

Text: 1 Corinthians 14:12b-20

Theme: Worship: What's in it for me?

Sermon Outline

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Epistle Lesson of Saint Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, chapter fourteen verses twelve through twenty.

Ladies and gentlemen, how are you doing today? I pray that you are doing well. I want you to look behind you. We have a lot of people gathered together today. Why are we all here today? Saint Paul writes that it is good to gather to build up one another. How do we do that, what's in worship for you? Ponder these questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

I. Jesus comes in worship, giving to me himself. So, live for him!

In Corinth, worshipers speaking in tongues had failed to edify the others present. They were speaking not to glorify Christ or to show that He was, and is, present here and now. Rather, they were speaking to glorify themselves saying, "Look at me! Look at this wonderful gift that I have." People were coming to worship with them, but because they could not understand the language, they did not know what was going on. I doubt that many of us share this issue today, after all many of us are not speaking in other tongues in worship. Yet, how often do we treat worship as something to build ourselves up rather than others. How often do our lives and actions act as though Christ is not here? Many today treat worship as merely a social gathering. This is the place that I gather with my friends to talk, catch up, and learn about who has done what this week. Note, this is not a bad thing. It is good to

have friends in worship. But that is not our main point of gathering together. Still others treat worship as something that I can do anywhere I desire. I can worship God just as easily out in nature in my deer stand or on a mountain rather than in a building on Sunday morning. So, what is our reason for gathering here and now? What is the main point of worship? The main point of worship, the Divine service is that in the Divine Service, the divine Jesus serves us with his Word and Sacrament, his *Means* of Grace. As we saw at the opening of service as Aubree was brought to the waters of Holy Baptism. There Christ came to her and washed her clean of all of her sins. Making her His dear and beloved child.

So what's in it for us? *Gottesdienst!* That's worship. *Gottesdienst.* Allow me to interpret, to translate the German tongue. *Gottesdienst* is the German word for worship. *Gottesdienst*, literally, is "God's service." Jesus, our God, in worship serves us.

God serves us, pressing on our hearts his Word of forgiveness, earned when Jesus served us by dying for us. God serves us, giving us new birth in Baptism. God serves us, feeding our faith with his own body and blood. God serves us, loving us. God serves us, setting us free to love him, setting us free to serve the ones he has given to us.

Is worship for God, or for me? In every other religion, the worshipers gather to serve their gods. They have to do something to make their gods happy in order for them to get favor and blessings. In Christian worship, the true God has gathered us so that he can serve us!

What's in worship for me? Good question! Jesus comes to serve us in worship.

In worship, Jesus comes to us, giving to us his Good News of the salvation of our souls and the forgiveness of sins (nurture) for sharing with others (outreach) and his love (fellowship) for caring (service). Christ's Body, the Church, lives by these five functions: worship (Jesus comes to us), nurture (his Word for us), outreach (his Word for all), fellowship (his deeds among us), and service (his deeds for others). In Christ's Body, worship is life's beating heart.

Our lives are lives of worship. "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God," his mercies given to us in worship, "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1).

II. Jesus comes in worship, giving to me his family. So, build one another up!

Today, in this worship, Jesus comes to give each one of you himself. He makes himself your brother, having taking on our flesh being born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He bears your sins in His holy flesh, living a perfect life for you in your place. He suffers, bleeds, and dies for you on the cross, taking the full wrath of God for every single one of your sins. Rising from the dead, Jesus gives to you new life and brings you to his Father. He gives you of His own strong Holy Spirit and sends you to serve one another.

Now take a look at one another, each of you here worshipping. As surely as Jesus comes to give to you Himself, today Jesus comes to give us to one another. Your brother Jesus says, "These are your brothers and sisters. You are newborn to one heavenly Father. So my Spirit has given you gifts to build one another up, today to share my love on earth."

As we have seen before, each one of us has unique gifts, given to us, for the common good. We use our gifts, not to build up

ourselves, but to build up one another. That as our God has come to us in worship to serve us. In Christ, He has blessed us with every blessing under Heaven. We depart from worship, going to family, friends, and others around us to bless them with every blessing that we have been blessed. It is not about us at all but about the God who gathers us together. As Saint Paul wrote, “I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.” Our very lives are lives of worship. By the Spirit, gifted with the grace and gifts, let us “strive to excel in building up the church” (v 12).

Conclusion: So, what’s in it for me? Nothing and everything. Worship is not about ourselves, but gathering together to be served by the God who loves us, redeems us, and serves us here and now. He gives us every blessing in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us always be “eager for manifestations of the Spirit” (v 12) that God gave to his people in Corinth. We can pray (v 13) for fresh outpourings of the Spirit in order that He would gather more people together, endow them with His gifts. That we all may indeed gather together in worship to be strengthened to build each other up in love.

May the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.