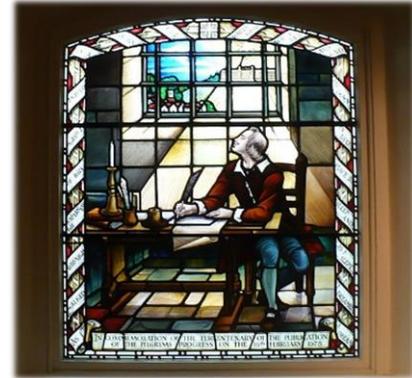


June 18, 2020

## Good morning, Everybody.

Last night we ended the service by singing “Blessed Assurance.” The chorus runs, *This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.* Well, the day is begun. How are we doing on *praising my Savior* this morning (smile)?



In a morning sermon a few weeks ago, I shared with you that during this virus crisis an involuntary thought arose in my mind while reading in the New Testament one morning. It’s resurfaced in my thinking several times since then (including that Sunday morning); with variations of wording, but the same essence.

*What I really **want** is a church that is just like what I’m seeing in the New Testament, and that helps me and my family be **exactly** the kind of person (people) that the New Testament is describing. That’s really **all** I want.*

Nothing profound about that. But I suppose that the reason it was a lucid moment is because I’d heard that someone (I don’t know who) out there somewhere in the world of evangelicalism had told his congregation that the virus was causing the staff to rethink how they “do church.” I took it that all that was meant is that the arrangements of things were having to be shuffled around. But the language, *do church*, began to show up in conferences and seminars during the seeker sensitive and emergent church movements, and it was (and is) used by church leaders to communicate that they were being creative. That *their* church, and more specifically, its worship, was *uniquely* nuanced; therefore *especially* attractive.

What that resulted in were churches of nearly any conceivable “taste” in what came to be called “style” of worship. If there’s anything that scriptural worship is emphatically *not*, it’s personal *style*. Even the suggestion that it is ought to alarm any Bible believer who hears it said, especially coming from church leaders.

Actually, there is no such thing as genuinely scriptural worship that is personally *styled*. If it's stylized, it's not scriptural worship. If it's scriptural worship, it's most certainly not stylized.

That, of course, is the problem with using even a word like *traditional* to describe a church's worship services. I know what we mean by that, and I, too, am reassured by it when I'm looking for a place to visit and find that its website announces unashamedly that it's not *contemporary* or *casual* in its approach to God. But our churches probably ought to be careful to clarify our use of even a good word like *traditional* when describing to an outsider our worship and ministry. The thing we really want to be telling people is that we're doing our utmost to worship just as God's Word directs.

Several years ago at our church leaderships' annual October retreat, we read parts of a book entitled, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal*. We didn't find every single thing in it to be entirely scriptural (especially some of the author's own lifestyle standards), but we appreciated its especially pointed ways of getting your thinking going in right directions.

One example. I've never forgotten a question the author raises concerning church signs. He asks why the signs outside churches read "*Contemporary Worship*," rather than "*Worship Appropriate to a Meeting Between God and His Assembled People*."

It was his way of getting to the nub of the worship question. What is worship? O.K. then, if that's what it is, what ought to be its character? Your *taste*? Your uniquely nuanced, creative *style*? This is the way we *contemporaries* like to "do church?" Perish the thought!

### **A Testimony**

What got me thinking about this today is a testimony that came in this morning from one of our longtime members, Bryan Smith. His mom and dad were once members with us as well, but moved to Charleston over twenty years ago. This week the Lord took his mom home, and Bryan sent me a brief testimony that is not only a blessing for what it says about her, but also about what she found in a little Baptist church when she was just a girl.

My mom walked with the Lord from about the time she was 10. She was instrumental in my dad coming to the Lord. I believe she led each of us to the Lord. She came from a drunkard's home. But there was a small General Baptist church just a block away from her house. The believers there took an interest in her, and that church quickly became the center of her life--a center of peace and spiritual health in a world of evil.

*A center of peace and spiritual health in a world of evil.* By God's grace, that's what Mount Calvary Baptist Church is for us. May He enable us to do just as we saw in I Corinthians 16 this last Lord's Day: to *be alert* to the relentless threats to a scriptural church and to *stand firm in the faith*, so that Mount Calvary will remain as it is for long into the future for girls and boys and men and women who need and want *a center of peace and spiritual health in a world of evil*.

Thank you, Bryan, for sharing this. Please be assured of our prayers for you and your family this week.

Have a blessed day, everyone. Have you intentionally praised the Lord for anything yet this morning? He deserves it, and you'll feel much better if you do (smile).

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick