

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

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This month's subject for consideration is actually a command of God, for in God's Holy Word we are directly instructed: **worship the Lord!**

For example, consider the following Bible verses:

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." (1 Chronicles 16:29)

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." (Psalm 29:2)

"O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." (Psalm 96:9)

Comment: Observe that we are repeatedly commanded to WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS. Thus, we are to worship the LORD— Jehovah, the self-existing one true God, the Triune God. Indeed, the one true God is the TRIUNE GOD, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7) The "Word" being Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; for, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) And, it is also written, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Corinthians 13:14) So, we truly are to WORSHIP THE LORD!

*However, note well that the LORD is to be worshiped IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS; that is, the LORD is to be worshiped in righteousness, for such is beautiful in God's sight. But, take it to heart that the required righteousness is imputed to believers and only to believers— people with God-given and sustained faith in Jesus Christ. Hence, only sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior can actually show the LORD the reverence and honor He is due. It's as Holy Writ plainly teaches in the following verses: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Romans 4:5) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10) "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6) **GOD GRANT THAT WE CHRISTIANS INDEED WORSHIP HIM – THE LORD – IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS!***

Additional Scripture verses, regarding public worship of the LORD, will now be considered:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8)

"Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt 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, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor

thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.”
(Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

Comment: It is one of the LORD's Ten Commandments to worship Him regularly. We Lutheran Christians recognize it as the 3rd Commandment. Oh, it's true that we New Testament Christians no longer worship on Saturday, as did the Old Testament believers; for we are free to worship God any day and every day. It's as we read in Romans 14:5-8, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Accordingly, the New Testament sense of the 3rd Commandment is: thou shalt sanctify the holy day. Now, since Sunday is the first day of the week – and the day upon which the Lord Jesus Christ victoriously and bodily rose from the dead – we normally choose to worship on Sunday, as did the early New Testament Christians, for we read in Acts 20:7, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." The most important point to remember is that WE SHOULD WORSHIP THE LORD REGULARLY, IN SINCERITY, FROM OUR HEARTS WHICH BEAT WITH FAITH IN HIM, for Holy Writ states: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

“LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.”
(Psalm 26:8)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

Comment: The right and God-pleasing attitude we are to have regarding publically worshiping the LORD is evident. We are to love going to the LORD's House; that is, we are to earnestly desire to attend a church where the one true God – the Triune God – is honored and adored in hymns, prayers of praise and thanksgiving; a church where God's pure, preserved Holy Word is preached and taught! We are NOT to attend churches which hold and promote false doctrines and practices (doctrines and practices contrary to the pure, preserved Holy Bible), for Holy Writ clearly instructs all Christians: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17-18) That's right, we are to mark and avoid all false prophets, false doctrines, and false practices. WE ARE NOT TO ATTEND AND FELLOWSHIP WITH FALSE AND ERRING CHURCHES!

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of

ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
(Hebrews 10:23-31)

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:21)

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

Comment: Note the importance of regularly assembling for PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE TRUE GOD WITH FELLOW CHRISTIANS, when such public worship is available to us in a faithful, local church— even when such a church is small in membership numbers, for Jesus says: “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) Yes, it is important to regularly assemble for PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE TRUE GOD WITH FELLOW CHRISTIANS, when and where we can hear sound, Scriptural doctrine preached and taught; and, where we adult Christians (who can examine ourselves) can regularly partake of the Lord's Supper. It's as the Holy Bible tells us: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17) “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-29) Take it to heart that we adult Christians are to partake of the Lord's Supper OFTEN, in remembrance of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, when such a blessing is available to us!

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (John 8:47)

“And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” (Luke 11:27-28)

Comment: Observe the NECESSITY OF CONTINUING IN THE LORD’S WORD: hearing it, heeding it, and keeping it; rather than ignoring it or casting it aside! Note well that a lack of hearing God’s Word, when it is available to us, is indicative of unbelief— indicative of being a person who is NOT of God!

Jesus says to His faithful preachers: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” (Luke 10:16)

Comment: Jesus makes it quite clear that no one is to despise the preaching and teaching of His Holy Word. Take it to heart that Holy Writ also says: “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Corinthians 1:18-25) LET US HIGHLY VALUE GOD’S HOLY WORD AND THE FAITHFUL PREACHING OF THAT WORD!

Jesus says: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

Comment: FAITHFULNESS TO THE TRUE LORD GOD – THE TRIUNE GOD – AND TO HIS PURE, PRESERVED, HOLY WORD IS VITAL, IF ONE WOULD RECEIVE THE CROWN OF EVERLASTING LIFE FROM OUR SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST!

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32)

Comment: Note well that Jesus labels His believing followers a LITTLE FLOCK, for the truth is that true believers are NOT a big number of people, when compared to the unbelievers.

Therefore, let us regularly be part of God-pleasing public worship, if we have such available to us where we are residing, for Jesus our Lord says, “the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” (John 4:23) Yes, my friends, the LORD God desires that we rightly and faithfully worship Him. Let us do so, for the LORD God definitely deserves our worship, when we consider all that He has done, still does, and will yet do, for us.

m.e.l.