

THE BRIDE: WORSHIP

JOHN 4:20-24

Kids ask “Why?” Rom. 11:26, “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”” God’s glory is the termination of everything. We don’t worship Him for some greater cause. And because the glory of God is the purpose of the universe, the worship of God is the purpose of His creation. And we get a picture of how to do that well in Jn 4. Read Jn. 4:23-34. “What Is Worship?”

An inward response of satisfaction in God produced by beholding the truth about Him and His glory.

True Worship Must Have God As Its Object "...to worship him"

God is not concerned about whether we worship in general, but whether or not we worship Him—whether or not he’s the object of our worship. The English word worship comes from “worth ship”. The idea of ascribing value and worth to something. And it’s something we’re always doing. We see a sunset, we’re moved by its beauty and we say “wow”. You’re with your friend in a movie theatre and you see an amazing preview, and you turn to your friend and say, “That looks awesome.” Why are we always doing that? The reason for this is that we were created to be worshippers. Everyone in the world, without exception, is a worshipper and everyone worships something.

And from the beginning, there was one object that we were designed to ascribe supreme value to, something designed to be the source of our deepest joy and satisfaction and thus the ultimate object of our worship—God. He created the universe for his glory and as the infinitely holy, majestic, sovereign God of the universe He is the only proper object of our ultimate worship and praise. Sin turned this on its head so that we’re tempted to ascribe ultimate value and worth to other things. To worship other objects. This means that the biggest problem in the universe is misplaced worship.

Every day a thousand things battle for the worship of your heart and promise that if you’ll hope in them, they’ll provide you the abundant life you want for yourself. And it’s these disordered loves that produce our disordered lives. And the only way to fight the cancer of misplaced worship is with the superior heart-changing power of rightly placed worship! And that starts with focusing on the right object! The secret to worship is realizing that what you have in God is infinitely superior than anything this world can offer you. But we forget that and fortunately, God hasn’t left us without a reminder.

You may or may not know that we have a copy of Israel’s song book. It’s a five book anthology called the Psalter. And it contains 150 Psalms that serve to constantly set before Israel the proper object of their worship. **Ps. 148, 150.** God has designed this entire universe to exalt him as the object of supreme glory and praise. And you say well isn’t that kind of self-centered, no it’s radically self-centered God lives to exalt himself and bring glory to himself. And if that bothers us, we need to ask the question, who would we rather have him exalt? To whom would we rather Him ascribe glory and honor? Because the moment he worshipped someone else, he would cease to be God. God has centered the entire universe around magnifying his glory and the command to praise him is a command to join God in his cosmic self-exaltation.

And you notice I use the word command. “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord” is a command. And you may look at this verse, and the hundreds of other verses in the Psalter and wonder, why is God always demanding that people praise him? We don’t like people that constantly fish for compliments. Why

are we supposed to praise God? Have you ever thought about this? Doesn't God already know that He's glorious? It's not like we praise him to remind him! Does he struggle from low self-esteem and commands us to praise him to build confidence? In fact, does God need our praise and our worship at all? No! Tozer "If every man on the earth became blind it would not diminish the beauty of the sun and if every man turned atheist it would not diminish the glory of God" God's glory does not depend on our recognition of it. So if God doesn't need our worship, why does he command us to praise him?

Football illustration. Why do you cheer if it doesn't effect the outcome of the game??? One youth said, "Because you get satisfaction." We when see or experience something excellent praising it gives us joy and satisfaction. And so in commanding us to praise him God is not fishing for compliments. He is inviting us to complete our joy by cheering for the glory and excellence that we see! For God to tell us not to praise him would be like me telling you not to cheer. No, that robs me of satisfaction! So don't miss this, in calling us to praise him, God commanding us to seek our full satisfaction in Him. And when we are satisfied in him, he is glorified in us and that is the essence of worship! My satisfaction in your glory. Which leads us to the second element of worship here...

True Worship Must Be Spirit-Empowered

True worship is a matter of the heart. It is internal, produced by the Spirit. The Samaritan Woman in this text, like the Jews, was caught up in the idea the idea of external worship. Where it takes place. For Jews the proper place to worship God was Jerusalem and Samaritans it was Mt. Gerizim where Abraham had received a blessing from Melchizedek. And she starts talking about which one is right, and Jesus gives an answers that explodes these categories. He says that there is a time coming and is now here that people won't worship on either mountain. Because the essence of worship isn't external or geographical. It's internal and it's empowered by the Spirit. And he says, "The Father is looking for people who worship in Spirit."

Now commentators are divided on whether or not this is a specific reference to the Holy Spirit or just the human spirit, I tend to think it's the Holy Spirit, because He is the one who reveals Christ to us and produces our affections for him. But either way we can say with certainty that worship that is pleasing to God is produced by a heart that treasures and love and values and finds satisfaction in God. There is a way to come in to worship and to lift your hands and raise your voice that displeases God. Mt. 15:8 "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." It's just external. (Angel in heaven) It's business as usual sit and stand sing and give routine Sunday morning. And it's not pleasing to God. Ps. 95:1-3 "Oh come, let us sing to the LORD let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Ps 16 "you make known to me the path of life..." yes! Spirit-fueled joy! That is the kind of worship the Father is seeking!

And you say well Chase, are you saying that I have to be happy when I come in on Sunday in order for my worship to be pleasing to God? I just had a blow up with my spouse before I got here. It's been a terrible week and my kids are driving me crazy. And if my being happy this morning is a prerequisite for true worship, then I might as well go home. No!

I'll never forget an older lady at the church I came from who used to play the piano, and she was very much into the good old Baptist songs I'll Fly Away, Victory In Jesus. And I'll never forget there was a rehearsal where our worship leader was doing a ballad—a slower song. And she was doing the intro, and she was doing it fast and the worship leader said, "Let's make sure this is slow because this is a ballad" and

she responded, “yea but worship should be happy...so it needs to be uptempo.” I thought is that true? Should worship be always be happy? Chipper? And if you look at the Psalter you’ll see that while the general shape of worship does involve deep-seated satisfaction and joy in God there are songs that express deep pain and are delivered from positions of despair. “Out of the depths I cry to you O lord, O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” “As a deer pants for flowing streams so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?”...Why are you cast down O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God”

Is that happy? No. Is that God-honoring worship? Yes! And the reason that it genuine worship is because it is coming from a heart that, broken as it may be, is seeking satisfaction and joy in Him. It’s saying, “you are what I need! Whom have I in heaven but you and there is nothing on earth I desire besides you...” God is honored when unhappy people come to find their happiness in him! “why are you here” “Because I’m not happy and I need the one thing that can revive me.” So we may come to worship with a joyful heart or a broken heart, but with our hearts we must come.

Even in talking about our hearts, there is a gravity and weight a reverence that should characterize our expressions worship. If the Queen of England invited you to Buckingham Palace and invited you into the throne room, would you show up late? Would you schmooze on in there? No because this moment has a weightiness to it. It’s a wonderful opportunity. A joyous occasion and your posture would reflect the gravity of the moment. But when it comes to God too many of have lost this. We stroll in to God’s presence like’s he’s our peer, like we’re coming to hangout with Jesus our buddy. Isaiah gives us a picture of the awe and reverence that should characterize our worship...and in Isa. 6 he describes this unbelievable vision he has where he sees God, and sees seraphim flying and crying Holy Holy Holy is the lord of hosts...” and his response is not “cool” but “woe”. No doubt this is the most amazing of Isaiah’s life and he’s not sad, he’s overwhelmed with God’s holiness and his sinfulness. God’s bigness and his smallness! This kind is the kind reverence that should characterize our worship—we’re coming before the Great I Am, The Ancient of Days. The Sovereign reigning king of the universe! Because of His grace, we can approach him confidently, but because of his glory, we dare not approach Him casually. True worship is characterized by a Spirit-fueled power working in our hearts that produces the joy wonder we experience when we behold the glory of God...

And that worship must be guided by and shaped by truth

True Worship Must Be Guided by the Truth About God and His Glory

Jesus says here that God is seeking people who worship Him in spirit and truth and then he says it again that God is spirit, and those who worship him, must worship in spirit and truth. And this is so crucial. God is very concerned that our worship of him is shaped by truth about him. Which means that while our worship must involve passion it’s not rooted in passion. And our worship isn’t rooted in passion because our faith is not rooted in feelings. Our faith is rooted in a person. And our affections and passions and emotions must be shaped by truth about who He is—not who we want him to be or who we wish he was.

I can’t tell you how many worship services I’ve seen where the joy and passion in the room is not a response God’s glory and what he’s done for us in Christ, it is in response to the idea that God is going to bless their circumstances soon. Health, wealth. It’s not true. God is not honored where is only as valuable

as the next blessing he's going to give us. **The services are all heat and no light**... Truth isn't a balance for affections it's the fuel for affections... .In Jn. 17 Jesus prays: "Sanctify them in your truth, your word is truth." and that is why at New Century Church we preach the Bible! We've talked about what is worship now let's talk about what it looks like here.

Now this is a peculiar thing for folks who aren't familiar with it. Preaching, why do we do it? Why does someone get up here every week and preach out of this book? We could do other things. We could break up into groups and discuss questions about the Bible. We could watch an engaging and inspiring video each week. Besides don't you know that people who aren't auditory learners don't do well just sitting and listening? Lots of answers I could give. 2 Tim. 4:2 says, "Preach the word." 2 Tim. 3:16 says all Scripture is God breathed profitable for teaching. But you simply walk out of here with more information, the preaching hasn't achieved it's goal. If you just left with knowledge that's a TED talk. Biblical knowledge is not an end in itself—it is an means to an end. I want suggest another reason. I want to suggest that the primary reason we preach the Word is worship.

And the Word, is the most potent agent for catalyzing worship because it is the place where see God the most clearly. I love this from 1 Sam. 3:21. **"And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD."** God has decided to manifest himself not through sky writing, not through a video, not through peer review social science journals...a book—this book. And when you rightly preach this Word, God's glory shines forth...and you behold it and when you do, you worship. You know this. There are times where you're listening along to a sermon and you're taking notes and writing and your caught up in the truth being presented and some point your pen goes down, and you just worship. Preaching is designed to do something to you! To create worship. That is what we're doing here. It's a mistake to say that the musical portion of our service is the worship.

This is worship. I am leading worship now. And when you see the glory this God in this Word, the worship it produces conquers the misplaced worship in your heart. It's the cure for our biggest disease. It's what we need. Too many churches try to sell themselves on relevant or practical teaching, and by relevant they mean it contains very little about God and usually some inspirational rhetoric combined with some good advice about how to live. But friends a motivational speech with some life hacks at the end can't fix the disordered loves of our heart. The only thing that can dethrone those loves is a greater love for a superior object—God! Only a superior pleasure can dethrone the lesser pleasures that compete for our hearts!

And when you understand this, nothing could be more practical for beating your addiction than seeing God's glory. Nothing could be more practical for fighting anxiety, than seeing God's glory. Nothing is more relevant to saving your marriage than seeing God's glory. If the glory of God descended in this room and we all beheld his radiant beauty and majesty and then just went home—no advice—no one would go home and scream at their spouse. That's why, in preaching, we're doing everything we can to put the glory of God on display through the word of God. What we need is not advice, what we need is truth shaped truth fueled worship. And so at this church we will spend a significant portion of our time worshipping over the Word...but that's not all...there is another crucial piece to our worship—that is worship in song! If you recall our definition, "An inward response of satisfaction in God produced by beholding the truth about Him and His glory." Notice I said inward—that's the essence—but the expression of it is almost always outward!

Musical worship has always played a central role in the life of God's people. I mentioned earlier that Israel had an entire song book—they are also prayers. A worship song is essentially prayer set to music. And rather than say it, we sing it. Music is a powerful catalyst for worship. It does something to our hearts that is hard to explain. **Example.** It just hits us in the feels and done correctly, it takes the truth of God's word and works it into our heart. God has designed music as a way for us to experience our theology. To help us taste and see that He is good. And it's so important (Eph. 5:18-19) "**And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,**" So a couple of things about our singing. It's a command! We are not told to close our eyes and listen to everyone else sing. Worship is not a spectator sport. It's something we do, with our mouth. With our vocal chords. What makes it pleasing to God is not if you worship with perfect pitch, but if you worship with your heart. And last—and we'll close with this—when we are worshipping, we are singing to God yes, but also did you catch it we are singing to one another—addressing one another.

And so when we gather together and sing, we are not just singing for an audience of one as if the only thing happening here is vertical. We are singing to one another which means that once again corporate worship is not primarily a time for private worship. Because we are reminding each other of truths of the gospel and the glory of the God we serve. When we sing we're encouraging one another. I'm singing to God Yes, but to the person in this room who's struggling with the shame of something they did, I'm singing "there is a fountain filled with blood drain from Immanuel's veins, and sinner plunged beneath that flood, lose all there guilty stains." And I'm singing to God, but to the person who's walking though depression I'm addressing them saying, "Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!" And to the saint who's health is failing and has fought the good fight and kept the faith and is standing on the porch of eternity, I say, "when Christ shall come, with shouts of acclamation..."

Worshipping God in Spirit and truth. End with Christ as the one who makes worship possible citing his words "and is now here" from John 4.