Him, and so be

made an entirely new human being, a new person, never, ever the same.

The Bible is full of illustrations of a new life in which everything changes. Ezekiel, looking forward to the restoration of Israel and beyond to the new Kingdom of the Messiah, saw a vision of transformation. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26) The heart is the core of your being. Your heart can grow calloused and hardened in this world. It can take some shots. God says, I will remove your heart of stone. You can exchange, return, you can turn in a stone-cold heart and receive a heart of flesh. Total transformation. I know a woman who, as a girl, saw the conversion of her father in Iran. He was a terror to the home when she was little. She came in the house one day and almost didn’t recognize him. His face changed. His whole attitude was warm and loving. A new heart.

The Bible says you change from being in Adam to being in Christ. Paul writes later in this same letter, “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) In Adam, we are still subject to our sinful nature, disobedient to God as Adam was, and God is to us a terror and a stranger we hide from. In Christ, we are forgiven and restored to full adoption, a right relationship with God, counted as sons and daughters, with God as our loving and caring Father. God looks over all the earth and sees two types of people. Are you in Adam or in Christ? When you put your faith in Christ you are transferred from one nation of people to another. “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14) You are shuttled across the border. A new life begins.

Jesus called it being born again. “Very truly I tell you, no one can see



the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” (John 3:3) It’s very literal language, and the man Jesus was talking to took it literally. How’s that going to happen? I think you better call my mom and explain that. “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:6-7) It’s nothing less than rebirth; a new birth into a new life, and you start out as an infant spiritually. Honestly, the whole world is new. C. S. Lewis, an avid atheistic professor at Oxford, turned his life over to Christ in his apartment and said when he walked out of there, the whole world looked different. The sky was different, the buildings, other people, the grass and river. That’s why he eventually explained, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

But it’s not just what you see that changes. You change, from the inside out. Paul wrote a second letter to this same church and said, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17) When we are separated from God, we participate in the un-creation, the dis-creation, the coming apart of all that God made. Our disobedience is a participation in the unraveling of God’s created order. Our decisions have an impact on the world and people around us. None of us is sitting still. No one sits in an objective, non-involved seat. We are all in the game, none in the stands. So when we are moving away from God, we are pulling the world apart, away from its Creator. What Paul says is, if you are in Christ, when you put your faith in Christ—first of all, it isn’t just that you took up some new beliefs; no, you have moved, been transferred, from in Adam to in Christ—when that occurs, now you are part of new creation. The Greek is just an exclamation here. Paul just says, “New creation!” Therefore, when someone is in Christ...new creation! Boom!

How does that happen? Conversion by faith in Christ. “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, ‘Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Romans 10:9-13) That’s it. Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Do you remember when you were saved? For some, it was a lightning bolt moment. Wham! From utter darkness to everlasting light. For others it was a slowly rising sun and eventually they realized it was full day, the light of the Lord. For others, praise God, you have never known a day out of the sun. Raised in faith. Still, you can shiver when you see the darkness, or when you wander toward it. How will the people you know come to know Jesus? Strangers, community members, they become friends and neighbors, participants, and they, if we walk along with them, they are being led toward a moment in time when they open their lips and confess Jesus is Lord, when they open their heart and put their full faith and belief and trust in Him, when they are forgiven, redeemed, made whole, made new in Christ. And Hell is robbed of another soul in darkness and the Kingdom of God is filled with one more child of God in eternal light. That is our errand. That’s the mission to reach Colorado Springs for Christ, to be Light and Life for the City in Jesus’ name. That’s what we are about. Come worship the Lord with me.