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The Difference Between Worship and Evangelism

Genesis 4:26 Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time **men began to call on the name of the LORD.**

Psalms 118:1 Give thanks to the LORD, **for he is good; his love endures forever.**

Psalms 150:1 Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. 2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. 3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, 4 praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. **6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.**

Ephesians 5: 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 **Speak to one another** with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And **whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Matthew 28:19-20 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

1 Corinthians 14:12-19, 23-25 - 12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. 13 For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. 16 If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

**23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say**

**that you are out of your mind? 24 But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, 25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"**

Last week was the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of my wife and I. The week before my wife and I got married a couple warned us that we might disagree, fight even, over silly things. They suggested they had disagreed over which way to squeeze a toothpaste tube. Imagine fighting over something like that. In the history of the church Christians have disagreed over many things. Sometimes these disagreements are at the heart of the faith, such as, "How does God save us?" That was the basis for the controversy of the Reformation. Recently I have read a number of books and article, however, that use a specific phrase, "The Worship Wars." It seems Christians have been disagreeing over how to worship. The question we examine today in our sermon series has to do with worship. We've been asked to consider, "The Difference between Worship and Evangelism."

First, It helps to know what worship is. Many Biblical scholars point to Genesis 4 as the first instance of worship. In Genesis 4:26 we are told, **Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.** It was very early in the history of people that they specifically worshiped, or called to God, seemingly together.

The book of Psalms is the song book or hymn book of the Old Testament. One of the greatest descriptions of worship is a verse repeated again and again. But, Psalm 118:1 says, **Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.** Worship includes thanking or praising God, because of His goodness, because of His enduring love. Christians have even more reason to thank and praise God than the Psalmist. We know that in Jesus God has loved us in such a way that He offers us eternal life through faith, because Jesus died and rose. That surely is enduring love, worth thanking God for.

There are many Psalms about worship and praise. One of the most well-known is Psalm 150. It says, **1 Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. 2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. 3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, 4 praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.** In other words, worship is not just for those who know and follow God. Actually, all creation is called to Praise the Lord.

The New Testament talks about worship in many ways. But, in Ephesians and Colossians we have two very similar verses that reveal a lot about *how* Christians worship. Ephesians 5:18-21 says, **18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Please notice that for Paul worship included the singing of Psalm, hymns, and spiritual songs, different kinds of music, but the ultimate purpose in this verse is praise or thanks to God. This is done ALWAYS, and for everything. The life of a Christian is always to praise and glorify God. Please note, that the purpose of worship is not about what we want, but about praising and

serving God.

Paul shares similar words with the Colossians in chapter 3:15-17. **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.** While everything is to give thanks to God, worship includes relationship with other Christians and other people. Worship is to show, according to verse 15, that we are of one body. It is also how we teach and admonish (or encourage and correct one another) with our worship. Worship is not just about my relationship with. Worship includes other Christians, and my relationship with them as God's Children! We too often forget that point.

To consider our question however, on the difference between worship and evangelism, or outreach, we also need to consider evangelism. The main verse that calls God's people to evangelism is Matthew 28:19-20, which Jesus spoke as he was leaving this world. The main job he tells His disciples to do is **19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** If you think about it, this making disciples is included in **"giving thanks to God . . . in whatever you do."** In addition disciples are made through baptism and teaching how, and baptism and teaching have always also been part of Christian worship.

Now, look at the Corinthian congregation, and instructions Paul gives about worship. First of all, let me say we are blessed that the Christians in Corinth had so many problems, because their problems led to our instruction and knowledge. Secondly, many of their problems had to do with worship including how to dress, how to celebrate the Lord's Supper, how to speak and act. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul talks to the Corinthians about the abuse of speaking in tongues, and encourages them to change practices that lead to confusion. At the end of the section I list on our Bible study sheet, we read the following instructions about worship.

**23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, 25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"** In Corinth they expected unbelievers to attend, and they changed their worship to make it more understandable, possible for others to see God working. Ultimately, God's direction to the church through St. Paul about worship is found in 1 Corinthians 14:40 **But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.**

So, in looking at the question about the Difference Between Worship and Evangelism, yes, there is a difference. But that does not mean that they are always done separately. When we look at Matthew 28 we see that evangelism is done in Baptism and teaching, which has been part of Christian worship. Colossians tells us that worship is not just about my relationship with God, but includes teaching and admonishing others. And, when we look at 1 Corinthians 14, we see that Christians were to worship in such a way that they did not confuse, but spoke to the people of their day.

There is an old saying that "The two things you can be sure of in life are death and taxes." However, there is one other constant in life. Ironically, life is full of "Changes." Does worship change? Yes; In

obvious ways: we no longer speak in Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin, or even German when we worship. The world around us changes, and how people communicate changes. This change leads to these "Worship Wars." There will always be a tension between speaking in ways that God's people are used to, and outsiders understand.

We actually have some tension on worship here. Recently we took a worship survey so we could do a better job of serving God's people and doing God's work here at St. John. One survey said, "Get rid of the drums." Another said, they especially liked the drums. Some listed their favorite songs as hymns. In another survey a person did not like traditional hymns. In one survey we were told no projector. But in 3 surveys, people asked to get the projector going. Please know that the Worship Board, the Council, your staff are trying their best to do God's work, to praise Him, to reach people, in a way that reaches the most people the most effectively.

But, remember, worship is about thanking and praising God, and teaching and admonishing one another. It's not about just my desires, it is about doing God's work. Ultimately, God sent Jesus to suffer and die and rise to save us. That is worth praising God for, and it is worth sharing with others. May God's Holy Spirit lead us so that our worship praises Him and blesses others, believers and unbelievers. Amen.