

Defining Worship
Part 5: The subject of “*Style*”

And he [Jesus] said to them, “*Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.*”

Matthew 13:52

So far we have focused on the following foundational ideas on the subject of worship:

1. Cahaba Park is committed to worship that majors on the *essentials*, namely that our worship be completely God-centered;
2. The *essence* of worship is found in our heart’s desire. True worship that pleases God is the drawing near of the heart to God -- the quickening of the heart with genuine feelings in response to God’s glory;
3. The *essence* of worship is fueled by our cherishing, treasuring, savoring Christ as gain. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”¹;
4. Worship that is *pure and simple* is forged out of a hungering and thirsting for God. If we worship with a divided heart, that is, to achieve some other goal, we worship for a reason other than to be fully satisfied in God alone.

There is very little in the New Testament about the forms and style and content of corporate worship. Our approach to worship at Cahaba Park is prayerful, thoughtful, Bible-saturated, God-centered, Christ-exalting, driven by a passion to be filled with all the fullness of God. This is an ongoing process. The commitment of the four foundational statements above will rarely ever change. The way in which we express them changes weekly. This is the nature of form and freedom. Our form does not often change; how we come to express them in worship will change. There is no one right style of worship. “Jesus Christ our worship leader has taken innumerable forms of worship across the centuries and across the world and made them His own; He has been pleased to call men and women ‘from every tribe and language and people and nations (Revelation 5:9) His brethren’ (Hebrews 2:11), and hence to take up their expressions of praise into His own continuing and eternal communion with the Father.”²

We are committed to use the best theologically, musically, and stylistically in all forms ranging from “fine” to “folk.” Also, I am committed that our choices about worship style at Cahaba Park are grounded in God’s Word, in the wisdom of history, in tradition and community, and in the new winds of the Spirit in order to come to faithful decisions. To be *a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old*” is my goal. I am praying that all of us will earnestly seek the Lord in a dry and weary land where there is no water, to see His power and His glory (Psalm 63:1-2). And to thirst and yearn for Him as well, to drink deeply of His glory and be satisfied. Only a grander vision of God will overcome our nearsightedness, and cause us to be “lost in wonder, love and praise.”

¹ John Piper sermon entitled, “Worship is an End in Itself.”

² Ron Man, “Jesus Our Worship Leader: The Mediating Work Of The Son in Worship” in *Reformation and Revival*, Volume 9, Number 2, page 38.