

## 2007-09-16 Worship - John ch4 v16-24 (Ignite UK)

### I. Worship

As a college student I can think back to when I was a kid and picture what my life was like in the church setting. Many of you had the same experiences I am sure; when you are about sixth grade and you see the high school students raising their hands, singing songs, and ‘worshipping’ God. I looked at them with a sense of awe and respect that led me to want to be the same way.

Well now here we are sitting in a Theater at the University of Kentucky. And I am doing the things that I once so admired. I come week after week; raise my hands, singing loud and not so pretty, and ‘worship’.

But my question to you is what is worship? How are we meant to worship? Why do we worship?

These questions we must understand, otherwise we can never truly know the purpose behind our sometimes hollow motions on Sundays.

- So what is Worship? Before we get started into the passage I want us to understand what it is... Worship defined is: honor paid to a superior being. It means to give homage, honor, reverence, respect, adoration, praise, or glory to a superior being. (Macarthur).
- When we think of worship we see that High School senior, or your friend, or a person you really look up to with hands lifted and raised in reverence as they spill their guts into singing to their God. And we look longingly at that and may even try to emulate it... But that is not worship in its entirety.
- When we worship we are not only to do it on Sundays or when were with a group of people singing songs. While this is a very important and an integral part of our walks as followers of Christ; it is not by any means the only aspect of worship we need to practice.
- Other forms of worship include:

**A. Personal Worship:** Seen in the life of David in 1Kings 12, he goes into the temple alone and worships the Lord, after he discovers that his child, by Bathsheba, has died. This is his initial reaction because he understands that through difficulties and trials, communion, honor, respect, and adoration of the Lord that he will be restored and will see the purpose that God has laid out for his life. He still found it an important and irreplaceable goal to worship the Lord. (Daniel 3)

**B. Worship through our Everyday:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3) lived this everyday in a foreign land. Not only did they choose to abstain from eating the food from the Kings table, they chose to not bow to the image of gold, constructed by Nebuchadnezzar, which put them in the furnace, however in the face of that they worshipped and paid honor to their supreme being, not a fabricated one that they were told to worship. They worshipped the Lord by not worshipping something fabricated by men. It is cliché but, it raises the question in our lives of what we are choosing to bow to and worship. Are we standing up and worshipping our God by not

falling down and worshipping what we chose or those things in our lives that become our God?

**C. Corporate Worship:** This is obviously what we are doing now. It is the coming together of the believers to not only sing praises to their God and Savior, but it is also to pray corporately. It is to worship through the preaching of the Word, and thus hear from God. And another reason to come together as a group of believers and worship together is to listen to God. Much of the Psalms is this aspect of Worship (95, 96). Also pick up the first few chapters of Acts and you will see what genuine corporate worship is.

- This is not an exhaustive list of what worship is or parts of the Bible where it can be seen, but it gives us a clear understanding and a direction that we can talk about it.
- Knowing what worship is a bit more clearly, though we already knew to a certain extent, we must now explore: How we are to Worship.

## II. John 4:16-24

- Some background for understanding. Here Christ has come into contact with a woman from Samaria. She is coming to draw water from the well in the heat of the afternoon (showing that she did not want to interact with people), never being prepared to come into contact with the Living Water. However this is where we pick up the conversation. Christ had asked her to go fetch her husband, knowing full well that she had no husband (thus not wanting to be around people, due to their judging hearts), He did this so that she would realize her sin and see it fully; not to condemn her but to show her that she had need for a Savior. It gets her to a point where she desires to find God and go to where He is... Enter Christ.
- She understood that Christ was a Jewish Prophet, not the Messiah that He was, and acknowledged Him as such. She was in search of the living water that Christ had mentioned earlier in this conversation, and being a prophet she knew that Christ would know where to find God. And this is where we pick up the story.
- As she goes about her search for God, she talks with Christ and identifies where she believes that God can be found and where Christ, a Jew, says that God can be found (Mt. Gerizim or Jerusalem). This created an amazing window that Christ took advantage of to explain the truth about His deity and character and also an important understanding for us because she identifies two places that carry significant traits that we must carry and employ in our worship of God.
- The first place that the Samaritan woman identifies is 'the mountain'. "Our Fathers worshipped on this Mountain". The Mountain that she is referring to is Mount Gerizim. This was an extremely special place to the Samaritans. It was near this location that Abraham built his altar to God, where he would sacrifice Isaac. It was here that Jacob pledged Israel's obedience to the commandments. It was this place that the Samaritans believed the Temple should be built (because they believed only in the first five books of the Bible), and thus the temple was built and it was where they could find God. They thought that God was confined to this location and no other place. Keep this in mind for later.

- The other group that the Samaritan woman addresses is the Jews. She understands that they believe that God can be found in Jerusalem, where their temple was located. The Jew's obviously taking the entire Old Testament made their temple where God was to be worshipped. They built and maintained this single place. With its rigid building and, at times, pharisaical attitude, it made this place a difficult to be intimate with the Creator.
- The woman brings this up because she wants to find God, however Christ, being the savior that He was leads her and teaches her a truth about Himself that was yet to be revealed.
- **This is our focus passage: John 4:21-24**
- He tells the woman to not be concerned with where she is worshipping God because the time is near when salvation shall not be found in either place, but it is coming from the Jews, which is the case, Christ was a Jew.
- He was identifying Himself as the Savior that would allow His people to worship when and where they chose, not being bound to a priest nor a place where it was required to go and find Him.
- Christ says that they time is near when true worshippers would worship in Spirit and in Truth. (v. 23)
- Through we see Christ just identifying two truths that true worshippers must employ, He is actually addressing the condition of the two groups and locations that the Samaritan woman brought up.

**A. True Worshippers Worship in Spirit:** On Mt. Gerizim the Samaritans worshipped with amazing fervor. They got up on that mountain and believed that they were in the presence of God. This caused them to sacrifice amazing amounts of animals, and act like fools.

- These would have been the people that when we were in middle school we would have looked at them like they were Pentecostals, we would have admired their desire and wanted to worship like that, but would not have had the courage or gall to go ahead and do it. They threw everything that they had into worship and left nothing behind.
- While they had Spirit and Passion in their worship. They were lacking a partnering trait that made their worship unauthentic and displeasing to God. They lacked the truth in worship.

**B. True Worshippers Worship in Truth:** This is the trait that they Jews in Jerusalem were not short of. These were the Pharisees and super religious that believed that by showing emotion in their worship that it was somewhat less authentic. They were completely in their world of following rules and regulations in worship and completely missing the passion that a relationship with God brings.

- These would have been the people that we would have looked at like they were super spiritual, but we could not be emotional or passionate in our worship or walk around them because we would have somehow felt stupid or juvenile for

putting our hands in the air, or getting excited about a passage we read that week in the scripture.

- The Jews had plenty of ritual and knew who they were worshipping they missed the point because they did not allow the spirit to change their lives and get to a point of impacting their world with the 'joy' that they possessed.
- This is why Christ makes it his point that "True Worshippers worship in both Spirit and Truth". It cannot be that way with one and not the other. These traits coming hand in hand produce the overwhelming joy in our lives, sparks a passion and fire to go impact the world, allows people to fully see Christ in us, and finally the reason that we should possess and refine both in our lives, because God seeks those who worship in this way.

**C. God Seeks True Worshippers** (those in spirit and truth): This is the ultimate reason to produce a balance of spirit and truth in your life. Because God actively seeks those people who are worshipping him in this way. If God is actively seeking those who worship Him in this way, then why wouldn't we want to appease and please our savior? (Yeah didn't make much sense to me either).

- When we only worship possessing one of these traits we are shorting God what He is overly due. We are stealing from Him the one thing that He created us for, His Glory. We worship, as the angels do, the sovereign God of the universe.
- Not only are we stealing from our Creator, and thus not giving Him what He is due, from the overflow of our hearts, but we also are becoming stumbling blocks for those who may not believe.
- Him seeking those who truly worship is exactly in line with the characteristic that defines God. He created all for His Glory. Nothing less, and when we truly worship Him we must have that balance between Spirit and Truth. Because when we do one and not the other we do not fulfill worship.

As you have probably noticed the way the order is switched up things are being done a bit different tonight. The reason that we have set it up this way is to give us as a congregation the opportunity to worship corporately. Understanding now why we do this week in and week out, because God seeks those who worship Him in spirit and truth, and we desiring to honor His majesty.

Therefore we want to take this chance to come together and worship Him. This is also going to be a time of invitation. If you feel that you have not known the God that we worship, anytime, anywhere then take this opportunity to come and talk to myself, Jonathon, or one of the staff and begin a relationship that allows you to worship and find God. If you don't have a church home, this is a place that we invite you to come and join, and if you just want to respond in light of the scriptures, change behavior or attitude, and worship your God take this time to start honoring and adoring Him with your worship.

This is not just a time of invitation for those wishing to make decisions. It is a time, right away to react and act upon the scriptures, and practice what God calls us to. So as we begin our time of worship for the evening give it all to your God, do whatever you

need to do, just come to the throne in Spirit, with passion and energy, or somberness and meekness, and come with Truth, knowing that this place we reveal and practice the scriptures and attempt to honor our God with everything and in every situation we have.

Use this time, act how the Lord is leading you, and come presence of God.