

Call to Worship

#0570

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—February 12, 1966

We have come this morning to worship God. This is the hour of worship. This is the place of worship. Let us hear the call to worship as echoed by the angel of Revelation 14:6–7:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” Revelation 14:6–7.

You see, this message is not a negative message. It’s true that the second angel follows, announcing the fall of Babylon, and the third angel, exposing the falsehood of the beast and his image and his mark.

But do you know, if all men had listened to the first message, there would have been no need for the second and third? And it is only as we enter into this message of the first angel that we shall be kept from the wine of Babylon and kept from the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of his mark. So, let us again this morning enter into the study of this wonderful message:

“...Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters”
Revelation 14:7.

I thought this morning it would be of special interest to us to note some of the verses in various parts of the Bible that teach us this thought of reverence, the worship of God—how we are to worship Him, how we are to express reverence, in what ways we can do this.

Turn, please, to the law of God as recorded in Exodus 20. I want to notice some of the commandments and see how a number of them deal in one way or another with this important subject.

You remember that the Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself on Sinai. And as this law was spoken, special arrangements were made that all the audience might show reverence.

In the 19th chapter, God told the people to get ready for this occasion of giving the law. He told them to wash their clothes. Everything was to be clean about their

person and their tents. And then, in the 21st verse, God sent Moses from the mount down to the camp saying:

“...Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish” Exodus 19:21.

Twenty-third verse:

“Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them” Exodus 19:23–24.

The 21st verse indicates that the Lord recognized human nature, that there might be a curiosity that would lead them to break through those bounds to do what? To gaze. What does that mean? To look, yes.

The children of Israel years later, when the Philistines had captured the Ark and it was returned, decided they would have a look at the inside of that Ark, and thousands of them perished as the result. Curiosity is not to be encouraged when it leads to irreverence, and this applies in many areas, dear friends, many areas.

There is to be a holy fear, a wholesome fear, when we deal with God and the things of God. This is not a slavish fear. It's not a terrified fear. It's a respectful fear. And so, as God spoke from Mt. Sinai, the people at a distance stood in respect and reverence. And they were not allowed to come to the mountain.

Now, the thing that made that mountain holy was what? The presence of God.

Before we look at the 20th chapter with the Ten Commandments, I want us to go back to the third chapter of this same book, Exodus the third chapter. Here is an experience that had happened some months before when Moses, alone with his sheep, came near this same mountain.

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt” Exodus 3:1–3.

Now, here was a curiosity, and it was a proper one up to a point. But now, watch what God did:

“And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither...” Exodus 3:4–5.

“Be careful, Moses. Don’t come too close.”

“...Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” Exodus 3:4–6.

Moses had a holy fear, a wholesome fear, respect toward God.

Now, notice that attitude of reverence and respect was manifest in various ways. What was the first thing God said to him?

“...Draw not nigh hither...” Exodus 3:5.

“Don’t get too close.”

Now, in a way, we’re to press very close to God, dear friends. We like to think of Him in the person of Jesus, taking the children on His knees, holding them to His breast. It’s proper we should think of Him in this way.

It’s also proper that we should think of Him as a great King, and that we should approach Him with reverence, particularly in His public worship.

“...Draw not nigh hither...” Exodus 3:5.

“Be careful. Keep a respectful distance.”

“...Put off thy shoes from off thy feet...” Exodus 3:5.

In some countries, taking off the shoes when one enters the place of worship is still a mark of respect. It’s true in Japan, other oriental countries. Here in this country, men remove their hats when they come into the house of God. But whatever it is that you do, it’s simply a mark of respect, a mark of reverence, and there are many ways in which we can show that reverence and respect.

All right. Then, notice that Moses, it said,

“...Hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God”
Exodus 3:6.

There is a becoming modesty, a reserve, a reticence. Paul, you remember, speaks of women adorning themselves in modest apparel with what?

“...With shamefacedness and sobriety...” 1 Timothy 2:9.

It's the harlot that walks with the bold attitude and the bold face to look anybody in the eye with a hard expression. The Christian woman will drop her eyes. She will show by her attitude that she is modest and retiring. And Christians of all ages and of both sexes will be modest, retired, reverent in the presence of God.

“...And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” Exodus 3:6.

Let me repeat and emphasize this is not a slavish fear. This is not a terrified fear. This is a holy fear, respect, and reverence toward God. He is so great and we are so small. He is so honorable; we're little worms of the dust. We know He loves us, but our understanding of His exalted character, His high position, will lead us to be careful, to be thoughtful, to be reverent.

All right. Now, back to the 20th chapter of Exodus, let us notice a number of the commandments that, in one way or another, present this important subject. Take the very First Commandment. What does it say?

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” Exodus 20:3.

Nothing is to come between God and us. You see, this commandment deals with the matter of our attitude toward God. If no other gods are to be before Him, where is He? Above all. What place does He occupy? First place. That's right.

The Second Commandment forbids any attempt to make a graven image of Him or of any other god. Now, dear friends—watch this point—this was not just to ensure that Israel did not worship the gods of the Canaanites, the Philistines. It wasn't just to keep them from Dagon and Baal. It was to keep them from lowering the conceptions of the true God, the true God.

No sculptor could make an image of the great Jehovah that was fit to represent Him. No artist could paint a picture of God upon His throne that would rightly convey to our minds who it is that we're worshiping.

So, God said, “Don't try it, for you can't do it.”

Now, we all have in our minds a certain concept of God, but it's impossible to put it on paper. There is another reason that God told them not to make these graven images. A graven image turns him into a stereotype, a fixed image, the artist's concept of God.

God intends that every day we shall get a fresh revelation of Him. We are not to worship God as we knew Him yesterday merely.

“...His going forth is prepared as the morning...” Hosea 6:3.

And:

“...The LORD’s mercies... are new every morning...”
Lamentations 3:22–23.

And in a sense, the God that I worship today is more wonderful than what I knew yesterday. And what a pity it would be to come today and see in an image merely my best concept of yesterday, when today God would lead me on and up beyond, that I may behold Him more nearly as He is. But tomorrow that will still be true.

So, God says, “Do not worship any graven image.”

On a trip recently, my wife and I were walking for a little exercise one evening. We came to a church of a leading Protestant denomination.

And there was a sign that said, “Chapel open for meditation and prayer.”

It was just time for our evening worship, and it was raining. And we thought, “This will be just fine. We will go in there and see.”

So, we went in and there was a lovely little chapel. No one was there. And there were these pews at the little chapel.

But I was quite interested in how the Protestant denominations are following, some like Peter afar off, some not quite so far off, I’d say following the Roman Catholic concept, for there were lights like candles. The pulpit was off to one side. The centerpiece was not the pulpit where the Word of God was preached. Rather, it was a picture of Christ with a light upon it and a golden cross there.

And I thought, “Now, the purpose of all this is to inspire reverence.”

There were little kneeling benches. But as the individual knelt, what would he see? Why, he would see that picture of Christ, that picture of Christ.

“Well,” you say, “isn’t that all right?”

I just want you to get the thought, dear friends. The Savior that we worship is not to be an image. It’s not to be a picture. No. I would never recommend to anybody that they kneel down before a picture of Christ. No. That’s not the place to kneel. That’s not the one to kneel to.

The Christ we worship is not on a piece of paper any more than He is a piece of stone, or a statue of gold. Our Savior is in the sanctuary. And I repeat that God is waiting and longing to give us conceptions of Himself, of His majesty far more than any artist’s brush can convey to us or any sculptor’s tools.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them...”
Exodus 20:4–5.

Oh, let us keep art in its place. And it has a place. But let us never, as we think of the worship of God, think of something that we have seen that men have carved or painted. Let us by faith look into the heavens, and there, through those pearly corridors of Orion, see in the temple of God surrounded by the myriads of the angel hosts, our God and His Son Jesus Christ, and let the Holy Spirit give to our minds exalted concepts, *evermore* exalted concepts of the One that we worship. What do you say, friends?

Now, look at this Third Commandment. Does it not, too, deal with reverence? Will you read it with me, the Third Commandment, the seventh verse:

“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain;
for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name
in vain” Exodus 20:7.

Why, the whole thought of this commandment is reverence. Is it not? Reverence concerning what? The name of God. The Psalmist says:

“...Holy and reverend is His name” Psalms 111:9.

That is why, dear friends, that swearing is such a terrible thing. It takes the name of God in vain. It uses the most holy words in all the language as common words, and in either a light way or a vicious way, what a terrible thing to do. The Devil, of course, is back of it.

But this Third Commandment was given to accomplish more than merely to prohibit swearing, as we think of it. Every time we take the name of God upon our lips it should be an expression of reverence. That’s quite a high standard, isn’t it?

We’re told that angels when they speak His name, veil their faces [see *Education*, page 343], as Moses there:

“...Hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God”
Exodus 3:6.

We may not always go through that particular outward expression, but there should be inwardly in our hearts a reverent attitude whenever we speak the name of God.

There are some things that this will cause us to avoid. For example, the frequent repetition of His name even in prayer may come from and lead to undue familiarity.

Someone may say, “Doesn’t God want us to be real close to Him?”

Yes. But as I said, that closeness is still to include a holy reverence, a respectful fear of the One to whom we are close.

There is a type of religious experience today common in what is called the Pentecostal movement, and it reaches out into many other churches, where the

name of God and the name of Jesus is flung around in a very familiar way. And I would not for a moment suggest that all who engage in those things are in their hearts irreverent. But I would say, dear friends, that it can easily lead to irreverence and in some cases comes from an utterly inadequate thought of the nature of God.

There are some religious songs today that smack of that same careless familiarity, words and music suited more to sentimental humans, puppy-love affairs, than any expression of the exalted love that should exist between the creature and the Creator. Let us be careful in our choice of songs, either for congregational singing or for special music. Let us be sure that we are entering into genuine worship.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain...” Exodus 20:7.

You remember in one of the early messages to the remnant church, we were cautioned against linking together the words “Lord,” “God” and “almighty.” Perfectly good words but, ah friends, we are handling tremendous themes as we pronounce these wonderful words. We are to be careful lest familiarity breed contempt, disrespect.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain...” Exodus 20:7.

Let us be careful, then, in prayer that we do not multiply words, particularly in careless and thoughtless repetitions of the names of the Deity.

You know, if we were speaking to one another here even, we wouldn’t do that.

If I’m talking to Brother Cansler, I won’t open every sentence with, “Brother Cansler, I want to tell you this.”

“Brother Cansler, I’d like to have you do this.”

“Brother Cansler, I want to do this, tell you this.”

No, we wouldn’t do that. Let’s weed out of our prayers careless, thoughtless repetitions. What do you say? And when we use the name of God, use it carefully, thoughtfully, in a reverent way.

All right. Now, the Fourth Commandment, and what does that have to do with? The Sabbath. Does reverence enter into this? Oh, yes. We are to reverence not only the *name* of God in the Third Commandment, but we are also to reverence the Lord’s *day*. “My Holy day,” He calls it.

Let’s repeat the Sabbath commandment together. We won’t even need to read this. We can just repeat it, can’t we?

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the

Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” Exodus 20:8–11.

And when He hallowed it, He put into it something that we are to reverence. That is, His own holy presence. Is that right? Yes. As we think of reverence to the Sabbath day, let us remember that one of the great features of the Sabbath is the hour of worship in the sanctuary.

Turn, please, to Leviticus the 19th chapter and the 30th verse (the next verse in the Bible), where these two thoughts are linked together:

“Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD” Leviticus 19:30.

Now, this verse, as given to us here, applied of course, originally and primarily to the tabernacle built by Moses there in the desert, and the children of Israel as they came there to worship were to reverence the sanctuary.

But what *made* the sanctuary a holy place? The presence of God. And so, in every place set apart for the worship of God, whether it be set apart on a permanent basis as a church dedicated to nothing but worship, or whether it be a hall or other room which is used upon the Sabbath for the worship of God, when we come to the place of worship, the hour of worship, we’re to be what? Reverent.

Let’s turn to Ecclesiastes, the fifth chapter, and the first verse. Here is this book written by the wise man, Solomon, at the close of his life. The Holy Spirit inspired him to give good counsel. And on this subject we’re studying this morning, he’s given us a wonderful exhortation:

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God...”
Ecclesiastes 5:1.

I wonder what he meant when he said:

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God...”
Ecclesiastes 5:1.

. Ah, my friends, if we were going into the throne room of an earthly monarch, I don’t think we’d just come shuffling in. I don’t think we’d come running in. Do you? I think some guard would stop us before we got very far. Why, do you know when people are presented at court in Great Britain, they have to go through a period of training to know just how to walk and just how to act as they’re presented to the king, or the queen.

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God...”
Ecclesiastes 5:1.

May I be very practical, friends? We're here in Haskell Hall. This particular room is used for a number of functions. I trust it will never be used for anything that is unholy. But it *is* used for classes from time to time during the week. There ought to be in your mind and mine a conscious difference in the way we come into this sanctuary on Sabbath morning. Am I correct?

Now, we will not try to give to this building and this room the sanctity on Monday afternoon in a class that we do to the service of worship on Sabbath morning. No. That would be impractical, unnecessary, and in fact, it would fog the whole thing. But by the same token and far more important, we must not bring into this place of worship on Sabbath morning any commonness, any commonness.

There is a certain freedom of manner that is proper for a classroom and for a class activity which is altogether improper and out of place in the service of the sanctuary in the hour of worship on Sabbath morning. And I have a great longing in my heart, brothers and sisters, that we as a congregation shall learn to worship God on the day of worship at the hour of worship in the place of worship.

Now as you know, we're preparing to build a place. Not only larger that more people may come to hear the Word of God, but built more particularly *for* worship.

And as I thought about that, I thought, “I'm so glad that we can devote some weeks to studying and practicing how to conduct ourselves in the place of worship at the hour of worship on the day of worship.”

Nothing should be allowed that will in any way detract from the spirit of worship and the spirit of reverence. When we come into this building, this hall, which is a sanctuary on Sabbath morning, when we come here before Sabbath school, or at any time as the service progresses, let us leave our talking and whispering outside the door. What do you say? Unless it's something that pertains to and is a necessary part of the worship of God.

If we have something to say in the Sabbath school class, that's a part of the worship of God, right? If a deacon needs to speak to a brother deacon about arranging the ventilation or about something about the offering, that's a part of the worship of God. And I could go on with many illustrations.

But let us as we come to this place of worship and the hour of worship leave outside the door common thoughts, common attitudes:

“...The LORD is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep
silence before Him” Habakkuk 2:20.

And this is not to make our service less joyous. Oh no, friends! Just the opposite. This is to be the event of the week. This is to be the highpoint of our spiritual fellowship with God. This is to be the mount of transfiguration in which we

travel up with Jesus, and as it were, see Him enthroned in glory. Oh friends, let us rejoice in our privilege to know Him as Father, to worship Him as King.

Now, a part of the worship of God is our response.

“...In His temple doth every one speak of His glory”

Psalm 29:9.

Just now, I want to stop our study and give you an opportunity to say a word, and we shall continue with our study of the law as it relates to reverence and worship at another hour. What is your word this morning of worship that you’d like to say to give glory to God in His sanctuary, on His day?

[Testimony service followed.]

[Comments by Elder Frazee during testimony service.]

...As if we had all been invited to a presentation at the royal court in England. Think of it—that as a part of that service, *you* were permitted to come with a little bouquet perhaps and present it to the queen.

When your time came, what would you do? I’m sure it might be with just a bit of fear and trembling and yet with a sense of great privilege that you would go forward and present your offering.

But here, we are meeting not some human being. We’re meeting the King of the universe. Bring your offering, your words of praise, and lay them at Jesus’ feet this morning.

...Prayer in our attitude. It grows by expression. The more we express it, the more it grows.

...Two hundred eighty-three, if there are some that are unacquainted with it, let’s learn it. It’s very simple and, in a proper way, sweet.

“Saviour! Thy dying love Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold, Dear Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow, My heart fulfill its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now, Something for Thee.”
Church Hymnal (1941), #283, first stanza.

Let’s sing it to our Lord:

“Saviour! Thy dying love Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold, Dear Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow, My heart fulfill its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now, Something for Thee.

At the blest mercy seat, Pleading for me,
My feeble faith looks up, Jesus, to Thee;

Help me the cross to bear, Thy wondrous love declare,
Some song to raise, or prayer, Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart, Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun, Some deed of kindness done,
Some wanderer sought and won, Something for Thee.”
Ibid., first-third stanzas.

Just a minute, as we sing this closing stanza, might there be somebody here with a burden, either for yourself or some special burden for somebody else? If there is and you'd like to have a part in bringing that burden in a special way to our Lord on His day in this hour set apart for His worship, just come up here and bow your head and let that burden be borne to the mercy seat.

“All that I am and have, Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, through life, Dear Lord, for Thee!
And when Thy face I see, My ransomed soul shall be,
Through all eternity, Something for Thee.”
Ibid., fourth stanza.

Ah, dear ones, how wonderful to know that that which burdens us burdens Him, and how wonderful it is that that which burdens Him burdens us. And as we share His burdens, we shall share His hope, for ever before Him, Christ saw the result of His mission. He looked beyond the turmoil and the strife, and by faith, He saw a multitude redeemed in the kingdom of God.

I know that many who have come this morning are coming because of the heavy burden that rests on your hearts for others. Ah, dear ones, Jesus is carrying that burden, and what a fellowship with Him we share as we enter into that burden.

What a shame it would be if here in God's sanctuary, we could be content to merely see the Master glorified and, like Peter want to stay here always. Our hearts, like our Lord's, must be down in the plain where souls beset by Satan are waiting for the word of faith and prayer to set them free.

And let us carry from this hour of illumination, let us carry the Savior's light and love to those who need Him, shall we? And it is for this that we pray in this closing moment of benediction. And I know God will grant it. I know He will.

Precious Lord, Thou hast met with us, Thou hast spoken to us. Thou hast accepted our offerings of praise and song, our gifts of love. Just now, we're coming to Thee in intercession. We're praying that Thou wilt hear the plea of each heart. Whatever there is of burden because of our own needs and weaknesses, assure us just now of Thy sustaining grace, Thy hand that lifts up. Wherever we've failed, forgive us and give us strength to go on.

And Father, our great longing this morning is in behalf of others. We see about us those who have been bitten by the serpent, and unless we can help them to look, they'll die. But oh, if they could look, they would live.

There are parents we know are burdened for children, there are workers that we know are burdened for those that they're laboring with out in the community, and there are others, Lord, that may have other burdens. We present them all to Thee in the arms of faith and love.

And we pray that as our hearts bleed with Thee, we shall also share with Thee Thy hope, Thy faith, Thy consolation, that we may go to those we love, burdened for their souls and yet with it a holy assurance that God is on the winning side and that we shall win with Him. We ask it in His name Who died for us, amen.

You may be seated.

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