

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
October 20, 2024

"Even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." – Isaiah 56:7



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“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Psalm 141

Leader: O LORD, I call upon You; hasten to me!

People: Give ear to my voice when I call to You!

Leader: May my prayer be counted as incense before You;

People: The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

Leader: Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;

People: Keep watch over the door of my lips.

Leader: Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,

People: To practice deeds of wickedness

Leader: With men who do iniquity;

People: And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

Leader: Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me;

People: It is oil upon the head;

Leader: Do not let my head refuse it,

People: For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.

Leader: Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock,

People: And they hear my words, for they are pleasant.

Leader: As when one plows and breaks open the earth,

People: Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

Leader: For my eyes are toward You, O GOD, the Lord;

People: In You I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless.

Leader: Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me,

People: And from the snares of those who do iniquity.

Leader: Let the wicked fall into their own nets,

People: While I pass by safely.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Revelation 8:1-4

***Hymn #634** (red hymnal) – “Sweet Hour of Prayer”

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer . . .” – Acts 3:1a (KJV)

Scripture Reading – Exodus 30:1-21,34-38

Ancient Creedal Reading – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]
[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Sung Psalm #42B** (red hymnal) – “My God, My Soul Is in Despair”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Harmony of the Westminster Larger (#178)
and Shorter (#98) Catechisms.

Leader: What is prayer?

People: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God,

Ps 62:8

Leader: For things agreeable to His will,

1John 5:14

People: In the name of Christ,

John 16:23

Leader: By the help of His Spirit;

Rom 8:26

People: With confession of our sins,

Ps 32:5-6; Dan 9:4

Leader: And thankful acknowledgment

Phil 4:6

People: Of His mercies.

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Revelation 5:8

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

Sermon – “The Prayers of the Saints”

(A Sermon Series on Revelation 4-7)

***Hymn #629** (red hymnal) – “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

All are welcome for Fellowship & Food downstairs after Worship

Announcements

- Pastor Doug just started two new studies!

Tuesday Morning is reading through John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion.

Wednesday Evening is reading through the Book of Exodus.

Upcoming Special Events

- The New England Reformed Fellowship's **Bolton Conference** will be held on Friday, October 25th through Saturday, October 26th at the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church in Whitinsville, MA 01588. newenglandreformedfellowship.org/2024-conference
- The **Annual Meeting** will be held after church on November 17th.
- The 2nd Annual Calvinist **Christmas Party** will be at the Grange on Friday, Dec 6th starting at 6:30 PM. It is a pot-luck, so if you could bring a dish it would be helpful.

Regular Weekly Events

<i>Sunday</i>	9:00 – c.10:00 AM	Sunday School Children's curriculum: KVB Publications Women's Study: Study on cults Adult Study: Westminster Larger Catechism
	10:30 – c.11:40 AM c.11:40 AM	Worship (Lord's Supper on the 1 st Sunday of the month) Coffee Hour Fellowship
<i>Tuesday</i>	10:30 AM – Noon	Tuesday Classics Study (on Calvin's <u>Institutes</u>) at Pastor Doug's house
Wednesday	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Wednesday Bible Study (on Exodus) at Pastor Doug's house
Friday	6:30 - ??? PM	Young Adult Discussion Group at Pastor Doug's house (1 st & 3 rd Fridays)
Saturday	morning	Prayer Group at the Gabelmann's. (Please call Sheryl to confirm if the group is meeting that day, 860-309-7250.)

ONLINE RESOURCES

<i>TRC's Webpage:</i>	TrinityReformedCT.org
<i>TRC's Facebook Page:</i>	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
<i>TRC's Youtube Channel:</i>	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
<i>Pastor Doug's</i>	youtube.com/simplyreformed
<i>Youtube Channels:</i>	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

Elders:	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
Deacons:	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
Sunday School:	Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)

Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 – Phone: (860) 238-7399

Webpage: trinityreformedct.org – Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com

Sermon Notes

Revelation 5:8

“The Prayers of the Saints”

A Sermon Series on Revelation 4-7

October 20, 2024

Introduction

- 1) *Question: Why should we pray?*
- 2) This is particularly a frequent question asked of those who have a high view of the sovereignty of God.
 - a) Especially, this is a common question asked of those of the Reformed faith.
 - b) Savoy Declaration 3.1 – *“God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: (Eph 1:11; Rom 11:33; Heb 6:17; Rom 9:15,18).”*
- 3) There is a logic here: Why ask God for anything if God is sovereign and everything has been ordained?
- 4) To give a few quick answers:
 - a) First, and foremost, it is commanded. Ps 145:18; Is 56:7; 58:9; Luke 11:1-2; 18:1; Acts 1:14; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2; 1Thes 5:17
 - i) Isaiah 56:7 – *“Even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.”*
 - ii) Luke 18:1 – *“Now He (Jesus) was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart . . .”*
 - iii) This should be enough for any Christian, however, let’s give a few more reasons.
 - b) As we learned in our sermon about primary and secondary causes, because God ordains the ends and the means.
 - i) The Old Testament frequently mentions that God “changed His mind.” Ex 32:14; Deut 32:36; Judg 2:18; 2Sam 24:16; Ps 106:44-45; Jer 18:8; 26:3,13,19; Joel 2:13-14; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:9-10
 - ii) Yet, the Bible clearly teaches God never changes His mind because He cannot deny Himself. Num 23:19; 1Sam 15:29; Rom 11:29; 2Tim 2:13; Heb 7:21
1Samuel 15:29 – *“Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”*
 - iii) In the big picture of God’s sovereign decrees, how He governs the world, He cannot change.

- iv) Yet out of His love and compassion, He condescends to His people to show us who He is and His love for us, in human like ways we can understand.
 - v) For example, Moses pleads with God (i.e. prays!) that the Lord not destroy Israel for the grievous sin of the Golden Calf. God hears Moses' prayer and the "*LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.*" – Exodus 32:14b Ex 32:9-18
 - vi) Has all this been in the mind of God from the beginning? Yes!
 - vii) The way God ordained, at this moment in Exodus 32, that He would show His mercy, as He saves His people, is through Moses' prayer.
 - viii) The Primary Cause is God ordaining the salvation of His people to show His mercy.
 - ix) The Secondary Cause is Moses' prayer which illustrates God's mercy by hearing Moses' prayer and also affirms Moses' ministry to the people.
 - x) The **end** is God saving His people and showing His mercy.
 - The **means**, at this moment in Exodus 32, is Moses' prayer.
 - God ordains both the ends and the means.
 - The end is solely ordained by God, which is the primary cause.
 - The means, at this moment in Exodus 32, is by Moses' prayer, which he offers by his free will and which has been ordained by God from the very beginning.
 - c) Thus, prayer is a critical part of one's sanctification – one's life and walk of holiness.
 - i) Like Moses, it increases dependence on the Triune God.
 - ii) It trains us to be more faithful, which will create in us hope and produce in us that greatest of virtues: Love.
 - d) Besides, it can be cathartic and a great comfort. Num 11:14-15; Job 13:20ff
- 5) There are probably other reasons one could give.
- a) Our sermon text gives an interesting one.
 - b) But first, let's define our terms and think about prayer in a broad way.

Prayer Defined

- 1) To combine the Westminster Larger (Q#178) & Shorter (Q#98) Catechism answers on the subject, prayer is:

Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, (Ps 62:8) for things agreeable to His will, (1John 5:14) in the name of Christ, (John 16:23) by the help of His Spirit; (Rom 8:26) With confession of our sins, (Ps 32:5-6; Dan 9:4) and thankful acknowledgment (Phil 4:6) of His mercies. (Phil 4:6)
- 2) A few things we should note about what prayer is and is not.
- 3) Prayer is primarily about us speaking to God and *not* the normal way God speaks to us.
 - a) Can God speak to us in prayer?
 - i) Sure, but anything you feel, or hear, in prayer must be checked against God's Word.
 - ii) Remember the Third Commandment about taking God's name in vain. Ex 20:7
 - iii) If you don't "hear" anything in prayer, you are not doing it wrong!

- b) The normal means God uses to speak His people is through the ministry of the word:
The reading/preaching of Scripture and the administration of the sacraments.
 - i) There we hear God's Law – The does & don'ts of the faith. Rom 7:12,16; 1Tim 1:8
 - ii) Also, we hear the Gospel, the power of God, and His love for us. Rom 1:16; 1Cor 1:18,24
- c) Note the direction (this is so critical!):

- i) Preaching & the Sacraments = God to us.
- ii) Prayer = Us to God.

4) Prayer is giving over our desires unto God.

- a) There is great freedom in prayer, because we are now God's children through Christ. Rom 8:14-17
Eph 1:5-6
- b) You can pray to God about anything.
- c) Except you can't blaspheme God. Ex 20:7; Lev 19:12; Deut 6:13; 10:20
- d) You can even turn over your desires that might be wrong, as long as there is submission to God's will in the end. (Think of the sinless Son of God's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane). Matt 26:39-42

5) Modern Evangelical pastors have a habit of making prayer painful.

- a) For example: *"You should be crying on your knees in prayer."*
 - i) Certainly, you can do that.
 - ii) However, where is that commanded in the Bible?
 - iii) Where in the Bible does it command a certain personality type? (Whether emotional or stoic?)
- b) Or: *"Don't just say the Lord's Prayer really pray!"*
 - i) That directly contradicts the teaching of the Lord Jesus.
 - ii) Luke 11:1-4 – *"It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.' And He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"*
- c) One more example: *"We sing 'sweet hour of prayer' yet how many people can pray for an hour?"*
 - i) If you look up the Scripture reference that the hymn is based on, it is *not* about length of time, i.e. "60 minutes."
 - ii) It *is* about the time (i.e. the hour) when the church gathers to pray.
 - iii) Acts 3:1a – *"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer..."*

6) Now, we Christians must be a people of prayer.

- a) We must have a habit of prayer, as commanded in Scripture, and modeled for us by the Lord Jesus as seen in Luke 11. (If God Himself prays, we certainly should!)
- b) However, because of modern Evangelicalism puts an emphasis on the individual, personal, emotional and spontaneous over the corporate and the rote, which simply isn't biblical.

- c) Again, there is great freedom in prayer: The Lord wants to hear from His children.
 - d) We should pray individually, as a family, and as a congregation.
- 7) Prayer is an act of worship.
- a) As we read in Isaiah 56, and Acts 3, the whole worship service is a corporate act of prayer.
 - b) Thus, Revelation gives another very interesting reason for why to pray!

Revelation 5:8

- 1) Revelation, chapter 5, is a glorious scene from heaven, with the Father sovereignly enthroned before all creation.
- a) He has a scroll with seven seals on it.
 - b) The scroll is God's plan for all of history, until the end of the age.
 - c) Only the Son, the Lamb of God, is worthy to take the scroll and open it, thus executing God's plan.
- 2) As soon as the Son takes the scroll from the Father's hand, Rev 5:7-8
worship happens.
- 3) The cherubim and the saints "*fell down before the Lamb.*" Rev 5:8
- a) This is an act of worship.
 - b) Revelation clearly teaches the Christ (the Lamb) and the Father are different but both equally deserve worship because they are God.

(Revelation is one of the great biblical books to understand the nature of God and worship.)
 - c) To prostrate oneself is a fundamental base component to worship.
- 5) The cherubim and the heavenly saints have harps because they are going Rev 5:9
to sing a new song, glorifying God. (We will speak about this next week.)
- a) Yes, this is where we get the imagery of angels playing harps, however, the focus of the imagery on something else.
 - b) Harps (and lyres) were used by the priests 2Sam 6:5; 1Kgs 10:12;
to worship God in the OT, especially 1Chr 15:16,20,28; Neh 12:27;
starting with the Temple. Ps 33:2; 43:4; **71:22**; 92:3; 144:9; 147:7; 150:3
 - c) Though music instruments are not found in New Covenant Matt 26:30; Acts 16:25;
worship (only congregational singing is mentioned), they Eph 5:19; Col 3:16;
are certainly shown in heavenly worship in Revelation. Rev 5:8; 14:2; 15:2
 - d) Because singing to God is an act of prayer – That is why we should sing in church.
- 6) Besides harps, the angels and the saints have "golden bowls full of incense."
- a) Gold, of course, is a very expensive item and also Num 7:84,86; 1Kgs 7:50; 2Kgs 12:13;
represents eternity (because gold does not tarnish), 1Chr 28:17; 2Chr 4:22; Ezra 1:10; 8:27;
thus they are used in God's Temple in the OT. Jer 52:19; Zech 4:2
 - b) Bowls are used to collect a lot of something.
 - c) Here in Revelation the bowls are "full of incense."
- 7) The burning of incense was a critical part of OT worship in the Tabernacle/Temple. Ex 30:34-38
- a) Incense is a sweet-smelling substance burned as an offering to God. Ex 30:36

- b) The Bible gives great detail on how incense for OT worship was to be made. Ex 30:34-38
- c) The incense was most holy and sacred. Ex 30:35-37
- d) It was only used in worship and only priests could offer incense. Lev 2:2
- e) If anyone except the priests made incense, or if it was used for anything but worship, that person was to be “cut off” (*karet*) from God’s people. Ex 30:38
- 8) What is the incense made out of in Revelation?
- a) Revelation 5:8b – *“and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”*
- b) Stop and think about this: Our prayers, especially what we are doing here now in Sunday worship, are like incense before God in heaven!
- c) As David prayed, *“May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.”* – Psalm 141:2 Luke 1:10
- d) God delights in what we are doing here right now, if done in faith. Ex 29:18,25
- i) Like Noah who built an altar and offered correct sacrifice right after the flood and *“the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.’”* – Genesis 8:21
- ii) Proverbs 15:8 – *“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.”*
- 9) We have to be careful about false worship.
- a) Pagans used incense too, but it was false, and condemned. 1Kgs 11:8
- i) And Israel was called to destroy pagan incense altars. Lev 26:30; 2Chr 26:16-21; 30:14; 34:25; 2Kgs 22:17; Jer 11:12,17; 48:35
- ii) Just like music without faith before the Lord is evil. Amos 5:22-24
- b) Worship has to be according to Scripture. Ex 20:1-12; Lev 10:1
- c) Praise be to God that because of Christ’s perfect sacrifice we are no longer under the Old Covenant. Eph 5:2 Gal 3:25; Heb 8:1ff
- d) The Gospel, which we must get right, is the power of God, and makes our worship and prayers a sweet aroma unto God. 2Cor 2:14-16 Phil 4:18
- 10) Since all Christians are priests, our work is to offer up sacrifices of praise in worship and in prayer unto the Lord. Rom 12:1
- 1Peter 2:4-5 – *“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*
- 11) To skip ahead to when the 7th seal is broken:
- a) Revelation 8:1-4 – *“When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.”*

b) Why prayer? Why come to worship?

i) Yes, it is commanded.

ii) Yes, it is how God is working out His will, since He controls the ends and the means.

iii) Yes, it is a very important part of our sanctification.

iv) Yet also, it is a pleasing aroma unto the Lord, it decorates heaven itself,
and is part of the means by which all of history is to unfold!

12) James 5:16b – *“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”*