

## Why Worship?

What first comes to mind when you think of worship? Perhaps your thoughts are of a church service, a prayer, a sermon, or a hymn. Perhaps you think of a certain building. Maybe a discussion that you have had with another Christian over worship forms or styles come to mind. Chances are that your first reaction is to focus on something that we do or are involved in when we worship.

Our first reactions may fall short of what they should be. It is easy to get caught up in discussing the details of worship, or the controversies that often surround it, while forgetting the true focus of our worship. Worship needs to be focused on God and His Word.

God is worthy of worship. His glory, splendour, holiness, and greatness are so wonderful that all creatures should be moved to worship Him (Psalm 29). Every good thing, all that we are and have, come from Him. He deserves our worship because He is God (Psalm 145:3; Revelation 5:12).

Exodus 20:8 reveals the Third Commandment to us. God commands His people to worship Him. Hebrews 10:25 reminds us that worship does not end with the coming of Christ. Christians are also called to continue to worship together - in part to give each other encouragement in the last days.

In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther wrote that the Third Commandment means that *“we should fear and love God so that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.”* This explanation helps to focus our understanding of the commandment. Luther reminds us that the purpose of the Sabbath was not simply to have a day off from work, but to provide opportunity to worship. He directed people's attention to the Word of God. We hear God's voice, and receive His direction through His Word. True worship must involve the proclamation and belief of God's Holy Word. God knows that we shall be blessed as we hear His Word.

Worship isn't simply a set of activities to do or words to speak. Worship needs an object. We are to worship God. In the explanation of the First Commandment in the Large Catechism, Luther writes: *“A god means that from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take refuge in all distress. So, to have [the One] God is nothing other than trusting and believing Him with the heart.”* According to this definition, a god is whatever we trust and believe in. Whatever being or thing that we trust above all other things is, in fact, our god. To be sure, there is only one true, living God. Only the true God can save us. Only He has the power that we need. Only He is truly worthy of worship. Yet many people continue to worship false gods. Understood in this way, every person has a god.

If we are to worship the true God, we must know who He is. Deuteronomy 6:4 reminds us that there is only one God. Matthew 28:19 reveals that this one God consists of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The biblical doctrine of the Trinity is beyond our human comprehension. Our limited brains are incapable of fully understanding the nature of God. We can, however, trust and believe His Word. The only true God is the Holy Trinity. The three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God, and yet are only one God. This is how God has revealed Himself to us.

There are many people in our world who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and yet they still claim to worship God. Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, says that it is impossible to access the Father apart from the Son (John 14:6). Without the Son, we do not really know the Father. First Corinthians 12:3 teaches us that we cannot believe in Jesus without the Holy Spirit. We are not free to ignore the Trinity or any of the three persons. We come to the Father through Jesus. We believe in Jesus through the Spirit. The Trinity is the only true God. This is the God we worship.

The triune God is worthy of our worship. Nothing or no one else deserves or rightly receives our worship. In Isaiah 42:8, God forbids worshipping false gods or any created thing. In Revelation 22:8-9, John was about to worship an angel who had shown him wondrous things. The angel rebuked him. Angels are not worthy of worship - they are servants of God along with human beings. (This shows us also that mere human beings are not worthy of worship either.) Only God is worthy of our worship!