



Worship

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Introduction:

After attending church one Sunday morning, a little boy knelt at his bedside that night and prayed, "Dear God, we had a good time at church today, but I wish you had been there!"

This morning and next Sunday we are going to look at worship. I want to begin this morning by asking you a question. What is worship?

John 4:20-24

"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

I. The meaning of worship

Worship literally means to reverence, adore, crouch or prostrate. Worship can be directed any number of places. It can be directed to people, things, money, angels, demons, God. Every single being has within their core the need to worship. No matter who or what is worshipped, there is a connection; there is adoration, and a submission to what or who is being worshipped. I want us this morning to focus our attention on true worship. True worship is directed toward Almighty God.

Jesus describes in His own words the kind of worshiper that God seeks. Imagine that God is *seeking* for those who will worship Him.

In worship, I realize that God is bigger than I am, or you are, or all of us put together. Somehow true worship brings Him joy and delight.

King David the psalmist knew how to worship. He revered God through singing, through clapping, through dancing, through waiting silently, through writing. Whatever David did to worship God, he did it with all his strength and knowledge. His worship began with a decision.

Worshipping God begins with a decision we make and it involves our thoughts, attitudes, and our will. I *will* bless the Lord, I *will* sing, I *will* pray, I *will* serve, I *will* obey, I *will* follow, I *will* give, I *will* go, I *will* witness, I *will*.

This is why worship is not something that is done if we feel like it or not. Worship of God happens because of who God is. I relate to Him, and in spite of how I feel, I surrender myself to Him and His way. How we worship not only affects God, but it affects those around us. It affects our family, our neighbors, our work associates, our peers at school.

II. The place of worship

From the dialogue here we can clearly see the prevailing thought at that time among the Samaritans, was that worshiping God was limited to a place.

There are people today who hold this same thought. Worship of God is limited to the hour or two that is spent in church on Sunday. All too often we have the idea that worship of God has a certain feel or look to it and if it doesn't include that, we haven't worshipped God. No longer is it necessary to worship God corporately in special places, for as God is present everywhere (John 4:23-24), and ordinary homes became the most common meeting places of the church.

Mountains and hills have always been places where people definitely thought they would be nearer to God or gain His attention. The ancestors of this woman believed that the proper place and perhaps the only place for true worship was on the mountain.

We also see in this conversation that this woman was really questioning. We believe that the place to worship is this mountain. You Jews say the place we should be worshiping is in Jerusalem.

The essence of Jesus response is this – worship is not limited to a place, or tradition. Jesus also emphasized here that *one can worship even what they don't know*.

III. The true worshiper

Worship is something that involves my entire being.

Jesus said true worship is directed toward God. Worship is something spiritual. It involves the eternal part of our being. In order for worship to be truly worship, it involves my intellect, my mind, my thinking, my will. True worship involves truth. When I look at God and adore Him, I consider myself and have to deal with my sin, my failures, my shortcomings and His perfection. True worship involves my emotions because God made us with feelings. My body is involved, lifting hands, lifting voices, etc. The spiritual part of the individual is also engaged in worship.

God is spirit – JOHN 4:24 – they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

Worship involves my body – “I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your body as a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and holy will of God.”

False worship can take place. Here are some examples: worship of entertainers, jobs, sports celebrities, people, family, political and religious leaders, and material things. God's word is clear that He *alone* should be worshipped and He alone should be the object of true worship – spirit and truth.

IV. The why of worship

1. We worship the Lord because He is worthy – **Rev. 4:11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”**
2. We worship the Lord because He created us (Rev 4:11).
3. We worship the Lord because it helps us get our focus off us and onto Him.

In the Old Testament it is God who initiates the worshipful response of the people by revealing his divine name, rescuing Israel from her oppressors and establishing a covenant with them.

In the New Testament the sacrificial system, temple and priesthood, which kept open the lines of communication between God and the people despite their disobedience, are replaced by the sacrifice, holiness and priesthood of Christ.

Worship is something anyone can do, any place and any time. We find words associated with worship are also used of people's service to society at large. Believers are encouraged to serve Christ and to please God in every setting, such as their daily work (Col. 3:22-24), family life and marriage (Col. 3:18-20; Eph. 5:21), caring for the needy (Matthew 25:45), providing hospitality (Hebrews 13:2), acting justly and compassionately (James 1:27).

Indeed, our spiritual worship involves nothing less than offering up our whole life to God so that all we

do is *in conformity with God's character and standards* rather than with the attitudes and values of the world (Romans 12:1-2).

V. The heart of worship – all about HIM

At the heart of the idea of worship is our relationship with God. All creation declares the glory of God unintentionally just by being itself (Psalm 19:1). But human beings uniquely can choose to bless God; indeed, we are obligated to do so. The fundamental way the Bible describes our relationship with God is the covenant, that binding personal relationship by which two parties (in this case God and people) belong together forever. The covenant starts with the promise that God has selected, adopted and saved the people (Exodus 19:4-6) making them a “treasured

Conclusion:

This morning, if you are a follower of Christ, everything you do is part of your worship. My desire is that whatever I do, I do it to God's glory, with the strength that He gives me, and to the best of the ability I have.

We have to be careful of what we worship, because we become *like* what we worship.

James Michener, writing in his book, *The Source*, tells the story of a man named Urbaal, a farmer living about 2200 B.C. He worshiped two gods, one a god of death, the other a goddess of fertility. One day, the temple priests tell Urbaal to bring his young son to the temple for sacrifice, if he wants good crops. Urbaal obeys, and on the appointed day drags his wife and boy to the scene of the boy's “religious execution” by fire to the god of death. After the sacrifice of Urbaal's boy and several others, the priests announce that one of the fathers will spend next week in the temple with a new temple prostitute. Urbaal's wife is stunned as she notices a desire written more intensely across his face than she had seen before, and she is overwhelmed to see him eagerly lunge forward when his name is called. After the ceremony, she walks out of the temple with her head swimming, concluding that “if he had different gods, he would have been a different man.”

possession.” God promises presence, community and a place to belong. The covenant itself is unconditional, founded on the promise, but the blessings of the covenant (the land, the continuance of the people and the ultimate blessing of the Gentiles) are conditional upon obedience to its obligations.

The obligations of the covenant involve:

1. A lifestyle of behavior appropriate for God's covenant people (embodied in the Ten Commandments).
2. A lifestyle of blessing God (embodied in the temple worship and festivals).

In other words, people in right relation to God live faithfully and bless God continuously. This is a picture of true worship.