

What Is The Invocation?

Do you feel liturgical worship services are boring? If you do, you are not the only one. There are many reasons why people feel liturgical worship services are boring. Maybe you feel they are boring because they contain low beat music. Maybe you feel they are boring because it is a similar worship service week after week. You know the service so well you no longer need to open up your hymnal or worship folder to follow along. Maybe you feel they are boring for another reason. If you feel liturgical worship services are boring because you know the service by heart, or even if you don't, consider this question. Would you still feel liturgical worship services are boring if you paid attention to the words you are saying? The truth is the words in liturgical worship services have been treasured by Christians for thousands of years because they beautifully and clearly teach Jesus is the Savior. In this column entitled, "Questions About Christianity", we are looking at the different parts of a basic liturgical worship service. This month we will learn how most liturgical worship services begin by answering this question, "What is the Invocation?"

Many liturgical worship services begin with an opening hymn. After the hymn is sung, the service itself begins with the Invocation. The word Invocation comes from the Latin word *invocare*. It means "to call upon" or "to appeal to". When the Invocation is said by the minister, God invites the congregation to call upon or to appeal to him during the worship service.

There are two basic Invocations churches use in their liturgical worship services. The first is, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The second is "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you." In the first Invocation, people begin their worship service in the name of the Triune God. In the second Invocation, people begin their worship service with the Triune God giving his grace or undeserved love to them.

Even though these Invocations use different words, they have one thing in common. They both remind people the one true God whom they worship, believe in, and serve is a Triune God. This means he is three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But he is still one God. At the exact same time, the two different Invocations remind Christians they are able to worship, believe in, and serve the Triune God because they were baptized. When Christians are baptized, the minister applies water to them as he says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Through this simple process, God the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in the Triune God and washes their sins away.

When we stop and think about what the words of the Invocation actually mean, why would we ever want to start a worship service in any other way? They not only remind us we are worshipping a Triune God, but also we are able to worship him because we have been baptized. There is certainly nothing boring about that.