

March Teaching Theme: Life Rhythms (Lent)

讲员 Speaker: Jacob Chen 陈云传道

题目 Topic: 理所当然的侍奉 Reasonable Worship

经文 Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Monthly Theme: As we continue Lent season for much of the global church, it is worth pausing to reflect upon our life rhythms. Is the way we go about living healthy and biblical, or is it shaped by something else? This month, we will look at three significant theologies of our life rhythms - Work, Rest, and Worship - all leading up to Palm Sunday on March 28th. To begin the series, Pastor Will took a look at a Theology of Work, examining what it looks like to be the “Best Workers.” Last week, Pastor Tian examined a theology of rest, pointing us to setting Sabbath patterns of rest and finding our ultimate rest in King Jesus. And this week, Jacob Chen looked at worship from the lens of Romans 12:1-2.

三月 March - 生命旋律 Life's Rhythms (四旬期 Lent)

March 7th – 職場神學 A Theology of Work (聖經神學部分 Biblical Theology Piece) (四旬期 Lent)

March 14th – 安息神學 A Theology of Rest (創世紀 Genesis 2, 出埃及記 Exodus 31:14-17, 詩篇 Psalm 95, 馬太福音 Matthew 11:28-30, & 希伯來書 Hebrew 3:7-4:13) (四旬期 Lent)

March 21st – 讚美神學 A Theology of Worship (羅馬書 Romans 12:1-2) (四旬期 Lent)

March 28th – 受難日 The Crucifixion (棕枝主日 Palm Sunday)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

[Sermon Slides](#)

Discussion Questions (Pastor William R. Horne)

- (1) Read Romans 1:21-25 and 12:1-2 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the two passages? What connections do you see between the two passages?
- (2) In Romans 12:1-2, what ways is “worship” described? How do these descriptions help us understand the true nature and scope of “worship”?
- (3) What are the two commands we find in Romans 12:1-2? How would you describe what each of these commands means? What is the result of following these two commands?
- (4) As we can see from Romans 1, “worship” is a posture all humans take. The question is, what is the object of their worship. Name some idols we are tempted to worship in our time and context. Reflecting on the passages we read, what are some warning signs these things are capturing our “worship”?
- (5) As we have noted, “worship” is both an act of the mind and the body. Again, let’s ask the question - what are some practices we can take to train both our mind and body in proper “worship”?

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on Q1: In Romans 1, we see the downward spiral of false and foolish worship, corrupted minds under the power of sin **“they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.”** In Romans 12, we encounter the reversal of Romans 1 under the freedom and empowerment of the Gospel. The appropriate response to God’s grace is this embodied worship and renewal of the mind.

- Note: I believe the best translation of “spiritual worship” (ESV) (*logikos latreia*) is “true worship.” The sense of spirituality doesn’t capture the depth of what is being said and tempts us to segment “worship” to some spiritual plane instead of an all-encompassing life plane.

Notes on Q2:

“Living Sacrifice” - the most obvious sense of this metaphor is a connection to the sacrificial system we see in the Old Testament. Still, now the “sacrifice” doesn’t die and become consumed by fire but continues living. Followers of Jesus are “living sacrifices” in the sense that they have “been crucified with Christ” and “live as slaves of righteousness,” leading to holiness (Romans 6). Giving our allegiance to King Jesus and living a life of rightly directed worship are described as being a “living sacrifice.”

“Holy” - in its simplest sense designates something as “set apart” and dedicated to God as opposed to something common or profane. The Christian’s life is “Holy” in the sense that their whole life is devoted to God, allegiant to King Jesus, and through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are becoming more like Jesus.

“Pleasing to God” - the results of this “living sacrifice” is divine favor and satisfaction for God. (Same phrase used in Phil 4:18). To “be holy” is pleasing to God.

“Offering your bodies” - worship is intimately tied with how we “use our bodies,” thus our physical actions.

“Renewing your mind” - worship is also intimately tied with how we “use our minds,” thus our thought life.

“We experience God’s mercy as a power that exerts a total and all-encompassing claim upon us: grace now “reigns” over us (5:21). It is therefore entirely fitting that our response is to be one that is equally total and all-encompassing: the presentation of our entire persons as a sacrifice to God. “ (NICNT Moo) We see this all-encompassing idea capture in worship both being **“of the body”** and a **“renewed mind.”** *Thus, the Christian life is not just inner attitudes, right doctrinal thought, or right outward expression in acts of love and justice, but it is encompassed in all of them as inseparable acts of worship - the way we think and the way we act (All of Life).* *“Dualism” between the body, the mind, and the spirit (or soul) does not exist in Christian thought (even though we have often made that mistake), but we are holistic beings.*

Notes on Q3: First, **“Do not be conformed”** - do not allow yourselves to become like your surroundings (anti-Kingdom ways) Second, **“be transformed”** - a total renovation of a person at the deepest level of his or her desires, intellect, and will. This process is what we call the process of ‘sanctification’ - that we seek to look like Jesus by submitting to the work of the Spirit. **“Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will”** (v. 2b). A renewed mind can recognize and appreciate that which belongs to God. The mind renewed by the Spirit can discern the good, the pleasing, and God’s perfect purposes to align

their attitudes and values with it. *Essential a life of rightly directed worship is rewarded with Godly discernment.*

Notes on Q4: Recall, “worship” both encompasses our thoughts and our embodied actions. Thus, our warning signs are found in our thoughts (elevating created things over the Creator) and in the ways we live (how we “use our bodies”). These warning signs are why a regular practice of self-reflection in prayer is essential to examine how we are thinking and living and asking the questions, “am I living by the ways of the Kingdom or contributing to things anti-Kingdom?”

Notes on Q5:

- **Spiritual Disciplines** (Again?!?) as a way to train our bodies in proper worship. (Bible Reading, Prayer, Community, Sabbath, Fasting, Celebration, etc.)
- “One of the things we can simply do is to **trim our lives of excesses**, whether that is in food, drink, entertainment, or anything that is self-indulgent. We should live in such a way as to make clear that our bodies belong to God and not to Starbucks, Netflix, Forever 21, or Apple. In sum, if our worship is to “get physical,” then we must consciously treat our bodies as a vessel of holiness rather than as temples of self-indulgence.” (Bird, M. F.)
- “...we must **cultivate a habit of thinking that reflects the biblical vision** and the catholic [universal] core of the Christian faith. Fill your head with Scripture, hymns, novels, art, and songs which will strengthen your cerebral capacities to understand and articulate your faith. Christian faith cannot bide intellectual laziness...*If you would engage in professional development to enhance your career, why not engage in some spiritual development to enhance your faith? Then you’ll be better able to discern between the things of this world and those that belong to God.*” (Bird, M. F.)