



Growing as Disciples and Stewards

Introductory Comments

A wonderful old hymn of the church, centers us in the importance of worship in the life of a growing disciple and steward. The hymn is “Oh, Worship the King” and in the first and fourth verses we hear and sing these meaningful words: “Oh, worship the King, all glorious above. Oh, gratefully sing God’s power and love; our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days, pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise. O measureless might, ineffable love, while angels delight to hymn you above, the humble creation, though feeble their lays, with true adoration shall sing to your praise.” Text: Robert Grant, 1779-1838

Worship is a practice of discipleship and stewardship. If we understand discipleship and stewardship as how one lives their life amidst of God’s rich grace in Christ, of living in and living out God’s gift of grace, worship is the response of delight and joy for God’s giftedness in Christ. In worship, we gather with disciples to “gratefully sing of God’s power and love.” In worship, we are nurtured by the word of God and the proclamation of God’s life - giving grace in Christ. In worship, we gather at the table where we receive God’s meal of grace, hearing the words given and shed for you. We are then sent out into the world equipped and nurtured as we live in and live out God’s grace each moment of each day.

The discipleship practice of worship is not just receiving but also giving. One’s worship is an act of stewardship. In worship, we are surrounded by reminders of God’s grace for our lives. As we receive the promise of God’s life-giving grace in Christ, we also give of ourselves in joy and delight in response to God’s grace in Christ. The giving of ourselves in response to God’s grace in Christ does not only happen in the direct context of worship but carries on as we leave the sanctuary and go out into the world. For the disciple and steward, worship isn’t just a one-hour experience during the week. Our worship carries through each day as we give of ourselves in response to God’s grace. Consider that an important aspect of a disciple’s worship is reflected in how we address the ups and downs of life, everyday relationships, along with the witness and ministry that happens through our words and deeds wherever we find ourselves in life.

One more word about the discipleship practice of worship. Worship is intentional. As a discipleship practice, worship becomes a natural and regular response to God’s grace. For the disciple and steward, worship is not an optional part of one’s faith journey. It is something we do in the awareness of God’s presence in our life as we seek to connect the dots of life and faith. Worship is a prime venue in life to sing our praises to God in response to God’s grace in Christ, to be nurtured in our faith journey as we gather around word and sacrament, and a centering place for life that is busy and drawn in many competing directions. Gratefully singing God’s power and love, we worship as God’s people, growing as disciples and stewards, living in and living out God’s rich grace in Christ.

Bible Study

Psalm 100 and Luke 2:41-51

Psalm 100 and Luke 2:41-51 are two Biblical texts that help us to understand the meaning and importance of worship for the disciple and steward.



As disciples and stewards, worship is first, a response of joy and thanksgiving for God's abounding grace in Jesus Christ. In worship, we express our joy and delight for God's ever present and abundant love for us. Secondly, worship is where the disciple and steward is nurtured and equipped for ministry as we gather around God's word and the meal of grace. Worship is a discipleship practice that helps connect the dots between faith and life.

Psalm 100 is one of celebration and praise. Here, the psalmist sets out the characteristics of worship and the "why" of worship. The psalmist reminds us of the thankful and celebrative characteristic of worship. Making a joyful noise, worshipping with gladness, coming into God's presence with singing, giving thanks, and blessing God's name. This is the nature of our worship as we gather together as God's people. The "why" of worship is reflected in verses 3 and 5. We worship in joy and thanksgiving because God has made us and we are God's. We worship in joy and thanksgiving because the "Lord is good", God's love endures forever, and God is faithful to all generations. Our "why" for worship is because of what God has done and continues to do, bringing transformation, healing, and love to all of creation.

The text from the gospel of Luke is the only story in the four gospels of Jesus as a child other than the birth narratives. As Luke relates the story, Jesus is a child, twelve years of age. The context is the family's visit to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. After the Passover's conclusion, the family began its journey back home, traveling with a larger group of travelers. Assuming that Jesus was traveling with relatives or friends in the group, Joseph and Mary did not notice that Jesus was absent. It took three days of searching before they found Jesus. He had stayed behind when the family left Jerusalem and spent his time in the Temple, "sitting among the teachers..." Finding Jesus, his parents expressed their consternation with his absence. The response of Jesus is significant. He says, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (verse 10) Being in the "Father's house" was a natural for Jesus. This passage reminds us of the centrality of worship in the life of the disciple and steward. It should be a natural for the disciple. It is where we gather as a community of faith to celebrate God's presence, promise, nurture, and guidance in our faith journey as disciples.

Bible Study Discussion Questions

- Read Psalm 100 once again. What aspect of the character of worship has most meaning for you (praising, singing, giving thanks, etc.)? Why is this so? Does this change from Sunday to Sunday? If so, why or why not?
- What is your “why” for worship?
- How does your worship impact your life? Does worship help to connect the dots of your faith and life? If so, how?
- In Luke’s story, Jesus responds in surprise to his parent’s response when finding him in the temple. What do you think Jesus meant when he says, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”
- What do you think this means for our discipleship practice of worship?
- How is worship a practice of discipleship and stewardship do you think?
- How does regular worship assist us in growth as disciples and stewards?

