

Proper 16, Year B
Instructed Eucharist Day
August 26, 2018
New Song Church
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Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18
Psalm 84
Ephesians 6:10-20
John 6:59-69

Why We Worship

Today, as we turn our attention to various elements of our worship through the Instructed Eucharist, I'd like to focus this brief message on **why** we worship. Of course different people will have different reasons for why they worship. Though not an exhaustive list, there are a number of good reasons that our Hebrew scriptures highlight today for us.

In today's first lesson, the people of God have finally arrived in the Promised Land and are settling in. Joshua gathers them together and says: "Revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness."

We worship God because God is faithful and is worthy of our worship and praise.

Joshua goes on to tell the people to put away the gods that their ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But, he says, "If you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

We worship because we choose to cast our lot with God. We take a stand. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The people responded, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”

We worship to remember and to celebrate what God has done and is continuing to do for us. We worship because we are grateful and our gratitude overflows in praise and thanksgiving in the worship of God.

Psalm 84, which we sang a paraphrase of together this morning, is a joyful expression of delight in God’s presence. “How beloved is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the Courts of the Lord!”

We worship because our hearts long to be in the presence of God.

Like the sparrow, we find a home, a nesting place—a place of safety, security and belonging—near the altar of God.

We worship because sometimes, life is hard, and we need to be reminded that we are loved and held in the embrace of a loving God.

“Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.” Here, we can worship God together.

We worship because we are community and we delight in one another’s company.

“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.” Our liturgy molds and shapes us into the people that God has created us to be.

We worship to be transformed.