

Dr. James Hart
B.H. Carroll Colloquy: Right Worship and Beauty

SESSION 2

V. Rooted in the Church

A. Matt. 16:13-20

B. G.K. Chesterton famously quipped, “We do not really want a religion that is right where we are right. What we want is a religion that is right where we are wrong.”

C. Biblical theological study divorced from history. The Bible is not a self-interpreting document. It must be interpreted through the historic and authoritative witness of the Apostles and their spiritual ancestors in the Church.

D. Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed 4 “We believes”:

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
We believe in the one holy catholic and apostolic church*

1. The Church is not a human institution or organization. It is rather an interdependent organism, called by God, instituted by Jesus Christ himself and constituted by the Holy Spirit
2. Church is the ongoing incarnation of Christ in the world—the very sacrament of Christ, his “mystical” body (sacramental, transcending understanding, but NOT hidden).

E. Peter’s apostolic declaration: “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.”
Note: the church’s foundation is not simply a person, nor simply a theological apostolic truth, but both together, and both affirmed by Jesus Christ himself. The Church=the ongoing incarnation of Christ to the world, the very sacrament of Christ, the mystical Body of Christ. And therefore, she has the authority of Christ.

- F. Augustine: “Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself. Do you understand and grasp, brethren, God’s grace toward us? Marvel and rejoice: we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; he and we together are the whole man. . . The fullness of Christ then is the head and the members. But what does ‘head and members’ mean? Christ and the Church.”
- G. Gregory the Great: “Our redeemer has shown himself to be one person with the holy Church whom he has taken to himself.”
- H. Thomas Aquinas: “Head and members form as it were one and the same mystical person.”
- I. Ephesians 5:31-32
- J. Col. 1:18
- K. 1 Tim. 3:15, the Church of the living God: “...the pillar and bulwark of truth.”
- L. Joan of Arc: “About Jesus Christ and the Church, I know this: they are simply one thing, and we shouldn’t complicate the matter.” (Verum corpus v. corpus mysticum)
- M. Four descriptors of the church:
- a. One
 - b. Holy
 - c. Catholic
 - d. Apostolic: living and active, established by the Lord Jesus, formed by the faith of the Apostles and sustained by their successors
- N. AEF Call (2006)
- O. The Bible is famously referred to as the “soul of theology.” It is impossible to overstate the importance of embracing the authority of scripture as it is interpreted through the historic and living authority of the historic and living Church of Jesus Christ.

- P. Simon Chan: “Worship is not just one of the many practices of the church; it is the church’s definitive practice.”¹¹
- Q. We are called to lead worship shaped by scripture and formed by the wisdom and Divine life of God found within the Great Tradition of the Church: embracing apostolic faith, bearing Christ to the entire created order.
- R. G.K. Chesterton: “Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about.” (Orthodoxy)
- S. Cyprian “He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother.”
- T. Webber (in the epilogue to the AEF Call): “We pray that we can move with intention to proclaim a loving, transcendent, triune God who has become involved in our history. In line with Scripture, creed and tradition, it is our deepest desire to embody God's purposes in the mission of the Church through our theological reflection, our worship, our spirituality and our life in the world, all the while proclaiming that Jesus [the Christ, the Son of the Living God] is Lord over all creation.”

VI. Trinitarian

- A. Stanley Grenz: “Christian worship must be self-consciously Trinitarian and Christological.” Christian worship celebrates above all the Paschal mystery.
- B. The Trinity is THE distinctively Christian doctrine.
- C. Athanasian Creed “... we worship one [God](#) in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the [Godhead](#) of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all One, the Glory Equal, the Majesty Co-Eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father Uncreate, the Son Uncreate,

¹¹ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006).

and the Holy Ghost Uncreate. The Father Incomprehensible, the Son Incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost Incomprehensible. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal and yet they are not Three Eternals but One Eternal. As also there are not Three Uncreated, nor Three Incomprehensibles, but One Uncreated, and One Incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not Three Almightyies but One Almighty...”

- D. GK Chesterton (The Everlasting Man): “If we really want a simple religion of love, we must look for it in the Athanasian Creed
- E. God Is Love: God is a community of love. The Father is the lover, the Son is the beloved, and the Holy Spirit is love shared between the Father and the Son. Augustine: from all eternity, God knows himself. The Father is the knower, the Son is the known, and the Spirit is the knowledge between them. Karl Barth: the Father is the speaker, the Son is the Word spoken, and the Spirit is the interpreter of the Word through the church. The Trinity is a dynamo of energy and self-emptying love.
- F. The beginning of real spirituality: God has no need of us. God’s Triune being is such a white, hot intensity of love, that it spills over into the world that we know. This whole cosmos is made in the imago trinitatis.
- G. Jesus was THE emissary PAR EXCELLENCE for the Trinity so that the world may be trinitized, brought back to the divine life of God: John 3:16-17
- H. Kenosis of Christ (“The cross is the moment when the tensive unity of these three divine persons is on most vivid display.” –Balthasar) The Father sent all the way down into God-forsakenness to rescue us tethered by the infinite love that connects the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit. We are saved by the Trinitarian God. In his book *Mysterium Paschale*, Hans Urs von Balthasar:, “...in Jesus Christ’s death, Descent into Hell and Resurrection, only one reality is there to be seen: the love of the triune God for the world, a love which can only be perceived through a co-responsive love.”¹² This is the Gospel.

¹² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1970), p. 262.

I. Perichoresis: the inter-penetrating, indwelling, life-giving round dance of God. We are being called to submit to this invitation of the Trinitarian God's loving, reconciling, dancing embrace an embrace for your neighbor and the entire created order.

J. Back to Kenosis: In Phil. 2:

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God,^[a] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself,^[b] taking the form of a servant,^[c] being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (RSVCE)

K. The solution to human self-elevation is divine self-abnegation. The pride of mankind is broken by the humility of the divine.

L. The only way up is down. God in Christ by the Holy Spirit descended to the very bottom of hell to rescue us—and draw us back up into the dance of the Triune God.

M. How does worship bear a Trinitarian foundation? “Let this same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” Submission in humility, service, love and joyful self-abnegation. Come to the dance with the life of the world.

VII. Participation in the Gospel

A. *Koinonia* as participation in the gospel: substantial and purposeful participation: such as communion with the Triune God, participation in the sufferings of Christ and partaking of the beatific vision. *Koinonia* is at the very center of the Christian life as we are transformed into Christ-likeness, *Koinonia* is made manifest in gatherings with the Apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42-46). Within those gatherings of worship we mysteriously participate in and partake of the body and blood of Jesus.

B. What is participation? In philosophy, participation is the inverse of inherence. An attribute inheres in a substance, but the substance participates in the attribute. The image of God inheres in us, and we are invited to therefore participate in God. It's one of the great mysteries of God.

C. How do we participate in something? (Analogy)

- a. Varying levels of participation in creation. Humankind is the pinnacle of God's creation, made in the image of God, uniquely created with a heart that is restless until it rests in God, as Augustine wrote.
- b. Increasing or intensifying our participation in the life of the Triune God: *Creatio ex nihilo* (Rev. 4:11; Ps. 104:24a; Rom. 4:17b). Since God created the universe from nothing, everything that is is necessarily insinuated with God. But, he is also *other than* everything that exists. Everything that exists, exists because of God and finds its being in God. Additionally, God is present to his creation, upholding and sustaining it, and eternally continuing to create. Therefore, everything that exists participates in some way with the Divine and the ongoing continuous creative process=A participatory, sacramental metaphysic. God mysteriously participates in his created order as the created order mysteriously participates in God's merciful and loving continuous creation.