

Renewed to Renew the World – *Matt 28:18-20, 2 Cor 10:3-6*

“O ‘Twas a Joyful Sound” – The Way We Worship #9

Introduction – We are concluding our series on “*The Way We Worship*” where we have considered why we have chosen to do the things we do in our worship service. It has been our intention to show you that our choices (hopefully) are driven by Scripture and not by our personal preferences, although we also believe that in our obedience to the Lord, His desires become our desires more and more. We call this service a Covenant Renewal Service and through it the Lord summons us to come and enjoy personal and corporate renewal with Him and one another. And while the service has this glorious value in and of itself, it can be seen just as importantly that we are being renewed here so that we might bring renewal to the world. We carry the message that the Lord has complete dominion “*from the River to the ends of the earth*” (Ps 72:8). The church is that kingdom described as the small stone that smashes the beast-kingdom and grows to cover the earth (Dan 2:31-35, 44). The kingdom of heaven is like leaven hidden in a lump that leavens the whole lump (Matt 13:33-34). As we worship at this mountain (Heb 12:22), the heavens and the earth are shaken so that the things that cannot be shaken will remain (Heb 12:27-29). This service of worship is not simply for you or for us – this service of worship is for the world, a world which we have been sent to disciple under the authority of our gracious Lord and King.

A Commission and a Benediction (Matt 28:18-20) – After meeting with the resurrected Jesus for forty days prior to His ascension, Jesus leaves them with a declaration, an application, and a benediction. He declares His victorious resurrection and what it purchased (v18, Ps 2:7-9, 1 John 2:2, John 3:17, Rev 12:15, 19:16). And so today, while Jesus is in heaven, His rule extends over all heaven and earth. It is His Spirit-filled church which now speaks and acts on His behalf. And so, our application, His command to us, flows from that authority which already exists. Because He has all authority, we are to go and disciple the nations (v19). We are to do so by marking them with the sign of the Triune God and in His name, and then by teaching them to observe everything the Lord has commanded (vv19-20). Not only do we go because He has all authority already. We also go knowing that He is with us (by means of His Holy Spirit) always. That last phrase (v20b) is His benediction, something He gave with raised hands (Luke 24:50). We follow His example with the minister’s benediction at the end of our worship service.

Authoritative Teaching in the World (2 Cor 10:3-6) – We are going to talk about when and how we teach, but first of all let us consider the optimistic authority of our teaching (or, our toppling). Jesus is going to reign at the Father’s right hand, remaining there, until all His enemies have been subdued (1 Cor 15:25). In 2 Cor 10, Paul teaches that the church militant, the army of Christ, is invincible, not because of ourselves, but because our weapons are “*mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...*” (vv4-5). These weapons are more than adequate to accomplish the task, even to “*every thought captive.*” Christ’s goal, and therefore ours, is complete dominion for His kingdom (Phil 2:9-11). He expects there to be opposition and tells us what to do as we encounter pushback (Matt 5:10-12, 1 Cor 16:13-14).

With these concepts in mind, let’s think about what we are being commissioned (sent) to do as we leave this service and how we are to do so having been renewed here in the service. This is not an exhaustive list but an attempt to show a broad application:

Confession – How simple it is to approach the throne of grace and how freely you received forgiveness for your sins (1 John 1:9). We have prayed “*forgive us as we forgive.*” Now we go out and do the same. You have been renewed to go out and forgive just as freely.

Consecration – We offered up our bodies as living sacrifices here, and now we go out to do it all week. You have been set free from the bondage of sin and are now slaves of righteousness (Rom 6:18). Serve your Master. You have also been made joint heirs with Jesus (Eph 1:11, 2:6-7). What He has begun here in you (and in us), He will complete (Phil 1:6). This includes our daily ability to mortify the flesh, flee temptation, consider others more important, and speak the truth in love. There are strongholds to be pulled down and we have been given the weapons.

Communion – We have enjoyed communion with the body of Christ at the Table. This is to overflow into our fellowship with one another, our hospitality to one another, and our hospitable lives to the world around us.

The Works He Has Prepared (Eph 2:10) – Our salvation, this renewal, all of it is by grace and not of works. And even the works He has for you to do this week (all of them), He has already prepared them. We walk. God works. This mindset (of truth) allows us to do everything to His glory (1 Cor 10:31).

Disciple the Nations – Some people have the gift of evangelism. All of us need to be ready to give a defense for the hope that is in us (1 Pet 3:15). If you live according to the things in this list thus far you will find that people around you will ask you about this hope that they see in you. They will ask about your marriage relationship, your kids respect, the joy in your home, your attitude at work towards your work or your employees or your employer, how you treat that wretched neighbor everyone hates, etc. Remember to give credit where credit is due. It's not your natural good nature or the luck of the draw – it's the grace of God.

Disciple the Nations 2 – Nations are simply collective gatherings of smaller communities called families (and clans). Nations learn by watching your clan as much as they learn from instruction.

Disciple the Nations 3 – From concentric circles. Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Discipleship begins in the home, to the community around us, and then out beyond our immediate reach. One example that God has worked in us in this area is the truth about Christian Education.

You are an Answer to Someone's Prayer – How will God use you this week to provide the daily bread someone prayed for (and think of the vast variety of daily needs). How will God use you this week to lead someone out of temptation (through your prayers, your friendship, your instruction, admonition, encouragement, patience).

Lord's Day Rest in Christ – We celebrate the beginning of the week, the Lord's Day, with rest. Now go imitate your heavenly Father and bring the Sabbath of Jesus to others. Who needs rest this week and you could give it? Who needs friendship? Who has financial burdens? Who needs to be introduced to Jesus?

The Wilderness – But to you it feels like this week is a time of great testing, a wilderness of trials, a desert of uncertainties. Jesus was also sent out into the wilderness after His baptism by John, receiving the Spirit and the Words of His Father (Matt 3:13-4:11). Follow Jesus. He battled the devil with the Word of God. You have Jesus. You have the Spirit. You have the Word of God. You have heard the benediction of the Father. You are being sent to take dominion with these gifts. This is why you may and must “*count it all joy...*” (James 1:2-4).

The World Hates Us (John 15:18-20) – This taking dominion, pulling down strongholds, taking every thought captive, in real life and in the real world, causes trouble. We are to disciple the nations that do not want to be disciplined. We are to speak to the Pharaohs of our time who do not wish to hear our message. But this is all in God's plan as well, just as it was in Moses' time. When there is pushback, remember, glory is coming.

The Most Optimistic River that Floods the World (Ezek 47:1-12) – If it feels like this sermon has gone all over the place, that's the point. What goes on here in this temple-gathering is to affect absolutely everything out there. From here, Spirit-filled lives will flow out and deluge the world, making unclean things clean, bringing life where there was death, healing peoples and nations. This is what God is doing. This is why He called you here. This is why He is going to send you out again this week.

Go. Cause trouble. The kind of trouble that grace brings. For we have been made a river overflowing with grace. Overflowing rivers upset the status quo. Overflowing rivers of life bring life everywhere they overflow. And the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.