

# Essentials of Christian Worship

## 2 - Christ-Centred Worship

### Why 'Jesus'?



The eminent worship theologian Robert Webber is renowned for hammering home the saying “worship does God’s story”. It is a Grand Story that tells the tale of God’s interaction with His Creation from its origin right up to its consummation and restoration at the Final Day. But in our pluralistic society, is it not enough to refer to ‘God’ in our worship?

If culture readily accepted that ‘God’ referred to the Triune God of our Bible, then we wouldn’t necessarily have to always clarify ourselves. But ‘God’ to a Buddhist, for example, is a very different being than the God of our Bible. In addition, even the great monotheistic faiths of Judaism and Islam declare that we should worship ‘God’. Why, then, is it important that Christians make Christ the centre of our worship?

### Deity Declared

We know from Rev. 5:11-13 that it is Biblical and appropriate to worship Jesus. But even before John wrote Revelation, Webber tells us that from its earliest days, the Church made **Jesus** the focus of its worship as the:

- Incarnate Creator,
- King of Heaven,
- Sacrificial Lamb,
- Risen Victor,
- Ascended Saviour,
- Coming Judge and Restorer.

Moreover, Peter’s declaration (**Matt. 16:16**) is essential to our understanding of why we worship Jesus. These definitive attributes of Jesus ultimately brought the wrath of the Roman and Jewish Religious systems upon them. Yet by their faithful testimony empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Christian Church grew and flourished.



### Worship as ‘Remembering’



For the early Church, worship was more than just a mental exercise, it was a story that was ‘enacted’ in song, word, and sacraments. This form of worship is called ‘anamnesis’ - not just nostalgia, but a way of remembering that brings the *past* into the *present*, all the while pointing to the great *future* hope of ‘all things made new’. e.g. Eating at the Lord’s Table is a physical action that tells the story. It became the ‘definitive expression’ of Christian worship, for this was how Christ himself instructed us to do it! **1 Cor. 11:23-25 (c.55AD)**

## What's In A Name?

More than just a mere label, whenever Scripture speaks of the 'name' of God, it is intrinsically linked to His person. That is why the Name of God (YHWH) was held so holy that it was unspeakable in its full form. So when we read that the Father gave Jesus 'His Name' (John 17:11), we see that the name of Jesus is and should be held in absolute highest reverence. It represents more than a title, but an authority that comes from Almighty God.

- We pray in it - John 14:13; John 15:16
- We will bow before it - Phil 2:9-10
- We baptize in it - Matt. 28:18-19
- We act in it - Matt. 18:5
- We who are 'in Christ' bear it (are identified with it) - Acts 11:25-26



## No other name...



So... does it matter that we worship Jesus' name? **Yes!** Scripture tells us that there is 'no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.' (Acts 4:12). Our worship of Christ *is* and *should be* evangelistic proclamation in and of itself. When we worship, we point the way to the Cross and to the Empty Tomb... the very core of our faith!

## Tell Us A Story...

So in our worship, we will tell the Christ Story:

- His Incarnation
- His Death
- His Resurrection
- His Ascension
- His Promised Return

It is the 'high point' of history and of the Grand Story. It is where we should place our hope - in a God who broke into time and space in human form, turning all that is material 'upside-down' as a promise that the work He began, He will one day finish!

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

(Heb. 12:1-2, ESV)

## Discussion questions:

1. What is it about Peter's declaration of Jesus' deity that would cause the Romans of Jesus' day to be antagonistic? How about the Jews?
2. How do you think Jesus is viewed in our culture today (especially in your circle of contacts)?
3. How does the Lord's Supper 'tell the story' of Christ?
4. How does knowing we bear the name of Jesus as professing believers impact how you live?