

Worship: Not what you think! Romans 12:1

Announcements:

- 1) Lamont and Shannon will be recruiting support workers for missions through Wycliffe**
 - 1) Daughter has tested positive, they are all quarantined but getting out**
- 2) Continue prayer for AWANA's**
- 3) Starting new study of James, "Faith in Action"**
- 4) Help and prayer for Distance Learning**
- 5) Praise**

When I say the word worship, some of us may have a right idea, but most of us likely have a skewed or at best narrow definition of worship. There are few things in the church that are more debated and consumeristic than worship in the church.

Everyone seems to have an opinion about worship. In some circles of the church, we have lifted up 'good' worship more than we have lifted up the study of and the precise interpreting of God's Word. 'Good worship' is debated more than ideas in scripture or what scripture says about the second coming of Jesus, or the virgin birth and its relevance, or how to reach people going to Hell. We get more consumed with the 'songs we like' or 'being safe and comfortable in our worship' than ever asking such an important question as this: 'What are the preferences we have allowed to dictate how we do worship or even church that may turn people off to the Lord?' or another question like, 'does God like what we are singing or would he rather us care for and serve the poor or broken hearted?'

Worship has become a consumerism instead of offering. Worship has become more about what we like than what we bring. Worship has become more about style than a surrendering of the life. In so doing, worship has become something we consume and then make a decision of do we like it or not. Worship has become about the self.

Worship has become a response to whether we *feel* like the music or preaching or event leads me into an attitude of worship. Often we choose whether church was good based on how I *feel* leaving the church instead

of choosing church is good because we had an opportunity to come together and lift up the name of Jesus, listen to how He has initiated a relationship with us, poured out grace upon us, and have an opportunity to go and serve Him by ministering to others. Consumerist worship comes with an expectation to make a decision about whether church was good because of what it did for me or how I feel during and afterwards instead of responding to who God is and what He has and is doing.

We need to do a check on our theology of worship. We need to wrestle with true, biblical worship. We need to wrestle with the question, “What is biblical worship?” That question will reveal the answer to “Who do I worship?”, “How do I worship?”, “When do I worship?”, and “Why do I worship?”

Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria, “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” There was an understanding that worship happened in a location, but Jesus declares to her that worship isn’t stuck to a location or about a location, it’s not about being born of a certain race or culture, but about a life attitude, a response to who God is and what He has done. Catch what Jesus says, ‘true worship’. There is a right kind of worship and a wrong kind of worship.

Worship can be what we do when we come to this building on Sunday. Worship can be what we do when we sing on Sunday mornings or some other time during the week. Worship can be what we do when we carry out certain traditions. However, the building can be an idol, and the music can become an idol, and traditions can be an idol. We need to see that biblical worship is so much more than that.

This is week 3 of our 7 week series ‘7 Weeks to a Better Body’. The first week we looked at the church being the Church and last week we heard from retired pastor Mike Miller about loving God and loving others with his question to us, “Do you love God? Prove it.” This very much ties into our study this week of another aspect to a better body, right worship. As the church of God we are commanded to love God and love others. That love for God requires worship. We as an individual and as a body are required to worship God, alone. Exodus 34:14 simply says, “for you shall worship no other god”.

Every single person on the planet worships. It's part of our DNA. We have been made to worship. Throughout history, civilizations have worshiped, if it wasn't the one true God, then it was idols they worshiped. Look at Israel's response when they chose not to worship the God that saved them from Egypt. What did they do when Moses went up on the mountain while they were in the desert? They took their gold and metals and put them together to create idols, a golden calf to worship as if that piece of metal had some intrinsic value to lead them, care for them, protect them, and truly satisfy them.

Listen to Psalm 135:15-17 "The idols of the nations are merely things of silver and gold, shaped by human hands. They have mouths but cannot speak, and eyes but cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear and mouths but cannot breathe."

Hebrews 13:5 says, "Do not love money, be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." What is He saying? God is our provider, care taker, and security. To put your hope in what money can do for you an idol.

Jonah 2:8 tells us what happens inwardly when we choose to hope in an idol. It says, "Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies." We walk away from receiving and experiencing God's mercies. Listen to what Psalm 115, verses 4 and 8 say happens when we begin to worship our idols. "Their idols are merely things of silver and gold, shaped by human hands." Verse 8, and those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them."

We become like what we worship. Let that sink in for a moment. If money is an idol of your heart, you will wrestle with greed. If comfort is an idol of your heart, you will wrestle with complacency. If power is an idol of your heart, you will wrestle with a ruthless attitude. If safety is an idol of your heart, then you will wrestle with being fearful. If a need for sexual gratification is an idol of your heart, you will wrestle with lust. If making yourself great in others eyes is an attitude of your heart, you will wrestle with arrogance and pride. If worshiping the true God is the intent of your heart, then you will become Christ-like. You will begin to image a truer and truer image of Christ.

And by the way, atheists worship. They worship science and philosophy and self-promotion. There is always something that we lift up, we glorify. It is in our nature, because we were made to worship. Why? Because God is worthy of worship. He even demands our worship.

We've already read the first half of Exodus 34:14, but let's read the whole verse. This is when the 10 commandments are reiterated in Exodus. It says, "You must worship no other gods, for the Lord". Now listen to the second half, the Lord, "whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you." WAIT! I thought jealousy was wrong.

There is right jealousy and wrong jealousy. Right jealousy is being jealous for what is supposed to be and right. It is right for a man or wife to be jealous for their spouse. If a husband or wife's heart is straying from the covenant relationship, jealousy is right. It's the 'why' and the response that matters. God is jealous. God can be jealous. When we begin to turn our heart towards any other god, He is jealous. He knows the path of destruction that will follow. He knows that what is best for us is to be fully devoted to Him because that is what we were made for. He is the creator [Genesis 1]—worthy of worship. He is our redeemer[Eph 1:7]—worthy of worship. He is the life-giver[Gen 1:17; Rom 6:23]—worthy of worship. He is law-giver[Isaiah 33:22]—worthy of worship. He is savior[Acts 4:12]—worthy of worship. He is our very need[Psalm 55:22; Heb 13:6]—worthy of worship.

God can demand our worship. God can require our worship. Ex 34:14 says 'worship no other god'. Deuteronomy 12:31 tells us to worship according to God's way. Deuteronomy gives us understanding there is a wrong way to worship. 1 Chronicles 16:29 says, "Give to the Lord the glory he deserves! Bring your offering and come into his presence. Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor." Philippians 2:11 and Revelation 15:4 evens tells us that all will worship Him. Some will do it under the curse, some will do it under the blessing.

God even enables our worship. Think about that for a moment. The Creator enables the creations worship. The perfect One enables the imperfect, the holy enables the unholy, the life-giver enables the life-taker to worship.

"I am not a life-taker, I haven't murdered." To harbor hate, to wish suffering or calamity or to wish any vengeance for someone is to murder in God's economy. To sin is to murder. To sin is to love the self's will, in turn hating God's will. Sin is what put Jesus on the cross. Your's and my sin put Him on the cross.

“Well, Jesus didn’t have to go to the cross and die for me.” Exactly, but He did it anyways so you could have a right relationship with God. Otherwise, the only option is for you instead of Jesus to suffer the consequence of your sin. And, you and I could not do it and make it out okay. It’s an eternal prison sentence. Our offering is less than good enough, it wouldn’t pass. We could not pay the debt owed. Thank God the perfect, sinless One took the place of the imperfect, sinful one and paid our debt in full, not in installments over time.

God can demand worship. God can require worship. God even enables our worship. But, it isn’t because it is something He needs. He is self-sustaining. Whether or not you and I worship Him doesn’t effect His ability to *be or to thrive*. Instead, He invites us in to worship Him, because it is the best, most right thing for us to do. When we worship God for the right reasons, the result is that we can truly enjoy Him as He intends we should. And, as we worship Him, we get to know Him and all He is, experiencing His outpouring of grace and love, provision and protection, satisfying and care, salvation and more. As we worship Him we have access to all He is as Ephesians 3:14-20 says.

“When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray [worship] to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.”

We are made to worship, it is what we were created for and when we do it, God pours into us.

What is biblical worship? To understand we need to look at what the Bible says. The Bible doesn’t speak of singing as what defines worship. It does reveal singing as an expression of worship though.

In our English language the word 'worship' is very flat. It doesn't give us a real understanding of biblical worship. The Bible uses many words to describe what we translate 'worship'. Many of them are similar and they have a parallel meaning in both the Old and New Testament. The idea of worship didn't change, but has been constant from Genesis to Revelation.

These words, used in both Greek and Hebrew, convey submission, service and sacrifice, and awe and respect. An underlying aspect to these is obedience. What you don't hear in these words is 'me', 'feeling', 'self', 'like', or 'take'. These are words of 'otherness', reflecting the otherness of God. These are words that reflect out-pouring.

These Biblical words that define worship tell us what worship is and the attitude we should have, but they do not indicate how the attitude should be shown. For the practical aspect of these attitudes we have to look at the context of the verses that speak of worship for specific ways God expects us to worship Him.

These forms of worship carry many forms throughout Scripture. It's formal and informal, spontaneous and calculated, in a temple or wherever, mental and physical, individual and corporate. The form of worship throughout Scripture changed, but the heart and center of worship did not.

The center of worship is God. Jesus received worship, because He is God. The Spirit enables our worship and points us to Jesus. Chris Cocksworth calls the many dimensions of worshipping God as Father, Son, and Spirit the "Trinitarian geography of Christian worship." The idea is we praise Jesus, but we also join with Jesus in worship as He glorifies His Father. As the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus to the depths of our heart, He also takes us to the Son's relationship with the Father.

What is the heart of worship? Is there a right and wrong heart? Yes. The Old Testament reveals both.

- In Genesis 4, Cain's sacrifice to God was with the wrong heart. It was self-gratifying and not giving of his best.
- In Malachi 3, the Israelites brought sacrifices and performed their traditions, but they neglected other parts of the law. They did what looked like loving God, but they didn't prove it in their actions towards others.

- In Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had the right heart. They were told to bow down before Nebuchadnezzar's idol. The decree was that if all nations and peoples were to bow down, if they did not they would be thrown into a blazing furnace. Listen to the 3 protestor's response:

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. *But* even if He doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up." They had the right heart. They chose to worship God alone, no other gods, at all costs.

Sometimes right worship will take us to uncomfortable places, but it will always lead us to the right place.

What is biblical worship? a right, biblical response of submission, service and awe and respect to what God does and who He is

Why do we worship? because He is God, deserves it, it's commanded of us, and it is the right thing and best thing to do

How do we worship? Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria the "time has come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth." In spirit and truth.

Bible scholars have disagreed is 'spirit' meaning the Holy Spirit or human spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one that awakens our hearts to Christ. True worship can only be done by those saved by faith in the Lord Jesus who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Philippians 3:3 says, "For we worship by the Spirit of God." In either case, the idea is simple, true worship is from within, it's sincere, motivated by our love for God and gratitude for all He is and has done for us.

True worshippers worship in the Truth found in scripture. It is the revelation of who God is, what He is like, and what He has done. True worship is rooted in what Scripture says and its principles.

True worship will evoke within us emotion and affections. It will ignite more of a burning desire for God and will ignite feelings. But, true worship will evoke those because they are rooted and first found in truth. In other

words, emotion doesn't drive worship or even start worship, but it is response to truth, what God is initiating.

John Piper says speaking of worship, "Truth without emotion produces dead orthodoxy and a church full . . . of artificial admirers. . . . On the other hand, emotion without truth produces empty frenzy and cultivates shallow people who refuse the discipline of rigorous thought. But true worship comes from people who are deeply emotional and who love deep and sound doctrine. Strong affections for God rooted in truth are the bone and marrow of biblical worship."

Let me read Romans 12:1. "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him."

This verse gives us understanding of why, how, and even when to worship. Why do we worship? Because of all He (God) has done for you. It's a response.

How do we worship? we give our bodies and let them be a living and holy sacrifice. The idea here is entirety. It's a constant giving of our entire self. It reflects the picture of the sacrificial system. The sacrificial worship of the Old Testament was about submission, service, and reverence...a reverence that is filled with wonder, awe, and respect for the majesty and greatness and holiness of God. We even find there is a standard to worship. It's what God finds acceptable. It's found in obedience.

When do we worship? All the time. In informal, formal, spontaneous, calculated, inside, outside, mentally, physically with dancing and clapping of hands, and more.

The next verse even explains to us what comes of worship. We are transformed and renewed. As we worship, God reaches in and transforms and renews us.

As believers, we should be:

- A) Unquenchable worshipers: there is always a reason to praise God. So often when our worship has dried up, it's because we haven't been fueling the fire.
- B) Undone worshipers: God is constantly working on us, disciplining us, growing us through good and bad, comfort and suffering.

- C) Undignified worshipers: one of the words translated praise means to be clamorously foolish or mad before the Lord. The same word is where we get the word hallelujah. David danced before the Lord in an undignified manner when the Ark of the Covenant was brought back to Israel.
- D) Unpredictable worshipers: Worship is meant to be an encounter, an exciting meeting place where love is given and received in an unscripted manner. A relationship with the living God shouldn't just fade away or wear out like an old pair of shoes. It's meant to be new every morning, just like the mercy it responds to.
- E) Unveiled worshipers: Worship doesn't hide, but reveals. And as we worship, we open ourselves up to God for Him to reveal Himself to us.
- F) Unstoppable worshipers: True worship is often met with opposition. It doesn't matter what the opposition, we lift up the name of Jesus, we'll let nothing hinder our worship inside the church and outside.
- G) Unnoticed worshipers: are not looking for attention from this world, because it isn't about them. This is why there has been a movement of calling worship pastors as lead worshippers. They are an example of one who is worshiping, not performing.
- H) Undivided worshipers: we need to have untainted hearts, defending ourselves from everything that seeks to lead us off the path of pure worship. (pg 102-104)
- I) Unsatisfied worshipers: three unresolved tensions,
 - A) we have merely a glimpse into the glory of God—a small drop in the bucket of His fullness
 - B) we are unfinished worshipers because we are broken people that are being healed, but yet fragile
 - C) Lastly we exist as strangers in a foreign land, painfully aware of the troubles that surround us and the many lost hearts who haven't discovered Jesus.
- J) Unending worshipers: our worship begins now, and it carries into eternity. We have endless reason to submit to, serve, and revere our great God.

John Piper often says, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him".

Some questions to get us thinking about what we worship:

“What do you think about most?”

“What do you talk about most?”

“What is your intention of what you are doing?”

A great question that will reflect the quality and quantity of your worship to God: “How much is God worth to you?” Our intensity, fervency, and knowledge of God will reveal the answer to this question.