

Series: The Whys of Worship – sermon 3 - 1/11/09 (am)

Why do we Worship God the Way we do?

Exodus 32:1-10

*Theme: God cares about the way
His people worship Him.*

A. The Israelites, the Golden Calf & the Altar (32:1-6)

The Israelites heard God speak the commandments, *cf.* Deut. 5:22.

Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive instructions on worship.

The Israelites suggested to Aaron
alternative worship.

This incident is a warning to us, *cf.*
1 Cor. 10:6-7, 11.

1st principle:

**God's people have a desire to
worship Him (32:1-6).**

The Israelites were keen to worship
God, Who delivered them from
Egypt.

When the Lord saves someone that
person desires to worship Him.

But a problem may arise ...

B. God's Displeasure at the Israelites, the Golden Calf & the Altar (32:7-10)

... 2nd principle:

**God's people may err in how
they worship Him (32:7-8).**

The Israelites worshipped the right
God in the wrong way.

They broke the first and second
commandments.

The Lord was not pleased, *cf.*

32:7-8.

Our desire may be to worship God
in public...

...but, like the Israelites, we can
err.

How can we avoid erring in
worship?

3rd principle:

God's people have been instructed by God how to worship Him (32:7-8).

The Israelites disobeyed God's instructions.

God has given us instructions regarding acceptable worship.

The guideline to regulate our worship is in Scripture.

We call it the **regulative principle**.

Different denominations explain this in different ways.

Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutherans. We can do anything in worship that Scripture does not forbid.

Presbyterian, Reformed. We must only do in worship what Scripture says we should do, *cf.* Westminster Confession of Faith 21:1.

What *elements* (aspects) should be used in public worship?

1. Greetings/benedictions, Col. 1:2

2. Prayer, 1 Tim. 2:1-3

3. Preaching the Word, 1 Tim. 4:13

4. Reading the Word, 1 Thess. 5:27

5. Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:26

6. Singing, Eph. 5:19-20

7. Tithes/offerings, 1 Cor. 16:1-2

8. Church Discipline, Matt. 18:15-20

9. Baptism

Are we capable, without the guidance of Scripture, to decide what God does or does not like in worship?

What happens if God's people do not worship Him as He prescribes?

4th principle:

**God is displeased when His
people worship Him
incorrectly (32:9-10).**

Conclusion—God cares how His people worship Him

...We may not do anything we please in God's awesome presence. Modern Christians are far too casual about worship. The letter to the Hebrews admonishes us to "worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire'" (Hebrews 12:28). (John Frame)

Worship is an engagement with God in the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible. (David Peterson)

In essence, God cares about the way His people worship Him.

We must worship Him according to His prescription.