

## **Group Study Guide**

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

*Thanksgiving Around the Lord's Table (Psalm 19, I Corinthians 11:23-26 and Colossians 3:15-17)*

11.26.17

### **Main Point**

We value God by acknowledging His glory in creation, worshiping Him corporately, and remembering Christ's sacrifice as we gather to worship Him.

### **Getting Started**

*When you hear the word "worship," what comes to mind? What is the purpose of worshipping God?*

*What are some benefits of corporate worship (together at church)? What are some benefits of private worship? Why is it important that we worship God both corporately and privately?*

Worship is primarily about value. What we treasure above all else is the primary object of our worship. God created us to value Him above all things (Isa. 43:7; Matt. 6:33-34). However, because of our sin, we often worship created things rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:18-22). That is why corporate worship is important. If we only worship privately, we will inevitably lose our focus on the glory of God. Today we will look at three ways the Bible calls us to focus our hearts on worshipping the Lord: acknowledging God's glory in creation, worshiping corporately, and remembering Christ's sacrifice. Reflecting on these three areas of worship will eventually lead to a heart of gratitude in our church fellowship.

### **Observation**

Have a volunteer read Psalm 19:1-6.

*What about God do the heavens declare (vv. 1-2)? How often do they declare it?*

*How far has God's testimony about Himself in creation traveled? Who has God revealed Himself to through nature (vv. 4-6)? According to these verses, who should be the object of our worship?*

The word "heavens" in verse 1 refers to the sky and all that we see in it—the sun, the moon, and the stars. David speaks as if the heavens are constantly speaking to us. Of course, it is not the heavens themselves that are speaking, but God. God communicates His character to us through what He has made. David says the heavens declare "the glory of God" and reveal His "greatness" (vv. 1-2). This tells us that creation testifies that God is the highest Being in existence.

Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 11:23-28.

*Paul repeats the words Jesus used during the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26-29) in verses 23-26. How do you respond when you hear these words during the Lord's Supper?*

*What is the significance of the bread? What is the significance of the cup? Jesus' words, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25), conveys the idea of a figurative memorial. The bread and juice are symbols or pictures of Jesus' body and blood. They serve as reminders for us that Jesus sacrificed His body on our behalf, to pay for our sins and make it possible for us to have a relationship with God.*

*Do you tend to view the Lord's Supper as an opportunity for transformation? Why or why not?*

*How might we keep worship from being reduced to an activity of repetition rather than an opportunity for transformation?*

*Read Romans 5:6-8 and John 10:11-18. How has Jesus demonstrated His love for us?*

*How might we demonstrate our love for God in our daily lives?*

*What do you think Paul meant by the phrase "in an unworthy manner" in verse 27?*

*What are the consequences of eating the Supper in an unworthy manner (v. 27)?*

Some Christians misunderstand Paul's use of the word "unworthy" and question whether anyone is worthy of partaking in the Lord's Supper. Paul was referring to the way we participate in the Lord's Supper, not our worthiness. None of us are worthy of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross. To take the bread and cup without giving high value to that for which it stands is to take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. We partake in an unworthy manner when we have a divisive attitude, discriminate against other believers, or fail to recognize that the bread and cup symbolize Jesus' sacrificial death.

Have a volunteer read Colossians 3:15-17.

*What does it mean to let the peace of the Messiah control our hearts? What controls our hearts if we neglect this command?*

*How well do we make the story of Jesus Christ the center of our teaching and worship at our church? How can we make it more fully the topic of our conversation and our praise?*

*What do verses 16-17 teach us about the importance of corporate worship?*

While each of us are saved individually, the Bible calls us to grow in our walk with Him in the context of the local church. Thus, Paul challenged the church at Colossae to teach

and admonish one another and to sing songs to God together. Corporate worship is an essential element of God's plan to make us more like Jesus.

### **Application**

Use this section to identify how the truths from Scripture apply directly to our lives. *How might we make remembering what Christ accomplished for us on the cross a more consistent part of our daily lives? How might doing so help us be more active in sharing our faith?*

*When do you tend to approach worship or other "rituals" of our faith, (i.e. the Lord's Supper) too lightly? What are some ways we can help each other guard against those complacencies and habits?*

*What are some practical ways you might be intentional about worshiping throughout the week? How might private worship prepare you to make the most of corporate worship in our weekly gatherings?*

*Take some time in your group to express gratitude for what Jesus is doing in your life and in the life of our church. Share ways you see Him aligning our lives with the mission of Christ in our community.*

### **Prayer**

Close in prayer by thanking God for revealing Himself to us in nature and ultimately in His Son. Pray that your group members would see the value of both private and corporate worship. Ask God to use the members of your group to encourage each other in their worship of Christ.

### **Commentary**

#### Psalm 19

19:1. Although the heavens can refer to God's dwelling place, here it is clarified by sky, which is what can be seen from the perspective of those who live on the earth. The "sky" is the same Hebrew word as the expanse that separated water from water in Gen 1:6-8. Creation is sometimes personified as a witness to God's work among His people, particularly in the covenant relationship He has with them (Dt 4:26; 30:19; Isa 1:2). In this context one specific part of creation is personified as declaring and proclaiming a message. The parallelism between the glory of God and the work of His hands indicates that the objects of creation are demonstrations (or evidence) of God's glory (50:6; 89:5-8; 97:6; Rom. 1:19-20).

19:2-3. "Pour out" is literally "gush" or "bubble up." This phrase is most often used for springs or fountains of water. The significance of the term here seems to be that speech never ceases. The concept is intensified by the doubling of the terms "day and night." The message goes out all the time without ceasing. The paradox is that there is speech in verse 2, but there is no speech in verse 3.

19:4-6. While verse 2 says that the message comes at all times, this verse adds that it also comes to all places. The word for “world” is not the usual word for earth (as in the first line), but it denotes dry land that is capable of sustaining life (9:8; 24:1)—in other words, the inhabited world. No one can escape the message either in time or in space, and everyone is accountable for the message (Rom. 1:20). The focus turns from the more general heavens to the most obvious and spectacular object in them: the sun. It is also personified and compared to a groom and an athlete. These images are used together to convey the idea of youthful strength, a concept that is elsewhere associated with the sun, especially when it rises (Jdg 5:31). The fact that nothing is hidden from the sun reinforces the idea that the message of God’s glory is as obvious as the most visible and powerful object in God’s creation.

### 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

11:23-25. “I received from the Lord” most likely means Paul was given a special revelation from Jesus about this matter. For other instances where Paul received such revelation, (see Acts 18:9; 22:18; 23:11; 27:23-25; 2 Cor. 12:7.) Christ’s selflessness in giving His life for others stood in stark contrast to the Corinthians’ selfishness during the Lord’s Supper.

11:26. The phrase “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup” emphasizes that the solemn remembrance of Christ’s death is a corporate declaration of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (2:2) until He comes again.

11:27. Since the Lord’s Supper is a commemoration of Christ’s suffering and death on our behalf, to participate in an unworthy manner is to sin against the body and blood of the Lord.

11:28. A person must examine himself with respect to Christ’s sacrifice for believers and the relationship each believer has within the corporate body. Believers are to recognize that Jesus selflessly sacrificed His body for others and that this sacrifice was designed to make Christians a selfless corporate body.

### Colossians 3:15-17

3:15. Christ had called believers to His “peace”—spiritual wholeness under His lordship. The phrase “in one body” implies believers’ oneness under Christ’s rule as the Head of His body, the church. They were to allow Christ’s gift of spiritual health to exercise “control” (literally, “act as an umpire”) at the center of their lives (in their hearts). Gratitude was to be a continuing characteristic of their life together. The exhortation to “be thankful” applied especially to corporate worship.

3:16. Paul admonished believers to “let the message” (literally, “word”) “about the Messiah dwell richly” among them. Christ’s word—the genuine message as opposed to the false teachers’ empty substitute—was to continue to have priority in the church. The phrase “among you” likely referred to the church as a whole. The word richly has the idea of flourishing or being abundant. Paul pointed to three ongoing activities that

should issue from Christ's indwelling word or message. "Teaching" referred to instruction in Christian living. "Admonishing" involved warning against false teachings and encouraging one another. Mutual instruction and encouragement were to be offered "in all wisdom"—carefully, tactfully, and with the right motive. "Singing" joyfully expresses worship and praise. "Psalms" were Old Testament songs of faith that originally were sung to musical accompaniment. "Hymns" were songs of praise and probably were Christian compositions. "Spiritual songs" may have been spontaneous melodies or compositions like today's gospel songs. Believers' joyful singing was to express to God the constant gratitude that flowed from their hearts.

3:17. Paul urged believers to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Name is a synonym for person. Thus, the phrase is the same as "in Christ"—in close relationship with Him. The words in the name of can mean "in the authority or power of." Jesus supplies power for Christian living. The title the Lord Jesus stressed that they were to represent their Savior and Master well in their daily lives. Paul again emphasized believers' expressing gratitude "to God the Father." God was believers' Father in the sense that they were members of His family through faith in Christ. Their joyful gratitude was channeled through Christ, who made possible their relationship with the Father. We live in accordance with new life in Christ when our behavior reflects our relationship with God. He provides us with daily power to live for Him.