

Worshiping in Truth

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To Start, Considering a Hymn and a Praise Chorus

- Are the songs similar at any significant level?
- Are these songs similar or are they different?
- Is there anything missing in both songs?



The Significant Omission

- Who gets named and who doesn't get named?

Collapsing God References to Jesus

By collapsing the references to God to Jesus they omit mentioning God the Father.

Are These Songs True to God?

- Yes.
- But are they fully true?
- Not by themselves.

Why Should We Care?

John 4: 23-24: God the Father seeks true worshipers who will worship him in spirit and in truth.

In John, “Spirit” and “Truth”: Not Open-Ended Words

Jesus Christ is Truth.

Small Words, Big Meaning

- *To and Through*
- No one comes to the Father except through the Son. (John 14:6)

Jesus Christ, Mediator of Worship

- The main recipient of worship in the New Testament and in historical forms of worship is God the Father.
- Prayer, thanks, honor, and prayer is directed to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Jesus as Two-Way Mediator

Salvation

From the Father

Through

Jesus Christ

In the power of

The Holy Spirit

Worship

To the Father

Through

Jesus Christ

In the power of

The Holy Spirit



Salvation as Cooperative Effort

Jesus-Only Way of Speaking

Jesus Christ died for my sins and then rose from the dead.

NT Trinitarian Speech

God presented Christ as an atoning sacrifice for my sins and raised him up, having freed him from death.

Importance

- Using the Bible not only to pick up ideas but patterns of thought and speech.
- The current time: some seem to make the Father and the Spirit irrelevant

A Lesson Learned

- Do you want to be spiritual? Love the Son.
- Do you want to love the Son? Love the One he loves.

The Triune Persons...Not to Be Isolated

Not to be isolated as we worship and love.

Discussion Time

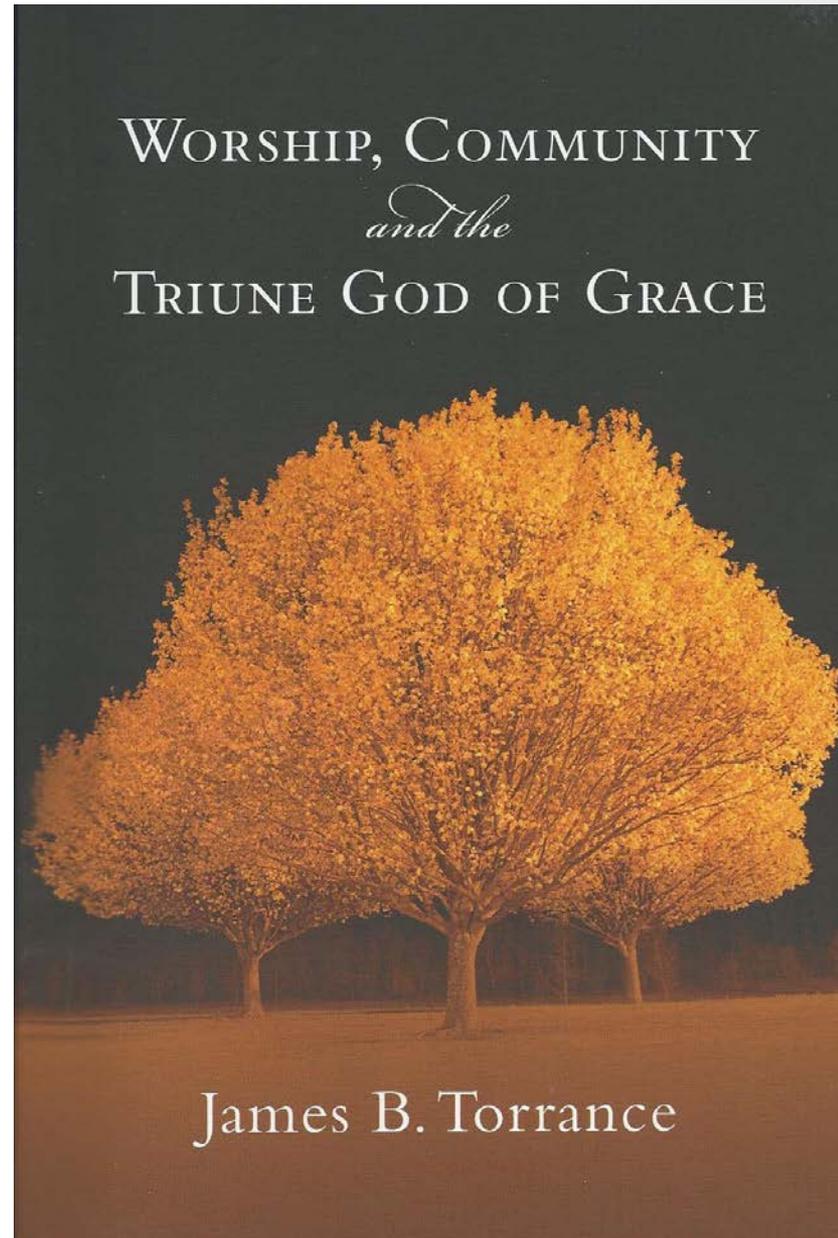
Please get in your groups for discussion. Bring your Bibles if you have them. Here is what I would like for you to do. Find an important verse in the Bible that speaks about the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. I want to hear about some of these verses in 5 minutes.

Christ-Centered Worship?

- Yes, if Christ-centered emphasizes him as the mediating center between us and God the Father.
- Be cautious if “Christ-centered worship” means only Jesus Christ is worshiped and prayed to.

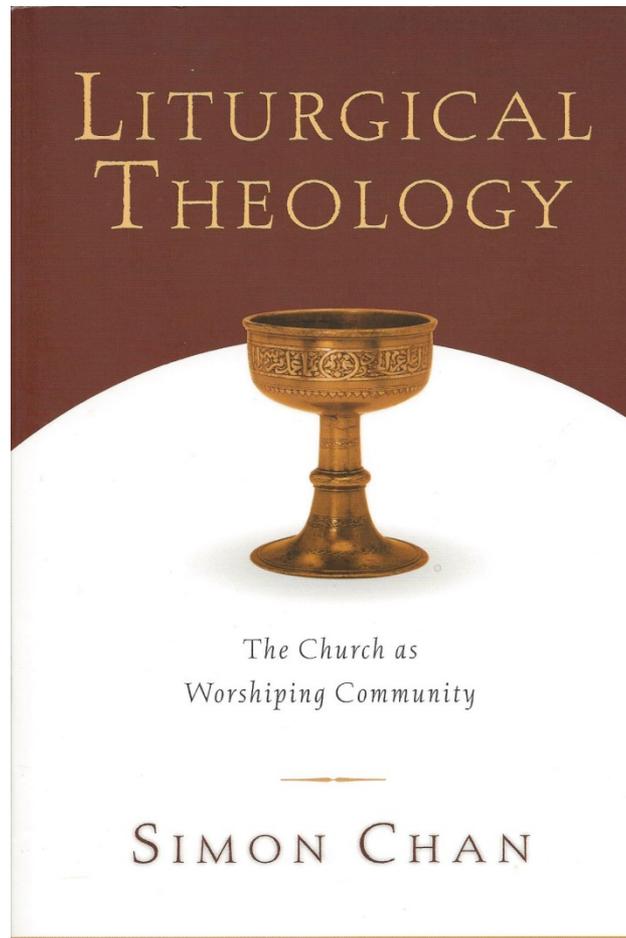
Helpful Books

- James Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*.



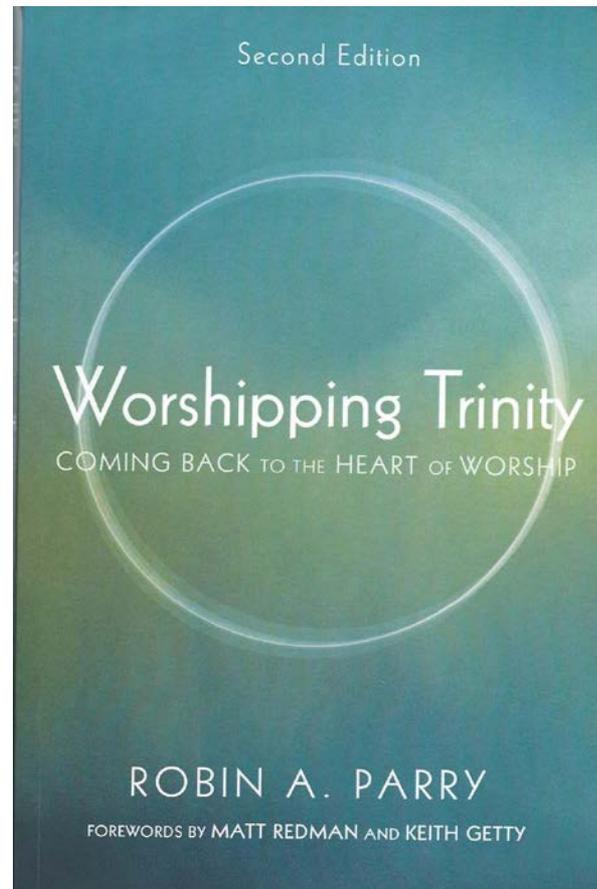
Helpful Books

- Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community*

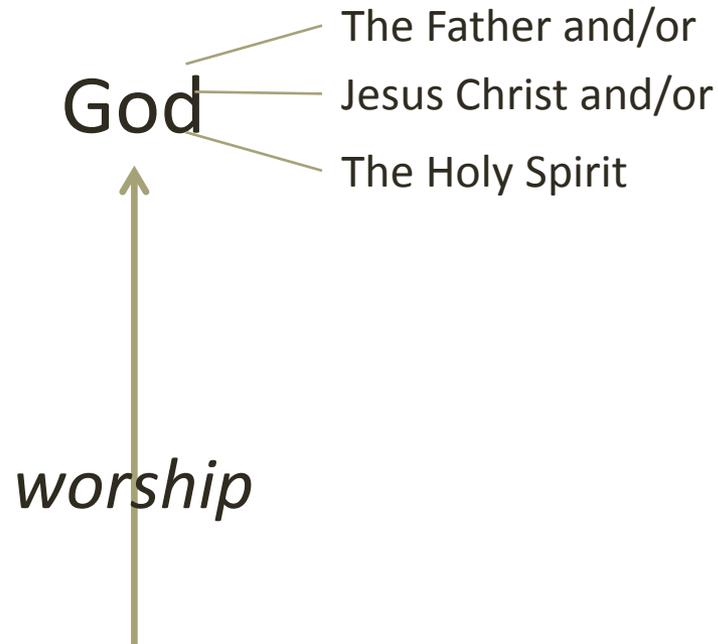


Helpful Books

- Robin Parry, *Worshipping Trinity*

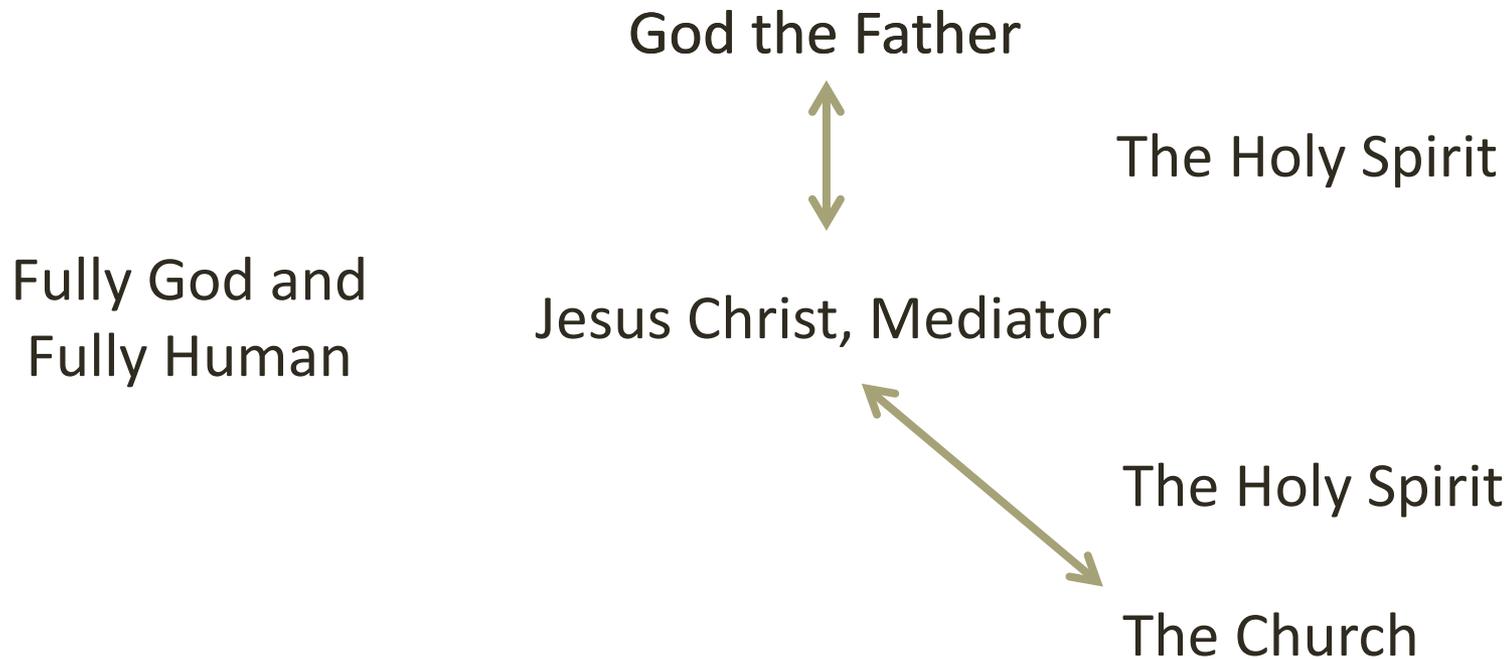


Torrance Diagram #1: A Common View



Us or Me, Here and Now

Torrance Diagram #2: A More Scriptural and Trinitarian View of Worship



Relationship and Worship as a Dance

- An ancient Christian way of speaking of the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: they live, move, and work cooperatively as in a dance.



Emil Nolde, *Wildly Dancing Children*

But How Can We Join the Dance?

Joining in Through Jesus

Worship...

...our energy or His?

...our movement or His?



Joined to Jesus...

...joined to his glorifying of
God the Father.

John Wesley, Methodist Founder, on this Point

“As Aaron never came in before the Lord without the whole people of Israel represented both by the twelve stones on his breast and by the two others on his shoulder, so Jesus Christ does nothing without the Church, in that sometimes they are represented as only one Person. Seeing Christ acts and suffers for this body in that manner which is fitting to Him as the Head, the Church follows all the motions and sufferings of its Head in such a manner as is possible to its weak members.”

Matt Redman, Contemporary Musician, on this Point

“We praise Jesus the Son with everything within us—but we also join with Jesus in worship as He glorifies His Father. As the Holy Spirit reveals the Lordship of Jesus to the depths of our heart, He also takes us into the Son’s relationship with the Father...Worship is *to* Jesus, yes—absolutely. We glorify the Son and magnify His name. But worship is also *in* Jesus and *through* Jesus and *with* Jesus...When our heavenly Father receives our worship, He receives it in the person of His Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit.”

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Augustine, 5th Century

Theologian, on this Point

“When the body of the Son prays, it does not separate its Head from itself; and it is the one Savior of his body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us. He prays for us as our priest; he prays in us as our Head, he is prayed to by us as our God. Let us therefore recognize our words in him and his words in us.”

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Christ's Mediation of Worship

How could imagine that the founder of Methodism, a contemporary worship songwriter, and a 5th century bishop could agree?

Christ Mediates Worship: The First Impact

- Being aware of who gets prayed to and worshiped
- God the Father is the main recipient of worship and is the one to whom prayer is addressed normally.

3 Prayer Practices

- Avoid collapsing all references to God and the Lord to Jesus Christ.

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- Avoid sliding from one Person to another when you are praying extemporaneously.

Example: “Our heavenly God and Father, we thank you for all your works, especially the wonder of creation. And we thank you that you died on the cross for us.....

3 Prayer Practices

- Avoid collapsing all references to God and the Lord to Jesus Christ.
- Avoid sliding from one Person to another when you are praying extemporaneously.
- Can you imagine a prayer or song on the lips of Christ?

Jesus Prays as Our Head

- Augustine: “Jesus Christ prays in us as our Head....Let us therefore recognize our words in him and his words in us.”
- To whom does Jesus pray?
- What does Jesus say when he prays?

Fittingness of Acts of Worship

- Not only fitting to us
- But fitting to Jesus Christ: What would Jesus pray? What would Jesus sing?

Eliminating Trivial Worship

- Can you imagine this hymn on the lips of Christ?
- Early Methodist hymn: A Methodist I am by name / I hope to live and die the same / And then with Jesus I'll be blessed / With all the shouting Methodist.

A Good Guide for Preaching

If Jesus was addressing my congregation with the Bible passage we just read, what would he say to my congregation?

Discussion Time

Let me ask you to get in your groups for discussion again. Here is your task: think of an example from your experience of some act of worship that you could not imagine on the lips of Jesus Christ. It could be a song or a prayer. In five minutes I want to hear of the clearest, bad example your group can think of.

Christ Mediates Worship: The Second Impact

- Christ is the only true mediator of worship.
- Music is not the mediator between us and God.

“THE SEARCH FOR
HIS PRESENCE IS
OVER”?

Yes, it is by Jesus,
but not by music.

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Jesus, Not Music, is the Mediator of God's Presence in Worship

- Jesus Christ: The Word become Flesh who Tabernacles (dwells) among us (John 1:14)
- Jesus Christ: The New Bethel (house of God) (John 1:51)
- Jesus Christ: His Resurrected Body is the New Temple (John 2:19)

Christ Mediates Worship: The Third Impact

- Freedom from Anxiety
 - If Jesus' worship is true worship and if we are joined to him as he worship, then the following anxieties are ill-founded:
 - Am I feeling worshipping deeply enough?
 - Am I saying the right things?
 - Am I doing the right things?
 - Do the people like it?

Christ Mediates Worship: The Final Impact

- From Anxiety to Wonder and Awe and Gratitude
- From Obligation to Worship to Opportunity to Worship (to join with Christ)
- This Opportunity as God's Gift to Us

Awed by the Gift

Eternal God, Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, and have fed us with spiritual food in the sacrament of his body and blood.

The Lord's Prayer

- The “Our” of “Our Father”
- This “Our” begins with Christ’s prayer to the Father, a prayer in which we are invited to join.

Worship in Truth

Being Joined to Jesus Christ as He
Glorifies God

Resources for Worshiping in Truth



Question and Answer Time