



Issues, Etc.TM

Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

TRANSCRIPT

Rev. Todd Wilken, Host

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"Classical Christian Worship"

Guest:

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Concordia Publishing House**

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WILKEN: We used to be able to say that it was kind of the common Christian experience, week by week, every Lord's Day, Christian gathering together for what was called worship or in the olden days it might have been called Mass. Christians gathering together for the better part of 2000 years generally under the same rubric, that is, under the same form, the same standard, gathering together largely to hear the preaching of God's Word and receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And with it came, over time, but developed very early in Christian history, a liturgy, a service.

Now many have abandoned it, if they ever had it in the first place. But that does not mean that authentic, classical Christian worship isn't still with us and shouldn't still be with us. It has been the standard for almost two millennia. What is it, though? It's so strange to the ears of the world, much less to the ears of many Christians—parts that they have not heard, passages of Scripture that they may not have read or ever experienced on Sunday morning.

Greetings and welcome to *Issues, Etc.* on this Tuesday afternoon, March 30, Tuesday

of Holy Week. I'm Todd Wilken. Thanks for tuning us in. We're going to be talking about "Classical Christian Worship," sometimes even called the "Divine Service." Our guest: Pastor Scot Kinnaman. He's Senior Editor of Periodicals and Consumer Books Development for Concordia Publishing House based in St. Louis. He's author of the book *Worshiping with Angels and Archangels*. Scot, welcome back to *Issues, Etc.*

KINNAMAN: Thanks for having me, Todd.

WILKEN: The subtitle of the book: *An Introduction to the Divine Service*. That's an odd way of talking about worship—"Divine Service."

KINNAMAN: Well, as soon as we start talking about it as Divine Service, we're really carving out what we understand worship to be. I mean, that really is the question when Christians start getting together. What do you mean by worship? Well, what do you mean by worship? When we call it the Divine Service, we're immediately putting it in the context of what is "divine" and what is "service."

Let's start from the "service" understanding of it first, because for a large part of Christendom when we talk about "worship" we define it as the "work of the people," and that "service" then becomes what we do, either for each other or for God. And that is truly on its head, when what we have traditionally understood as being worship. When we call it "divine," it gives us our orientation, it gives us our focus, because when we gather together in the Divine Service, it is God calling us together. It is God's Word that we are there to receive, and it's really God's service to us, which is the reason why we're there. That focus, then, puts it on "What is God going to say?" This then begins the conversation that has become ritualized in our liturgy. God speaks, and then we respond.

WILKEN: Who is participating in this, wherever it takes place – this classical Christian worship, Divine Service – on a Sunday morning? What is the scope of the participation?

KINNAMAN: The participation is obviously all those who are gathered in any one congregation. But it goes beyond that, because what we're doing is hearing the words of the eternal, omnipresent God who joins together every believer who worships. And so on any given Sunday morning, shall we say, all of Christendom is involved in that same liturgy. But even more than that, it's the Church, as we talk about it, as the saints. And so here's the title of the book: We worship with angels, archangels, and the whole company of heaven.

WILKEN: So that includes all Christians everywhere at all times...

KINNAMAN: At *all* times, yes.

WILKEN: ...including those who have gone before us.

KINNAMAN: Absolutely. Yes. Because what we're doing – we often refer to the Lord's Supper, but this extends out to our worship as well – as the feast which is the foretaste of the feast to come. When we are finally and ultimately in the Lord's presence, we will be singing a liturgy. It will be the ultimate divine liturgy, the ultimate song of the saints to God.

WILKEN: Now here's the part that I think a lot of people stub their toes, figuratively, on in their first exposure to classical Christian worship. They walk in and perhaps after only the singing of a single hymn, maybe not even that, there is an invocation of the Triune Name of God. Nothing should be surprising there. But then immediately a confession of sins, a call to confess sins. Pretty stark stuff. I mean contrasted with what a lot of Christians are doing on Sunday morning – fifteen minutes of praise music to

get everybody fired up and then, perhaps not even then, a mention of sin. This is not seeker-sensitive.

KINNAMAN: It's not seeker-sensitive, but it is ultimately, again, reflective of our focus. We are being called into the presence of God. The Holy Spirit, as we confess, "calls, gathers, and enlightens the whole Christian church on earth." We are being called to gather for worship to receive the blessings of Christ through His Word and through His Sacrament. And the first thing that we do is acknowledge that what God has said about us is true, and that we are sinners in need of a Savior. And so we, in humble acknowledgement of who we are in relation to who God is, we confess our sins and receive then the very first blessing of God through the mouth of the pastor announcing that our sins are forgiven. Now that fires me up.

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Alleluia."

"O Lord, how manifold are Your works. In wisdom have You made them all. The earth is full of Your riches."

WILKEN: Now, Scot, they call this usually, not always with that text, the Introit. What is it? What function does it play in classical Christian worship?

KINNAMAN: It brings those who are going to be leading the service into the worship area. Often times the confession of sins is led from the baptismal font, because our confession of sins is tied to our baptism. That was where we came into, literally came into, the Church as children of God. We were brought in through Baptism. And so to have the beginning of the service at the baptismal font hearkens us back to our Baptism. And so traditionally it used to be that the service starts in the back, and they

would raise the crucifix on its pole and you would be able to see the procession of the pastors [and] the assisting ministers coming into the church. It kind of orders things. Now we're slightly different in our presentation of this. Many times during this Introit there is a processional. It's often the words of a Psalm as we again start speaking back to God His very own words. We have nothing better to say, Todd, to God than what He has said to us. And so we're offering back to God in the Introit these words of His.

WILKEN: Alright, you've emphasized it several times here, that this is not us inviting God down to visit us, but we are entering His presence at His invitation. He actually draws us into His presence in His Word and Sacrament by that very Word. Very different from how many Christians think about Christian worship on Sunday morning.

KINNAMAN: Right. Worship is not a time of obligation, something that we are there to fulfill. It is not something that we're offering to God. God needs nothing from us. He is the almighty Creator. He is drawing us in. He is initiating the conversation in His Word, and we are responding. This is the holy conversation of the liturgy.

WILKEN: Where in the Bible, with about a minute before we take a break, where in the Bible would you look for some direction in that sense, that this is what's really happening, that God is the primary actor and we are entering His presence not only by confession of sins, but by hearing His Word in the verses of these Psalms, literally to enter into His presence. One minute before we break.

KINNAMAN: Well, I would say one would be Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered in My name there I am among you." But also we have Isaiah, who calls us into worship, in the first chapter, verse 18, "Come, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though our sins are as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they are red

like crimson, they will become like wool.” This is the invitation of God to come into His presence. He is not limited. But what He has told us is that in worship this is where we can find Him. This is where He will locate Himself for our blessing, for our comfort, for our benefit.

WILKEN: Pastor Scot Kinnaman is our guest. We’re talking about classical Christian worship on this Tuesday afternoon, March 30, right in the middle of Holy Week. Scot is Senior Editor for Periodicals and Consumer Book Development for Concordia Publishing House based in St. Louis. He’s author of the book *Worshiping with Angels and Archangels: An Introduction to the Divine Service*. It’s a very different way of thinking about what happens on Sunday morning. Rather than you coming, fulfilling your obligation, somehow by your machinations, by your feelings, by your earnest praise, calling God down from heaven. No, He calls you into His presence around His Word and His Sacraments. He calls you as a sinner to enter in to His presence so that He might show you His mercy in Christ. Be right back.

[BREAK]

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

“Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.”

WILKEN: More sounds from classical Christian worship as we talk about that with Pastor Scot Kinnaman on this Tuesday afternoon, March 30. I’m Todd Wilken. This is *Issues, Etc.* Thanks for tuning us in. Now that has a strange name. The words are familiar. They’re all over the New Testament. “Lord, have mercy.” It’s called “The Kyrie,” and in some churches it’s not simply Kyrie. Sometimes it goes on for a period of time near the beginning of the service. Scot, first of all, explain this kind of shortened title, “Kyrie.” We just don’t use

the word at all any more. And then where are we at in the Sunday morning conversation with God in the “Kyrie”?

KINNAMAN: It’s interesting. Many people are afraid of the formal terminology of the liturgy. And really it’s been retained because it expresses particular meanings and kind of joins us with generations that have gone before. “The Kyrie” – in its full terms, the “Kyrie Eleison” – means, “Lord, have mercy.” And it really is the first prayer now that the people are involved in. It used to be called the Deacon’s Prayer, and more often than not if there’s an assisting minister, the assisting minister will lead the congregation in this prayer. And you’re right there is a longer form which is kind of a litany style, and it flows in this way: “In peace let us pray to the Lord.” The response is: “Lord, have mercy.” “For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.” “Lord, have mercy.” “For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.” “Lord, have mercy.” “For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.” “Lord, have mercy.” In this way we are orienting ourselves in what we are doing. We’re here to receive from God, but we’re also here to prepare us for service. When we leave the worship we will be going out into our vocation and to those things that the Lord has called us. And here even at the beginning as we are working our way toward the reading of God’s Word, which is the high point of this part of the service, we’re seeing not only our orientation here, one to another, but our orientation to the whole world.

WILKEN: Real quickly, why would we ask for mercy when, as you said in the last segment, we’ve already confessed our sins and heard the clear and sound Absolution from the pastor? Why would we ask for mercy again?

KINNAMAN: That is the very sustenance. I eat breakfast, but I also need lunch and dinner. We have forgiveness of sins. If we went by the fact that I asked for it once and I don't need it again, we would have stopped with our Baptism. But we continually sin, even from the moment that we have received Absolution to the very next thing. We are sinners by the way we are put together since the Fall. And so we rely constantly, we throw ourselves constantly on the cross of Christ. We constantly ask for Christ's mercy. It is the most basic prayer of Scripture. I think maybe one of the most familiar places that we can find it is probably Mark chapter 10, beginning about verse 46, where we have the story of blind Bartimaeus. And his simple prayer, which asks for everything, though, is: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

"Glory be to God on high. And on earth peace, goodwill toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord. Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

WILKEN: Well, that one, Scot, has a name that many Christians might be familiar with if they pay attention to Christmas time: "Gloria in Excelsis."

KINNAMAN: Right. "Glory to God in the Highest." Right after having prayed the Kyrie, asking for Christ's mercy, we sing this

hymn of confidence, saying, "Since you have given us this mercy, since you *are* the God who has promised us, be faithful and deliver what You have promised."

WILKEN: Now it's not exactly the song of the angels, but it has been kind of filled out a little bit. What fills out this – what has its basis in the song of the angels at Jesus' birth and then church has seen fit to flesh it out a little bit more. How?

KINNAMAN: Sure. "Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth" – that comes from Luke 2:14. But it's filled out with more of the Gospel from John the first chapter, beginning at verse 29.

WILKEN: There are very important words in here, but again it seems as though we're also talking again about mercy. "Have mercy on us." It's just constant so far in the liturgy.

KINNAMAN: Yes. I say, again, it is the basic prayer of the Christian, but it's not a prayer of distress, although it is the most basic prayer when we are in distress. It's not a prayer of pain, although when we are in need, you know, it could be the first words on our lips. But it is a prayer of confidence. You know, "Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, we worship You." Why? Because You have given us this mercy. "We praise You for Your glory." Why? Because You have given us this mercy. "Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world. Have mercy on us." Not again, you know, do what you have mercy on us, but here it is our words of Christ coming back. "You have had mercy on us. You take away the sins of the world. You have mercy on us. You sit at the right hand of the Father." And so we then pray in confidence, "Receive our prayer." We know He will because in the past He has. He has been faithful in the past; He'll be faithful now.

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

“Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.”

WILKEN: Well, there’s an important and a foundational word in Christian worship [that] every Christian will recognize. This response, the “Triple Alleluia,” if you will, comes as the Scriptures are being read, in particular adjacent to the reading of the Gospel. Talk about the word “Alleluia” and also why it is punctuating the public reading of Scripture, especially the Gospel reading.

KINNAMAN: Well, you’re right. It provides a transition between the Old and New Testament reading and the Gospel. The Gospel again features the words and the actions of Christ. The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus. Here is the top of the mountain, shall we say, of this portion of the service. And the “Alleluia”: it’s Hebrew for “praise to the Lord.” So as we have heard the lessons from the Old Testament, as we have heard application that comes from an Epistle reading, a reading of the letters in the New Testament, it’s all been preparing us. All our praise, the Psalm at the beginning as part of the Introit, has all been preparing us now for this. And so here we are. And it’s like standing at the mountaintop. We see the presence of Jesus now before us in the Gospel. That’s how real Christ is in our worship. He’s there in His words, and we announce the “Alleluias,” this praise to the Lord.

WILKEN: This emphasizes something that I think you’ve said before, and that is we’re not talking about the long distance presence of Christ on Sunday morning. We’re not talking about us shouting up to Him in the heavenly heights. But Christians have commonly understood from the very beginning that Christ *is* – when He says, “I am there in your midst,” He *is* there in His Word. Talk about that.

KINNAMAN: It’s not a mystical presence. It’s not, you know, it’s not in the air. We

don’t have to go looking around for Him. When He says, “There I am in the midst of you,” it is by the very means that He has given us. These “means of grace,” which is His Word, which is then presented in reading, presented in the Absolution, and then presented also in the Lord’s Supper. So we call this a very real presence of Christ, not corporeally, you know, sitting in the pew, but there with power to save in His Word and in the Sacraments.

WILKEN: Pastor Scot Kinnaman is our guest. We’re talking about classical Christian worship. It’s Tuesday afternoon, March 30. I’m Todd Wilken. This is *Issues, Etc.* When we come back, what follows after the preaching of God’s Word, which of course is key and crucial in Christian worship, is the Christian’s response, sometimes called the Offertory. And it is right next to the Offering as well. We’ll talk about that and hear what it sounds like after this.

[BREAK]

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

“Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Amen.”

WILKEN: Those words sound familiar. At least they should sound familiar. They’re drawn directly from Psalm 51, if I’m not mistaken, a song of confession but also a song that has been taken up historically by Christians on Sunday morning to be sung in response to the preaching of God’s Word: “Create in me a clean heart.” We’re talking about classical, historical Christian worship. Pastor Scot Kinnaman is our guest. Am I right, that’s Psalm 51?

KINNAMAN: Psalm 51, verses ten through twelve. Yes.

WILKEN: Do you think, just kind of pausing for a second, do you think that many Christians who gather on Sunday morning and find these things unfamiliar, the canticles, the songs of classical, Christian worship, finding them unfamiliar, because they're unfamiliar with the Scriptures that they are based on?

KINNAMAN: It may be an unfamiliarity with the Scriptures, but it may also be an unfamiliarity with the historic liturgy, this order that we use that puts Scripture in context of worship, that puts Scripture in the context of our focus on what Christ has done for us. So sometimes, you know, it's like seeing the fellow you always know at work, seeing him out of context and you don't recognize him. Sometimes it's just that.

WILKEN: Again, this is a prayer after the preaching of God's Word which is essentially asking for a clean heart. It seems we cannot get away from the notion that this Sunday morning experience is all about the forgiveness of sins.

KINNAMAN: Because that that is one of the means by which God immediately comes to us with His Word to assure us of what He has done. This Absolution we continually hear our sins are forgiven. And because our sins are forgiven we're prepared for service. "Lord, have mercy": we're confident that He has. And so we're able to sing these hymns of praise.

The Offertory is a great transition in the service, Todd. Usually the Offering has been presented. So another one of our responses, having heard the Word of God, having heard His mercy, we have given our gifts. They have been brought forward. And then during the Offertory the pastor is preparing the altar now, kind of a transitional between the Service of the Word and what we're now going to be approaching, which is the Service of the Sacrament. And so the elements have been

brought to the altar of bread and wine, and he is prepared now for the liturgy of the Sacrament.

WILKEN: Before we go into that, why that kind of basic two-part division between Service of Word and Service of Sacrament?

KINNAMAN: Again, we were talking about the means of grace and the service follows that breakdown. By the means of grace we're talking about that by which God brings and bestows grace. And it's the Word, as we have said, whether it be declared in the Absolution, whether it be read in the words, whether it be proclaimed in the sermon. One great teacher of the liturgy, Dr. Arthur Just, whom I think you know, calls the sermon a hinge between the two great parts. It's what reminds us and focuses on what we've heard in the Word and now prepares us for what we are going to hear in the Sacrament. And the Sacraments, then, are this kind of the demonstrated, or the performed Word. And so it's firmly grounded in this Word of God.

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

P: "The Lord be with you."

C: "And with thy spirit."

P: "Lift up your hearts."

C: "We lift them up unto the Lord."

P: "Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God."

C: "It is meet and right so to do."

WILKEN: That sounds like a little conversation between the pastor and the people as the beginning of the Service of the Sacrament.

KINNAMAN: It is. This portion of the service is called "The Preface," and just like the preface of a book it is preparing us to receive. And this conversation comes from several parts of the liturgy, I mean from the Word. 2 Timothy 4:22, "The Lord be with you." "Also with you," is the response. "Lift

up your hearts” comes from Colossians 3:1. “We lift them up to the Lord” – that’s our response. “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God”: that comes from Psalm 136. “Because it is meet and right so to do”: again our response.

This part of the Preface is what we call the Ordinary. It doesn’t change. There are several parts of the liturgy that [don’t] change. And the next part of the Preface is seasonal. It changes to reflect what part of the Church [Year] we’re in. Those things that change, like the readings, the Psalms that are chosen, the hymns, the next part of the Preface called “The Proper Preface,” are called Propers. They’re proper to the day.

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

“Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav’n and earth are full of Thy glory.”

WILKEN: This is called “The Sanctus,” after those proper prayers as you just mentioned Scot. This is a song drawn straight out of the Old Testament. Where?

KINNAMAN: This is Isaiah 6:3. This is the ultimate hymn of praise to be sung at the beginning of the service. Really it prepares us to receive. We’re acknowledging who’s coming. “Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.” This is the Lord, the One who is coming to serve us. We’re calling Him “holy.” We’re acknowledging, again, when we do that who He is and who we are. We sing “Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna.” This comes directly from the accolades given to Christ as He entered Jerusalem during Holy Week. So again we join, you know, a Church through all ages who acknowledges exactly who He is. He is the King of glory. He is the King who has come to save us. “Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He.” “Holy, holy, holy.” Notice these threes that we have throughout the liturgy that remind us that we are worshiping a God who is Triune: Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit. And then we acknowledge we come in the name of the Lord. And again we sing our “Hosannas.”

WILKEN: Nestled in the Service of the Sacrament, sometimes before, sometimes after the Words of Institution, is the Lord’s Prayer. It appears to occupy a place of very great honor there. Talk about that, if you would.

KINNAMAN: Well, the Lord’s Prayer, since the very first time that the Lord gave it to His apostles, is the chief prayer of the Christian Church. And it’s prayed here as we now prepare for the chief event of the Divine Service, which is the Sacrament of the Altar. We call God “Father,” and this is a privilege that only Christians have, only those who have been brought into the family of God. We call Him Father and we are acknowledging this as we are preparing for the Lord’s Supper. In doing that we’re calling forward and remembering our Baptism, that which brought us into the family of God, that’s brought us members of the kingdom. As I said before, we’re preparing for the very foretaste of the feast to come. The very liturgy is being joined in heaven. We’re joining that liturgy now.

AUDIO CLIP (Singing):

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: ‘Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.’

“In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying: ‘Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”

WILKEN: When we come back from our break, as we talk about classical Christian worship, Pastor Scot Kinnaman will explain the great words that we just heard from classical Christian worship, the words of Christ Himself, where He declares bread and wine to be body and blood for us for the forgiveness of sins. Again that theme: the forgiveness of sins. Pastor Scot Kinnaman is author of the book *Worshipping with Angels and Archangels*.

[BREAK]

WILKEN: Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* I'm Todd Wilken. We're talking about historic, classical Christian worship, called the Divine Service—God's service to us in Word and Sacrament. And then He calls forth from us by that very Word the response that is praise and service and love to neighbor. Before the break, Scot, we heard the Words of Institution in their entirety. That's kind of a mouthful: Words of Institution. What are these words and why are they said here? What actually happens at this point in historic Christian worship?

KINNAMAN: With the words of our Lord we are at the second mountaintop of the Divine Service, the first one having been the very words of our Lord spoken to us through the reading of the Holy Gospel. Now the words of our Lord presented here in the liturgy, the Words of Institution. Some of the earliest ritual that we have was set up around these words that were given to us by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11. And that pretty much sets up the presentation of what we now call the Words of Institution, or the words by which Christ instituted, established, the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of sins. And there has been much debate through out the Reformation period, especially at the early part of it: what do these words mean? Christ, when He instituted, handed the disciples bread and said, "This is My body." He handed them the cup of wine and said, "This is My blood." We

have Christian tradition that wants to take and say, "The bread and the wine turn into body and blood." And we say, "No, that's not what Christ said." There's Christian tradition that says, "You're only receiving bread and wine as a memory, a memorial, of what Christ has done." And we say, "No, that's not what Christ said." He said, "The bread *is* My body." He said, "The wine *is* My blood, and you receive *this* for the forgiveness of sins." Todd, we can't explain the tension, but we accept the tension between what we see and what Christ said it is, as Christians, and receive it for exactly the reason He said, for the forgiveness of our sins.

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

WILKEN: Scot, where do we find these words Scripture, and why are they appropriate to be sung after having received the very body and blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

KINNAMAN: This canticle, or this song from the liturgy, is often called the Song of Simeon. It's [Latin] name is the "Nunc Dimittis." And this comes from Luke chapter 2. This is the story of aged Simeon, who when Jesus was in the Temple, Simeon came and said this beautiful song: "Behold, this *is* the Savior," and in response he said, "Now let me go in peace. Everything that You have promised me has been fulfilled." Now we who have gone to the Lord's Supper and have received Christ in the bread and in the wine, through His body and His blood, we join Simeon in this song:

“Lord, now let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.” What is this word? This bread, this wine, this body, this blood has been given to you for the forgiveness of sins. “Lord, Your word has been fulfilled; let me go in peace. My own eyes have seen Your salvation.” We have these exact words of Simeon. This is a very Lutheran positioning of this canticle, because we understand truly the divine presence of Christ, the real presence of Christ, in the Sacrament. We can stand with Simeon and say, “I have received the Lord.”

AUDIO CLIP (Music & Singing):

“The Lord bless you and keep you.
“The Lord shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
“The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”

“Amen, Amen, Amen”

WILKEN: Scot, locate this final benediction, or blessing, if you will for us in Scripture.

KINNAMAN: Oh, sure. This is the blessing that God gave to Aaron to give to his sons and to all the priesthood. This from Numbers chapter 6, beginning in verse 22.

WILKEN: Then why do we end with this? And the response is traditionally that kind of triple “Amen.” What does that say, with about thirty seconds here.

KINNAMAN: Well, we’re ending the Divine Service just the way we began it. We’re ending it in the name of the Lord, and so we have this three-fold speaking of God’s holy name. And so we depart from God’s House in His name, with His name upon us. We depart fed and nourished by Word and Sacrament, having Christ in us. And we go in peace, and we go with God’s blessing.

And “Amen”: “Let it be so.” And so the triple “Amen,” again we’re emphasizing in whose name we are speaking, Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit—another referencing here of the Trinity.

WILKEN: Finally, then, with about a minute before we close up, how does a Biblical understanding – because we’ve been brought back again and again and again in every part of this classical Christian worship to the Biblical foundations and a Biblical understanding of worship – how does a Biblical understanding of worship as primarily what God is doing to serve us radically change one’s view of worship?

KINNAMAN: When we take the onus, the burden, off of us of having to perform in a way acceptable to God, you know, we take the burden of “Have I praised enough?”, “Have I prayed enough?”, “Have I been excited enough in what I’m doing?”, “Have I said the right words?” You see that all comes from the burden of us initiating the conversation, us trying to prepare ourselves properly and to do what is right for God. Remember the conversation starts with God. He has graciously brought us into His presence. He has given us His Word. He has given us His assurance. He is serving us with all that we need. Our response, then, comes from that, the response of praise and thanksgiving. Has enough been done? Yes it has, because God did it. Was there enough praise? Yes there was, because God brought it from us. Has enough blessing and forgiveness been given? Yes, because God did it. It’s God’s gifts bestowed on us. That’s the Biblical background and basis and focus for worship.

WILKEN: Pastor Scot Kinnaman is Senior Editor of Periodicals and Consumer Book Development for Concordia Publishing House based in St. Louis. He’s author of the book, *Worshiping with Angels and Archangels*. Scot, thank you very much.

KINNAMAN: It’s been my pleasure. Thank you, Todd.

WILKEN: Ah, the burden lifted. Think about that. You go to church on Sunday morning with a sense of obligation? Oh, maybe it's a happy obligation, but it's an obligation nonetheless. You go in there, and it pretty much all depends on you. Can you get yourself worked up again this Sunday morning to feel like you really worshiped, like worship was really going on, like the Spirit was really present, or Christ was really doing something there? What a burden. What a terrible burden. To have that burden lifted by reorienting your thinking about what worship really is – God's service to you in Jesus Christ. The

burden lies with Him, and He is happy to take it. He is happy to draw you, even though – He doesn't set your alarm clock for you – nonetheless, His Word draws you there Sunday to His Word where He bestows His gifts freely for Christ's sake. For Christ's death and resurrection for you stands at the center of that Word and is your assurance that everything is right with God.

I'm Todd Wilken. Talk with you again tomorrow. Thanks for listening to *Issues, Etc.*

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