

## The Way of the Lord

### 40. Theological Hindrances to The LORDship of Jesus (Part 5)

We're going to discuss how Roman Catholicism was able to *control* people's perspective of God. Because so few could read or write, the religious and political power of Roman Catholicism went relatively unchallenged for centuries. Not until Martin Luther's influence during the Reformation was there any concern for educating the lower classes so they could read the Bible for themselves. Corporate worship services were conducted *only in Latin*, a language understood by just an educated few and the clergy. The Bible remained hidden in Hebrew, Greek and Latin for over 1,100 years. Church authorities forbade it to be translated into any other language on *penalty of death*. Not until 1963 were priests permitted by the Vatican to conduct the Catholic Mass in the language of the people.

We take this for granted today. But having the Bible in the common tongue and congregational worship in a language people could understand were *revolutionary* fruit of the Reformation! Yet when King James ordered the Bible to be translated into English, neither he nor England's religious leaders trusted the people to apply God's Word *for themselves*. The king went so far as to *order* the translators to make sure the new version conformed to the ecclesiastical structure of clergy domination. King James also had the translators reflect the prevailing anti-Semitism in Christianity. The name *James* was substituted for the actual word *Jakob* throughout the Newer Testament. There is no name *James* in the original biblical text! (See *Pastoring By Elders*, Chapter 2 Nicolaitanism: Repression of God's People.)

With the invention of the printing press, Bibles were made available so people could *read God's Word for themselves*. That availability enhanced the push for literacy in parts of Europe. And collective worship in *words people could understand* allowed expression from the heart, and resulted in numerous new hymns being composed. Still, ecclesiastical authorities maintained control by establishing a set liturgy for communal worship. And, "church councils" continued to establish creeds and doctrine that had little to do with people living day by day in the LORDship of Jesus.

We're going to discuss another practice which blasphemes the Holy Spirit by changing the *pattern set by God's Word*. This one might surprise you because it's epidemic throughout Christendom. In fact, it takes place almost every time people gather together for corporate worship! It's the institution of a *prescribed liturgy*. This blasphemy began when Roman Catholicism adopted a pagan Greek religious practice: a *presiding priest* conducting a *set ritual* before a *passive audience*.

Both Roman Catholicism and the Protestant Reformers eliminated the communal participation that was enjoyed by the earliest Jesus followers. In its place they substituted a liturgical format that bred passive spectators. *Liturgy* is the established form by which public religious worship is conducted. A *prescribed way* of conducting a worship service evidences manmade liturgy at work. In the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great invented an order of worship. He designated it as the *only one* to be used in *all churches*. For Roman Catholics, that "order of worship" has remained basically unchanged.

During the Reformation, Martin Luther and John Calvin developed a pattern of worship that has remained standard for most Protestant churches to this day: a welcoming prayer, hymns, announcements, prayer, offertory, sermon, hymn, benediction.

What a sad departure from *God's* way of collective worship! Our Father calls for His *Spirit* to prepare each of us before we gather for worship. It's the *Spirit* Who inspires us to participate while we're together. Isn't this how Paul describes collective worship among the family of Jesus?

- “*What then shall we say, brothers? Whenever you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church*” (1 Corinthians 14:26).

- “*Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 5:19,20).

- “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God*” (Colossians 3:16).

Many Protestants don't think of their services as *liturgical*. But people are being *hindered by liturgy* whenever they come together as a gathering in Christ and *aren't* allowed to share a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, or a tongue or an interpretation to *strengthen one another* in the faith (1 Corinthians 14:26).

We do want to address another alteration of our *Lord's intent* for His collective body. *Why* does so much of Christendom today lack the spiritual power Jesus gave it? Think about it. Beginning with the institution of Roman Catholicism and continuing with much of Protestantism, *spiritual power* has been ignored or done away with. By eliminating any reliance on spiritual gifts, they *nullified* the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus followers to extend His Kingdom on earth. The Reformers did nothing to restore reliance on gifts of the Spirit. So believers *weren't* collectively strengthened and encouraged to live in the LORDship of Jesus in the outworking of spiritual gifts.

Too many believers as well as unbelievers view Christianity as a religious institution having no more Spirit-power than any other religion. All too often the Bible is taught like any other academic text. But look at the difference in the way the Apostle Paul presented God's truth: “*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on GOD'S power*” (1 Corinthians 2:4,5). We need *God's power* if we're to effectively battle the demonic principalities and authorities that are holding billions captive.

Paul points directly to this ongoing conflict of Jesus followers against demonic enemies: “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (Ephesians 6:12). Demons fear the *Holy Spirit* at work in and through us. They certainly don't fear *us*! That's why Satan, the master deceiver, has *denied* the reality of the Spirit's power among so many denominations. People who are ready instruments for the Holy Spirit to use in *His* power can stand firm against enemy resistance! (Ephesians 6:14-18)

If your spiritual life lacks testimony to the Holy Spirit's power working through you, we encourage you to take a closer look at what *God* says about it in His Word. The way of the Lord is lived out through the *power of His Spirit*.

### **For Further Study**

- Lifebyte 67. *The Hebraic Restoration: Our Father's Plan To Restore the Spiritual Power of the Early Church. Lesson 2: How "Christendom" Forsook Spiritual Power (Part 2)*
- Book: *Pastoring By Elders*, Chapter 2. Nicolaitanism: Repression of God's People
- Book: *God's Instruments for War: Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts as Weapons of Warfare*

Each is a free download on our website: <[restorationministries.org](http://restorationministries.org)>