

# ***Will Somebody Say ‘Amen’?***

**Psalm 106:47-48, Ephesians 5:15-20**

**Focus:** Christian worship is by definition a participatory event, symbolized in a glad “Amen.”

## **Ephesians 5**

*Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil.*

*So do not be foolish,  
but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

*Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery.*

*But [instead] be filled with the Spirit,*

*as you sing psalms and hymns  
and spiritual songs among yourselves,*

*singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,*

*giving thanks to God the Father at all times  
and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## **Psalm 106**

*Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.*

*And let all the people say, “Amen.”*

*Praise the LORD!*

## **Sermon**

***Let all the people, say AMEN. (ah-men)***

Such a great little world, AMEN

**Short and sweet and suitable** for so many moments

in this Christian journey we are together making

As fond as I am of the more **considerable** words in our faith

SUPRALAPSARIAN  
CONSUBSTANTIATION  
PRESTIDIGITATION

*Okay – so that last has nothing whatsoever to do with Christianity ...*

As much as I love a fancy, hard-to-spell expression

still, some of the more **useful words**

in our faith vocabulary

actually contain only **four letters**

And AMEN is a four letter word you can actually say in church!

**AMEN**

An English transliteration of little-bitty Hebrew word

AMEN essentially means

***so be it***  
***may it be so***  
***yes, indeed, it is true***

AMEN never **stands alone** in Biblical usage

Sometimes it proceeds, but more often than not, **follows**  
 some declaration of triumph, testimony, or truth

*Blessed be the LORD, from everlasting to everlasting*

So sings the psalmist

And then quick on the heels of his prayer comes this **firm invitation**:

*And let all the people say, "Amen."*

(Biblical faith is not a **solo** affair; it is not a **holy monologue**)  
 (Biblical faith is **living conversation**; a blessed back-and-forth)

*Is not the Lord a blessing, Israel?  
 Has not the Lord seen us through?  
 Are we not the Lord's glad possession?*

Then someone, please, say that **it is so**

Someone confirm that **this is indeed true**

Let all the people say **so be it**

*Let all the people say, "Amen."*

***AMEN is not merely the churchly caboose***  
***we tack on to the end of a long train of prayer requests***

It is not a simply a **sanctified suffix**

And it is certainly not simply a **signal**  
 that the preacher is *finally done praying*

and now its safe to **look up**, to **leave**, or to **eat**

AMEN at the end of all our praying

—whether we pray with **words**, with **song**, with **silence**—

AMEN is your **line** in this **sacred conversation**

your Biblically-sanctioned moment to say **so be it**

What the preacher just said in prayer—*so be it*

What the choir just uttered in song—*may it be so*

What the soloist just offered in song—*it is true*  
*it is good*  
*it is faithful*

*Blessed be the LORD, our God,  
 from everlasting to everlasting.*

*(and O yes) let all the people say, "Amen."*

(as if to suggest that the psalmist's prayer is not complete  
 without the **people's participatory permission**)

MAY IT BE SO they say

AMEN

*I feel I must tell you, I feel it is only fair to warn you,*

that the more Sunday sermons come and go in my work

the more I find myself becoming an **AMEN preacher**

And with a comment such as that—half of you are **delighted**  
half of you are **worried**

An “Amen Preacher” – What do I mean?

I simply mean that **I want to hear from you** from time to time

I simply mean that I do not want this 70 minutes we have  
to be a **one man/women show ...**

I guess by “Amen preacher” I mean that I expect your  
**full participation** in what this Lord’s Day time/space is all about

We “mainline” Protestants have historically  
expected a **great deal** from our preachers

to inspire us  
to teach us  
to know us  
to love us  
to comfort us  
*maybe even to entertain us*

But we have **not always expected as much** from ourselves

In many a season, in fact, our strategy for worship attendance has  
appeared to be an effort to **lower our expectations**, so as to make it  
easy for folks to attend

**But you get what you pay**—to borrow a misplaced phrase

One cannot linger casually on the sidelines with this faith

The gospel **calls** and **compels** us;  
**claims** us and **cajoles** us to respond ...

*This is why the Apostle Paul expects something  
from the Ephesians Christians, and from us*

Don’t try **to fill yourselves up** with the things of the world ...

Instead - be filled with the Holy Spirit – God’s presence/power

**Engage** this gospel; **participate** fully in this X gathering

sing songs/hymns/spirituals  
make melody to the Lord  
give thanks to God at all times

He might just as well have said, **Will somebody say AMEN?**

Now when I say I’d like to hear from you, like to hear an AMEN

I am not envisioning a **pep rally for Jesus**

No one is **more invested** in **decency** and **good order** than I

In these overly informal, somewhat narcissistic times,  
now more than ever there is calling for

Christian worship **imbued** with a sense of **transcendence**

offered with the **urgency of thoughtful preaching**

and conducted with an air of **dignity** and **grace**

I am not so much soliciting random, interrupting, individualistic AMENS

Rather I am **inviting you to join me** in a  
frequent, robust, well-placed, **unified liturgical response:**

LET US PRAY TOGETHER, **BLESSED BE THE LORD**  
LET THE PEOPLE SAY, **THANKS BE TO GOD.**  
ALL GOD’S PEOPLE NOW SAY **AMEN.**

The calling to **decency** must be held in tension  
with the calling for our **glad participation.**

***And participate we must!***

For this is our **day**, our **time**, our **place**—

for worship, for response, *for sharing in the good news*

We hear the gospel call us:

*Come sinners and strangers;  
come be changed into saints and siblings*

**And as God's people we say Amen.**

*Come people of God, just as the Lord who created all things  
turned the chaos of nothing into living and abundant life*

*so this same Lord can create new life in you ...*

**And as God's people we say Amen.**

*Come, gather together, gather around this living witness to Jesus*

*See his ministry turning the world upside down, rightside up  
See him hanging with you in your pain on Friday  
See him rising up on Sun., bringing healing/hope on his wings*

**And as God's people we say Amen.**

*Come—calls the gospel—come and worship the Lord together*

*Come and sing songs/hymns/spirituals with your lips  
Come and make melody to the Lord in your hearts  
Come and give thanks to God,*

*the giver of all good gifts—our peace, our hope, our life*

***So be it*** we say

***May it be so*** we sing

***Yes, indeed*** we shout

***Blessed be the Lord our God, from everlasting to everlasting.***

***Let all the people say, "Amen."***