

“WORSHIP – THE ULTIMATE PRIORITY” (Part 1)

The Importance of Worship (John 4:20-24)

INTRO: When you saw the series theme, some wondered: “What have we been doing these Sunday mornings?” Indeed we have been worshiping, but what we consider worship may not be how God sees it. He sees, hears, and knows much more than we. Tozer on worship... Barna survey shows a problem when it comes to worship... Since worship is a non-negotiable obligation of every Christian, let’s see what God says about it. Frustrating series (WWW) ... Perhaps the place to start is with what Jesus had to say about worship in John 4:20-24... Today, two foundational questions: WHAT is worship? WHY worship?

I. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

- A. OLD ENGLISH – Our English word comes from old English “worth-ship” which meant to ascribe worth or value to someone or something.
- B. BIBLICALLY (250 times – similar to faith and peace)
 - 1. OT uses four Hebrew words. The primary word literally means “to bow down, to prostrate oneself” (Gen. 22:5; Gen. 17:3) Idea of falling on your face before another who is superior in worth.
 - 2. NT uses eight Greek words, the most frequent (10 times in John 4) is *proskuneo*. It means “to kiss toward, to kneel before, to pay reverence to.” Idea of submission and respect to One worthy.
- C. SUGGESTED DEFINITIONS – Allen, Webber (PPT)
- D. WORKING DEFINITION – Worship is a *believer’s response (in attitude and/or action) to all that God is, says, and does*. Worship occurs when I respond (attitude or action) to God’s worth. Who and How we worship, not place, is the issue (v. 21). Worship is an internal experience *before* it is expressed in external rituals. What is God’s worth to you?
- E. OBSERVATIONS FROM DEFINITION
 - 1. *Only believers* can truly worship. Worship expresses our love and commitment to God, which unbelievers can’t do.
 - 2. Worship is more of a life *response* in attitude and/or action than attending an event (“going to church”). Worship is not a part of our life; it *is* our life. Worship is more than an event, it is an extension of a relationship with God that invades every facet of our life. How do you best connect with God?

ILLUS – falling in love... Linda is not honored when I celebrate our relationship out of a sense of duty, but when I truly delight in doing it.

- 3. Worship is about *God’s worth* not my benefit. Worship is not something we only do when we feel like it; it is what we always do because He is worthy of it. Humbly and joyfully adoring God is the focus, not how I feel or what I got out of it – else using God. Come looking for God to prize Him, not... Hughes writes ...

II. WHY WORSHIP GOD? – Suggest four biblical reasons:

A. WORSHIP OF GOD DOMINATES SCRIPTURE AND REDEMPTIVE HISTORY.

- 1. *In pre-creation history* the angels worshiped (Job 38:4-7) –
- 2. *After creation before the Fall* (Neh. 9:6) – Worship is reason behind creation (Rev. 4:11; 14:7) -
- 3. *After the Fall and Entrance of Sin* (Gen. 4:4-5) – As a commandment (Exo. 20:2-6); Tabernacle (Exo. 25:22); 1st Temple (2 Chron. 7:1-3)
- 4. *When Christ came to earth* (Matt. 2:11; 14:33; 28:9,17; John 9:38) -
- 5. *After Pentecost* (in the present) – Acts 18:7, 13; 24:14; Phil. 3:3
- 6. *In future history* (Rev. 4:9-11; 5:14; 7:9-12; 15:4; 19:4; 22:8-9) – We will worship Him forever in eternity.

Summary – The theme all eternity past, present and future is that the one and only true and living God is worthy of our worship! One day all will worship Him (Phil. 2:9-11)!

- B. WORSHIP IS THE ONLY PROPER RESPONSE WHEN WE SEE WHO WE ARE AND WHO GOD IS – H. A. Ironside tells a restaurant story... God alone is worthy of worship. We are fallen unworthy sinners before a holy and powerful God who saved us because of His goodness, love, mercy, and grace (Isa. 6:1-4). Too often focus on the worth of the music or the sermon, etc. It’s not about whether music and message was good but is God good!
- C. GOD COMMANDS US TO WORSHIP HIM AND HIM ALONE – First Commandment. Twice in John 4 Jesus said only the Father is to be worshiped. He commands it (Matt. 4:10). Already seen that worshiping God is focus of first two commandments. Listen to the psalmist (29:1-2; 99:5). Jesus said, “Worship the Lord your God” (Lk. 4:8). John’s final words in Rev. 22:9 are “Worship God!”
- D. THE WORSHIP OF GOD IS THE GOAL OF SALVATION (John 4:20-23). - Salvation produces true worshipers. The goal of salvation is worship. The goal of evangelism is to generate true worshipers (Psa. 22). To become a Christian is synonymous to becoming a true worshiper. The whole encounter between Jesus and this Samaritan adulteress is to model God’s work in making a true worshiper! How passionate is God about establishing true worshipers? So much so, He *seeks* those who will worship Him. He seeks lost people to come to know and to worship Him because *He is worthy*. The more I know the truth of these three words, the more I’ll worship. Judson Cornwall ...

CONC: Review answers to two questions... Worship begins when you establish a relationship with God by accepting His Son, Jesus Christ. Then worship expands as we grow in our understanding of and appreciation for the worth of God!