

Christ Centered Worship

Bryan Chappel says, “For modern sensibilities, confession of sin may seem an unappealing aspect of worship. It can be easy to succumb to the idea that dealing with sin is a turnoff that will steer people away from worship.” (207). Hearing about confession of sins being a necessary part of any worship service is undoubtedly difficult to hear. It seems that there are not many non-denominational churches that lead their congregations through this process regularly. It also seems like there is a danger of this becoming another pedantic ritual that is practiced because it is a required part of the service as Chappel reminds the reader at different points. It is conceivable that an issue could arise if people are practicing confessing sins to God and to other believers in a healthy way and this part of the service would just become a condemning reminder of sins already forgiven and dealt with. If this is a necessary part of a worship service then there have to be some points of doctrine that are made clear about confession. Many believers walk around guilt ridden and that keeps them from seeing who they really are in Christ. Confession of sin should be understood from the foundation of knowing one’s identity as the righteousness of God in Christ.

One issue with making confession of sins a regular part of a worship service is that the believer can see their identity as just being a sinner. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (NIV). It is understandable for the church to lead the congregants through confession of sins but that should not reinforce an identity of sinner. The congregants should be made to understand that even when they sin they are still the righteousness of God because of what Jesus did at the cross. John says in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (NIV). Confession of sins should be practiced

but the believer should understand that they do not have the identity of sinner because they still sin. Their identity should be found in Christ as a son or daughter of God. One beautiful way confession has been explained is that it should not be practiced to secure forgiveness so one does not go to hell. Confession should be practiced from an understanding that the believer is in a relationship with God and that their sin was against Him. Paul says in Galatians 3:26-27, “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” There are some believers that genuinely think every time they sin they are in danger of going to hell. This mindset must be dealt with in order to make sure believers are not drawn away from a true attitude of worship and just are confessing their sins out of fear of hell instead of a desire to draw deeper in relationship with God.

One point that Chappel makes is that everything about a worship service should communicate the gospel. Chappel even says, “The placement of the pulpit silently explained that the preacher was not more holy than the people.” (9). This point about the placement of the pulpit is powerful because as Chappel points out that Luther believed in the priesthood of the believer. It is reasonable to assume if even a preacher eloquently taught about the priesthood of the believer that if the aesthetics of a building do not communicate that message in some way then the message could be less impactful. To even take that a step further I think that outside of the worship service that the congregants should have an opportunity to learn how to minister themselves. That would include classes that teach congregants to walk in the gifts of the Spirit and cast out demons. It is agreeable to think that service should communicate the gospel but it should not end there. The believers need to be empowered to go out and share the gospel the way that Jesus and Paul did. Effective worship should not end with the worship service, which is why there should be space made for the congregants to even minister to each other during the

service. That could include giving congregants the opportunity to minister in the gifts of the Spirit as Paul outlines in 1 Corinthians 12-14.