

Does God Care How We Worship? Part 2 of 5

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Note: Some audience interaction where audible shown in italics.

Good evening again.

I have a story tonight, story time with uncle Linford now, I have a story about my wives great-grandfather who was decidedly Swiss German origin his last name was Good.

Mr Henry Good was born in Allen County Ohio, his father had moved from Rushville Virginia about 2 miles from my house but they moved to Allen County Ohio and that is where Henry Good was born, when he was a young man they moved to Halifax County Virginia which is south-east Virginia and Henry Good became a farmer.

In south-east Virginia the only thing that you could grow was tobacco but Henry Good did not believe in growing tobacco and the people that lived around there said that you are not going to make it as a farmer unless you grow tobacco, and he said we will see.

And so Henry Good began to plant the kinds of things that we are talking about and hearing about in Russia he began to plant trees, fruit trees, and he began to plant tomatoes and peppers and peas and beans and corn and he worked to the ground and worked at the ground and made it fertile and he sold produce all over south-east Virginia and fruit and the government took notice of what was happening here and so the governor of Virginia appointed Henry Good to the state board of agriculture.

So it's not just the Russian Mennonites that have stories like that.

We are here to talk about worship, sometimes I think Mennonites worship their farming but that's a different story for a different day.

The theme of our week is: Does God care how we worship?

Last night we looked at what worship is and why we worship and we asked the question what do we worship?

And I am not going to review that in detail I hope that you can go back and listen to it I think it has been recorded if not you can ask me and I will try to fill in the details but this evening I want us to consider as we begin I want to ask the question and it is a loaded question, you ought to know the answer, What is the most important and enduring activity of the Christian?

1] What is the most important and enduring activity of the Christian?

Come on now,

Worship.

Worship.

When are we going to be done worshipping?

Never.

Never.

What does the book of Revelation picture God's people doing what?

Worshipping.

Worshipping.

Is there any other activity that we do as Christians, any Christian activity, that you can think of that is more important than worship?

Some people say well missions is more important than worship. And I would beg to disagree, missions exist because worship doesn't. Once we have seen worshippers, people become worshippers of the true God, then we don't need missions for them anymore, once we get to heaven we are not going to be doing mission work anymore but we are still going to be worshipping, okay.

Most of the Christian activities that we engage in our temporal, they are temporary, worship is not.

Now because the subject is so important and so enduring you would think we would spend more time and energy talking about it, learning about it, practising it, whatever, but it seems like worship is not that important to us, it seems that way I'm not saying that's the way it is I'm saying that is what it seems like and so it is important that we look at this subject.

Last night we looked at kind of a brief definition of worship and a kind of personal look at ourselves and how worship affects us and how we are worshippers and the fact that we are naturally worshippers, God created us to be worshippers so we are going to be worshipping and we will always worship something.

Tonight I want to look at when and where we worship.

I want to look at when and where we worship because everything is rooted in worship this question is kind of a moot point really, we end up worshipping all the time in some manner or another, our actions, our activities are rooted in worship, this is true, but I want us to understand some distinctions here. Sometimes when we think about worship we think about it in terms of a worship service or a specific part of a service such as the music or the singing, now that is certainly not the definition of worship. Worship is an aspect of life that pervades all of life, it affects all of life, we worship on a daily basis, we ascribed value, we listen, we brag about, we serve, we sacrifice on a daily basis, the question is again who or what are we worshipping?

Another thing I would like to point out is that worship doesn't just happen when we feel like worshipping or when we feel like we have worshipped.

As I pointed out last night worship isn't ultimately about us and about how we feel it is ultimately about God. Now it does affect us it does make us feel things, it should anyway, in fact worship powerfully affects us because it deals with our whole being, it deals with our spirit as we interact interface with God's Spirit, it deals with our soul as we experience emotion, it deals with our bodies even though most of us Mennonites wouldn't admit it, it deals with us as a whole being it is powerful but it does so in a way that is more than mere emotion.

You see worship I'm going to argue actually trains our emotions, our emotions actually flow out of our worship, they are actually produced by our worship and so if you are feeling an emotion that emotional feeling is not worship, that emotional feeling is actually being produced by worship.

Do you see the distinction?

When you get upset about something and you feel the emotion of anger why? What causes you to feel anger?

Let's just say for example that your spouse or your child does something that really irritates you and you feel angry, maybe they are asking for your attention, demanding your attention, interrupting your activity whatever it is and you lash out in anger, what has really happened there?

What has happened there most often is that the worship of yourself has been interrupted by this other person, in other words you are wanting to do something, you had this idea about what you thought was important and now they are interrupting it and you are angry.

You see how worship created the emotion, all right, it's important for us to get this.

Whatever it is that we feed on, whatever we delight in is what will shape us.

2] Someone has famously said that we will become what we worship. And in fact I believe that is what Romans chapter 12 verses one and two is actually talking about, you can turn there if you wish I will read it for you: Romans 12:1-2, again very familiar verses to us but I want you to think about them in view of this matter of worship and how what we worship dictates or controls or produces what we become and how we feel: I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Okay, so their spiritual worship is to be this presentation of their bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God.

Verse 2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, Why? So that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

So the contrast here is give yourself, your whole being, to God in service as an ongoing sacrifice so that you are not conformed to this world but rather you are transformed by the renewing of your mind and the testing here is so that we can discern what is the will of God what is good, acceptable and perfect.

If we are not surrendering ourselves, if we are not submitting ourselves as a sacrifice of worship we are not going to be transformed into this new image and we are not going to know what is God's will, we are not going to become godlike we are going to become world-like, okay.

So what we worship, who we worship, even I'm going to argue tomorrow how we worship, informs who we become, what we feel and who we are ultimately like.

Alright let's leave that kind of set that off to the side for a minute, I have a long quote here from Mr James Boice, (1) I thought it was a very pertinent quote for our time and for our day even though he wrote this a long time ago he says this: "Many people worship with their bodies, this means that they consider themselves to have worshipped if they have been in the right place doing the right things at the right time. In Christ's day the woman at the well thought this meant being either in Jerusalem at the temple there or at Mount Gerizim at the Samaritans temple.

In our day this would refer to people who think they have worshipped God simply because they have occupied a seat in a church on Sunday morning or sung a hymn or lit a candle or crossed themselves or knelt in the aisle. Jesus says this is not worship, these customs may be vehicles for worship, in some cases they may also hinder it, but they are not worship in themselves therefore we must not confuse worship with the particular things that we do on Sunday morning. In addition however we must not confuse worship with the feeling."

You see what he is saying here, first of all he is dealing with this bodily exercise the kind of motions we go through, don't call that worship, those other instruments or forms or may be vehicles for worship but they are not the worship and now he is saying about feelings, do not confuse worship with feelings either for worship does not originate with the soul anymore then it originates with the body.

"The soul is the seat of our emotions, it may be the case and often is that the emotions are stirred in real worship, at times tears fill the eyes or joy floods the heart but unfortunately it is possible for these things to happen and still no worship to be there, it is possible to be moved by a song or by oratory and yet not come to a genuine awareness of God and fuller praise of his ways and nature.

True worship occurs only when that part of man, his spirit, which is akin to the divine nature of God for God is Spirit, actually meets with God and finds itself praising him for his love, wisdom, beauty, truth and holiness, compassion, mercy, grace, power and all his other attributes."

So let's not confuse worship with emotions we go through, let's not confuse worship with the feelings we feel although the emotions and feelings are a part and inescapable part of worship.

There was a declaration or a statement drawn up some years ago by the Alliance for Confessing Evangelicals it was called the Cambridge declaration, (2) it is a long paper, long document, I won't bore you with all the details but here is a small piece of it:

It says; "Whenever in the church biblical authority has been lost or Christ has been displaced or the Gospel has been distorted or faith has been perverted it has always been for one reason – our interests have displaced God's and we are attempting to do his work in our own way.

The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's Church is common and lamentable, it is this loss which allows us to transform worship into entertainment, Gospel preaching into marketing, believing into just a technique, being good into feeling good about ourselves and faithfulness into being successful, as a result God, Christ and the Bible have come to mean too little to us and to rest to inconsequentially upon us."

This is the dilemma we face in worship when we have lost, when we have displaced God's way, our interests have overcome His interests and as a result these things happen, worship gets transformed into entertainment.

You see when we are focused on the results of worship, when we are focused on the vehicles of worship and not on worship itself it leads us into some very, very strange places.

So where are we to worship, how are we to worship?

3] Well first of all let me say that there are two basic categories that we want to deal with one briefly and then one more expansively.

The first one is that all of life is worship, we have already said this, we know this to a point in John the passage where Jesus comes to the woman at the well the woman says, Sir, I see that you are a prophet, our fathers worshipped on this mountain but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people or to worship. And Jesus said to her, "Woman believe me the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know, we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and now is here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. John 4:19-24

What Jesus is saying here is that the place of worship is not as important as the way we approach God, we are to worship him in spirit and truth because God is spirit and truth and we are going to come back to this passage later evenings because it is an important passage as it relates to especially that dynamic of change in worship from old Testament to new Testament.

But for now I just want us to note that worship in the New Testament is no longer tied to a particular place, let's go on, in fact worship is seen in the New Testament to be something that we do everywhere. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. So you say okay I get it I'm supposed to worship God all the time and then you ask why do I need to go to church? Why can't I just worship God in my own quiet time and in my daily life while I'm eating and drinking?

And the answer to that would be yes you can and you should but that is not the only way you are called to worship. You see there is a special aspect of worship that happens when God's people come together for the purpose of worshipping him, we call this the assembly, the ecclesia, the called out ones, the gathered ones, the Church, the gathering together of God's people.

And so we have this all of life as worship and it is there and it is important for us to know and to do and to practice and to see but there is this gathered worship which is the focus of our study here this week, the Bible commands us by precept and by example to gather together with God's people and worship. In the old Testament this was pretty obvious because there was a place with this happened, a designated place the temple, the tabernacle where this worship was commanded to happen and the people of God were given very specific instructions about how and when they were to worship together in the tabernacle and what they were to do while they were there.

Not only that the presence of God was particularly with the gathering, you remember the flame of fire in the cloud by night where did it stay? You remember the smoke that fills the temple, you remember the powerful presence of God in the holiest of holies, that presence of God was there in a place it wasn't just everywhere in the same way it was there at the temple. God's presence was with this gathering in a way that He wasn't present with individuals as they went about their daily life.

Now certainly God's presence is with individuals and especially in the new covenant we understand this in greater ways where God's Spirit comes in and lives within us but when God's people came to the tabernacle they experienced God in a way that was special and unique.

But you say what about the New Testament era didn't Jesus do away with all of that in the priesthood of believers and the coming of the Holy Spirit?

Well, well not so fast. Acts chapter 2 and they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers and awe came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles, all who believed were together and had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as they had need and day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes they receive their food with Glad a generous hearts praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number they buy they those who are being saved. Acts 2:42-47

The early Church gathered together to worship, they evidently did it on a daily basis.

Hebrews chapter 10, and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some is but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25.

Colossians 3:15-16 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,.....

And we could go on and on and on and on, the New Testament is full of references of God's people gathering together and there being a special presence of God there.

It would seem that even in the New Testament era that God is with his people as they gathered together for worship in ways that He is not necessarily present with individuals.

Again this is not an either or situation, it is not that God is not present with individuals, it is not that individuals cannot and should not worship God individually but there is something special that happens when God's people get together.

I ran into this in a very personal way couple of years ago when I was at a conference, a very large conference, and I came into a workshop and I sat down beside a gentleman and I reached over and shook his hand and introduced myself and I found out he was from Great Britain.

And I said well that's interesting are you here for business or are you just here for the conference?

I'm just here for the conference.

And I said well it's a long way to travel for this conference you know you could have watched it online, you could have listened to it on the life-stream.

And he turns around and looks at me and he says, Brother, don't you know that it's something entirely different when God's people are gathered together then when you are watching on the life-stream at home.

There is a different dynamic, there is something else happening when God's people are gathered together. Matthew 18:20 says and we take this out of context and this might be slightly out of context but where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I among them.

Now we often think of worship as something private, something that happens between me and God, we even think about that in terms of when we gather together for church that we, the worship that I am engaged in on Sunday morning isn't it just primarily just something between my spirit and God's Spirit? One of the hymns that is common in the Christian world and well loved especially by the older set is called "In the Garden" and the preciousness of personal fellowship with the Lord makes this song dear to many believers, He walks with me, He talks with me, He tells me I am his own.

But no one seems to cringe at what comes next – and the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known.

We need to remember that the grace of God, the Spirit of God, unites us to the Lord and unites us to all who have been made members of his body. Anabaptists especially ought to know that, above all we must prize the blessings of corporate worship of gathered worship, the Church of the Lord gathered for worship marks the pinnacle of the fellowship with the Lord and with one another, the Church is the people of God, the new humanity, the beginning of the new creation, the colony of heaven.

Corporate worship is not something less than, it is not something we merely attend to in order to fulfil our duty and our obligation and then we go home and privately commune with God and that spirit really happens, no, in corporate worship we experience the meaning of the union with Christ, we worship most fully when we together hear his words to us and encourage one another to grow in grace and in witness to the world.

Corporate worship, gathered worship, the assembled worship of God's people is one of the most precious things there is.

And let me just tell you this and this sounds a little crass but if you don't enjoy that here you are certainly going to be miserable in heaven.

Now we have talked about all of life is worship and we have talked about the gathered worship of God's people and I hope you understand the dynamic or I hope you understand the difference, both are important, both are necessary, both are commanded by God but they are not the same thing.

Now as Anabaptists we have tended, we have tended in a healthy way I believe to see all of life is worship, all of life as a sacred, and we have pushed against this distinction that somehow we can be a Christian on Sunday in church and then we can go out of the church on Monday and we can live a different life or we can live by different standard, we have rejected that and rightly so.

We have said that the Christian life must be consistently Christian and that we do Monday through Saturday matters, all right, so that's been our emphasis and it is an important emphasis but I think we have missed something or we have de-emphasised something and that the de-emphasis is this matter of corporate worship and there is a distinction between all of life as worship and the gathered worship but one of the obstacles are run into when I talk about this is Anabaptists folks come up to me and want to push back and want to say, no, it's the same thing, it just happens at church instead of somewhere else. No, no you don't understand yet, when God's people gather together God is present in a way that he is not present when I'm by myself and there are some things that we do differently when we are gathered together then when we do when we are by ourselves.

Bear with me a moment, Old Testament example first.

David in the temple, in the Old Testament we read we have many illustrations of the distinction between what worship looks like in everyday life and what worship looks like in the temple and one of the clearest aspects of this is the life of the psalmist David. You see the psalmist David was a musician, he was an emotional sort of guy, he was an artist, he was a worshipper, he worshipped in everyday life and in the temple, for example we see from the record of Scripture in second Samuel that David danced in public as an expression of worship to God, it says in 2 Samuel 6:14 And David danced before the LORD with all his might.

I want you to get a picture of that, the mighty man David dancing before the Lord with all his might.

Now most of us are not very comfortable with that picture.

There are also instructions in the Psalms particularly to dance in response to and in worship to God, God commanded this, however we do not find dancing instructed or practised in the temple worship, it's a key difference. God commands dancing as a response of worship in the public life in the public and private life but not in the temple.

Another thing that we can look at in similar vein God gave very detailed instructions for temple worship but dancing is not included in those detailed instructions. A parallel example would be that of musical instruments there were by my count at least eight different musical instruments that were used by the Israelite people in their private and public life, many times these instruments were played in worship to God, many times they were played for therapeutic purposes such as when David played for King Saul, many times these instruments were played for entertainment purposes, but in the temple worship only four instruments were allowed to be used, only four different instruments, and even those four were highly regulated as to when they were to be played and who was to play them.

There was a difference between what was acceptable for general and private worship of God in all of life and what was acceptable when God's people gathered together in the temple. There is a difference.

Now you say that was Old Testament, okay I'll give you that, let's go to the New Testament.

First Corinthians, in the new Testament we find the same principle at work one of the most obvious places this is seen is in first Corinthians chapter 10 that I read earlier we are instructed to do everything to the glory of God whether eating or drinking, whatever you do be worshipping God in it.

That's the literal translation.

Now notice the special mention of eating and drinking that's going to be important okay, chapter 10 you can turn there if you want, first Corinthians chapter 10 the very end it says so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do all to the glory of God.

And then we move into Chapter 11, one of our favourite chapters, at least the first part, and halfway through Chapter 11 (verse 17) but in the following instructions I do not commend you because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.

Alright so now we have instructions about something happening when the people of God are coming together, in chapter 10 they were eating and drinking and enjoying life and worshipping God and now they have come together and things are not like they ought to be and what's the problem?

Verse 20, When you come together it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the Church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you on this? No, I will not.

What's the problem here? I thought eating and drinking was to be to the glory of God, I mean come on, Paul did you just say a few verses earlier to eat and drink do it all to the glory of God and now you're saying don't eat and drink at least not like you've been doing.

What's the difference?

Now they are gathered together, there's something unique about this, there is something different about now that they are coming together and eating and drinking, now they have to be concerned about their brother, you see now the eating and drinking has bigger implications.

All right, basically what he's telling them is when you come together there are certain appropriate ways to eat and drink that are different from what you do at home, if you want to eat and drink like this he says go home, go back to 1st Corinthians 10:31 okay, but when you come together that are certain things that are appropriate and certain things that are not and it should be pretty obvious to us, I mean this isn't the only thing.

There are certain activities that are appropriate in private and public whether in the public life or private worship that are not appropriate for the gathered worship of God's people.

Again this is a little crass perhaps but God makes special note of the worship of God in the act of marriage, in the physical intimate act of marriage there is a certain aspect of worship that is happening there but we don't bring that to church.

In first Corinthians 11 we have this observation of communion, we can't have communion by ourselves, it defies the very basic nature of it, communion is with our brother and with God, we do that when we come together when we gather together.

I don't think we have seen this distinction very clearly as Anabaptists, as I've said we have tended to kind of put all of life into one basket and we have tended to emphasise the holiness of life is needed all through the week and that is very good and right, don't hear me saying it is not, but what we have tended to say is that if it is not acceptable in church then it isn't acceptable at home either.

And we have been forced into this at times by people that push from the opposite direction and say well of this is good and proper in the worship of God in my private life then let me do it at church!

And so in an effort to maintain biblically ordered worship we have sometimes resorted to prohibitions outside of the gathered assembly so we won't have to deal with people bringing these things in the church.

Let me give you an example of how this works, and I don't want to step on too many toes here but music is a live issue here I think as it is in many places and some people have a problem with performance music at church, by performance music I mean music that somebody does for you instead of being a congregational activity you get people up front and they perform and they produce the music.

Some churches have made a ban against performance music in their worship services, only congregational singing, okay, well I think one of the reasons why they have done that is because of what I've already talked about.

Is performance music wrong in all of life is worship?

Biblically speaking I cannot see where it is.

Could performance worship be a problem in the gathered assembly?

Yes, it could become a problem.

We will get into why that might in future in the remainder of these evenings.

But if we ban performance music in the church or if we ban a certain type of performance music then many times we feel like we have to also ban it in our private life as well, if it is not acceptable at church then how can we do it the rest of the week? Okay, but we haven't really understood why it might be different at church that it is the rest of the week, what are the dynamics that interact with that?

And so for example at our church we like music but we don't have performance music in our gathered worship, we do have concerts however sometimes they are held at the church on a Sunday evening or some other evening of the week but we don't think of that as seeing it the same as the time we gathered together on Sunday morning to worship God together and yes God can be honoured and glorified in a concert, absolutely He can, but there is a distinction between that and the special communion of God's saints as they gathered together.

I'm not going to push that any further I just want you to think about that, I just want you to think about the differences there.

Now one of the questions that arise from this is how do we distinguish between all of life as worship and the gathered assembly for worship? How do we know which we are doing? How do we know where the line is?

So if I get together with some of my friends in my house and we start eating pizza and drinking Pepsi and we are two or three saints gathered together are we worshipping God in a collective corporate way? And can we have communion with the pizza and Pepsi?

Yeah that's kind of a funny question but think about it okay, how do we know where these boundaries are between all of life as worship and the gathered assembly in worship?

It is another thing we haven't done very well with.

At what point does this gathering of Christian friends for food and fellowship constitute a gathering of the church, how many people do you have to have, what are the parameters here?

Now the churches that have done a better job of making this distinction between all of life as worship and the gathered worship have historically had a device or a vehicle if you will to use the previous terminology of a call to worship, they've had a specific moment in time, a specific action in their worship at the beginning of their worship services that they call a "call to worship" and the call to worship is just that, it says okay brothers and sisters now we are leaving the all of life as worship and we are gathered together in worship. And so they have this way to understand where that line is.

Now I'm not saying that is necessary and I'm not saying that's absolutely the way it needs to be and I'm not saying we don't even do that, I think we might, there is a common Mennonite liturgy it is everywhere I go it's the same liturgy, two songs, devotions, prayer, whatever, right. Maybe those two songs are the call to worship okay, maybe that's what it is.

Well to sum it up we see that there is a difference between the kind of worship that we are commanded to be engaged in throughout our daily life and the worship that happens when we gather together as God's people, both are important but they are distinct and they need to be considered differently when we talk about what is acceptable worship and that is what we are going to talk about tomorrow night.

I want to leave us with Hebrews chapter 12 verse 18 and following.

Hebrews 12:18-21

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.²⁰ For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned."²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

So we haven't come to that but verse 22,

Hebrews 12:22-29

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator

of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.²⁶ At that time (referring back to that time at Mount Sinai) his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”²⁷ This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.²⁸ Therefore, therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Let’s pray.

Father we come before you as your people gathered together here this evening and we only catch but a glimpse of your greatness, of your power, and yet we tremble before you and Father we want, we desire to worship you in spirit and in truth, to worship you with acceptable worship.

May your Spirit and our spirits be in communion with each other and may we be in communion one with another here as your people and we ask that you would pour out your blessing on us and that you would prepare us even now for that great gathering of your people in heaven and know how we long for that sweet worship and that thunderous and glorious praise and may we experience a bit of that, taste of that even here even now.

We ask these things in the worth the name of Jesus our Saviour, amen.

Transcriber’s Notes:

(1) *James Montgomery Boice, Th.D. (July 7, 1938 – June 15, 2000) was a Reformed theologian, Bible teacher, and pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia USA*

(2) *Alliance for Confessing Evangelicals – Cambridge Declaration – published April 1996 available at <http://www.alliancenet.org/cambridge-declaration>*

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