

I am reading today from John 4, starting at verse 7 through 25.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, give me a drink, for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep.

Where do you get that living water?

Are you greater than our father Jacob?

He gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.

Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.

The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.

Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband and come here.

The woman answered him, I have no husband.

Jesus said to her, You are right in saying I have no husband.

for you have had five husbands, and the one who you now have is not your husband.

What you have said is true.

The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

You worship what you do not know.

We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."

But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ.

When he comes, he will tell us all things.

Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

Thanks, Lee.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we want to worship in spirit and truth this morning.

Would you teach us what that means?

Lord, would you do more than teach us just what it means, Lord, but would you make it and create it within us and draw us into it in a deeper way this morning?

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

So over the last couple of weeks, we've been in John chapter 4 for a couple of weeks now, and over the last couple of weeks, we've been seeing that we're all thirsty.

We have deep-seated longings and desires.

More accurately, though, we have a deep-rooted desire for God.

And that's what Jesus is trying to show the Samaritan woman here in John 4.

And he's already told the Samaritan woman that it's possible to have that desire, that one deep-rooted desire for God, met

and met with a spring of living water, right?

A never-ending spring, a spring that bubbles up and overflows into eternal life or in eternal life.

He's also been showing her that this longing is not satisfied with things like husbands and boyfriends.

It's not met through right religious practices and answering her questions about which mountain to worship on.

And it's not even met by knowing a lot of correct stuff about God.

We're having a lot of correct theology about God.

That's what we looked at last week.

In case you missed it, you can look it up online.

Catch up.

What we want to do today is to zero in on verses 23 to 24 and talk about where our deepest longing for God is met or how it's met.

and how it's met not just once, but how it's met on a continual basis.

And Jesus tells her, in explaining what true worship is, what that soul-satisfying thing, that eternal spring of living water is and is meant to be.

True soul-satisfying worship is rooted in God himself because God makes true worship, God is true worship, and God demands true worship.

That middle one's going to need to be clarified, so don't tweet that out yet until we explain what that means.

But God makes true worship, God is true worship, and God demands true worship.

First, the first thing we see in these two verses is that God makes true worship.

Look at verse 23 again.

But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

The hour is coming and is now here.

We alluded to this last week, but that is referring to

the person and work of Jesus.

So when he says it's now here, he's saying, I'm here, right?

I, the Messiah, God himself incarnate in the flesh have come.

And I've come specifically for that hour, right?

The hour of my death and resurrection in which I accomplished the work that God has given me to do.

So first though, before we unpack that, like what does Jesus mean by true worshipers?

So he says in verse 23, again, the hour is coming.

when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

What does he mean by true worshipers?

He doesn't mean that all the worshipers that came before, right, came before Jesus arrived were false worshipers, and now there's a new group that are the real true worshipers.

He doesn't mean that.

What he means, he means that there's always been true worshipers, right, ever since Cain and Abel, right, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel.

Abel worshiped rightly, Cain worshiped wrongly.

And Cain killed Abel over his jealousy, you know, of his being accepted by God, right?

So there's always been true worshipers and false worshipers going back to Cain and Abel.

He means that there's something that's going to happen, right?

There's something that's about to happen that will change how the true worshipers worship, right?

So what's changing is not that all of a sudden everybody was worshiping falsely or there was false worshipers before.

only false worshipers before, and now there's going to be true worshipers.

He's saying the true worshipers, how they worship is about to change.

Something is going to happen that will cause the true worshipers to worship in spirit and truth.

So that's the shift.

The true worshipers are now going to worship in spirit and truth.

So what happens that brings this change about?

How does this change happen?

What brings this change about?

What is the hour specifically that Jesus is talking about?

Well, the hour, as we've been saying from the beginning, in the book of John, refers to Jesus' death and resurrection.

One of the places that this is most clearly laid out is John 12, 27, and verses 32 to 33.

Jesus says, Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I have come to this hour.

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

So in other words, Jesus' death and resurrection will pave the way and bring about worship in spirit and truth.

So Jesus' death and resurrection is the way that the true worshipers are going to start worshiping in spirit and truth, which begs the question, and it's the question that Jesus wants the Samaritan woman and us to ask, is how?

How does Jesus' death and resurrection bring about true worship in spirit and truth, or worship in spirit and truth?

We begin to see that answer in the little phrase that comes right after that, right?

For the Father is seeking such people.

Look at verse 23 again.

In spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Again, note the for or the because, right?

So there's an hour coming when this change is about to happen because, right?

This change is about to happen because the Father is seeking such people.

This begins the explanation, right?

This begins the explanation of how Jesus's work on the cross produces true worship.

Notice here too, in this little phrase, that the emphasis,

is on the Father, right?

The emphasis is on the Father seeking.

The such people haven't been made yet, right?

He's seeking such people, such people that are a group that worships in spirit and truth.

He's about to bring about such people, but such people don't exist yet, right?

So the emphasis in that phrase is not on the people.

Don't worry about the people.

The emphasis in that phrase is on the Father seeking.

The whole point of that first phrase is that this change that is happening

is to bring about worshipers who worship in spirit and truth.

So in short, Jesus is saying that this hour, this change, is God's desire.

If I confused you with getting to that point, that's the point.

That this change that's about to happen, this thing that Jesus is going to do on the cross and in his resurrection, is God's desire, it's God's idea.

God wants, God desires worshipers who worship him in spirit and truth,

They didn't exist before.

The hour had to happen for them to exist in worshiping in spirit and truth, right?

Remember, spirit and truth, one thing today.

We'll explain what the two words mean, but together, one thing.

They didn't exist before.

The Father was looking to have true worshipers.

He was looking to have true worshipers.

Because of sin, none were available.

Therefore, Jesus came and died to produce true worshipers, and true worshipers in this context are those who worship in spirit and truth, right?

He desired to have people who worship in spirit and truth.

Jesus' work needed to happen for that to come about.

So the father gets the ball rolling.

with the true worshippers' plan.

But again, how exactly are true worshippers made?

So it's God's idea.

He gets the ball rolling.

He sends Jesus.

How are true worshippers made, though?

The next phrase that we get, the very next phrase that we get, is that God is spirit in this explanation of how true worship and true worshippers are made.

This leads us to another term that we got to define.

God is spirit.

What does spirit mean?

He doesn't say that God is the spirit or the Holy Spirit.

So he's not saying God is the Holy Spirit.

He also doesn't say that God is a spirit.

There's no article there.

He says God is spirit.

In other words, it's a character trait.

He's using spirit here as a character trait of God or a quality of God.

Like God is love, God is holy, God is spirit.

It's a quality of his nature.

So what is spirit then?

Like what part of God is spirit?

How do we wrap our minds around the spirit?

Well, spirit is kind of similar to holiness in that it is somewhat mysterious.

It's not something that we necessarily share with God in the way that he experiences it.

And it's a kind of a comprehensive word that's unique to God, so it exists uniquely within God.

However, as we read the scriptures, we do get a sense of what it points to in God.

And the thing that spirit is most associated with

especially in reference to God, is this invisible life or like this quality of life-givingness.

You can think of it like spirit versus flesh or spirit opposed to flesh.

The flesh, which is often used to refer to the things that are seen and die, you know, like that part of us that's going to pass away, right?

That's the opposite of spirit or often used in contrast to spirit.

A couple passages in the Old Testament say,

help us understand that a little bit, right?

In Psalm 73, 26, we get a sense for flesh.

He says, my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

And then Isaiah compares Egyptians and God and the horses of flesh and God is spirit.

He says, the Egyptians are man and not God and the horses are flesh and not spirit, right?

So we just kind of see this contrast between flesh and spirit.

Flesh, that part of us that passes away, that seeing spirit, that invisible part,

that is life and life-giving, right?

That never passes away.

And this isn't the first time, if that's a little confusing, this isn't the first time that we've been exposed to this concept of the Spirit in the book of John.

So while he isn't saying that God is the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit does embody this idea of Spirit, right?

So that would make sense because we refer to him as the Holy Spirit.

So if we want to see what is this character or quality of spirit, the Holy Spirit is probably the place where we see it the most clear.

In John 3, let's flip back one page, and Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit in some really particular ways.

John 3, verses 5 to 8.

Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you,

Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

So he is talking about the Holy Spirit here, and he's going to describe the Holy Spirit.

He says, that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Do not marvel that I said to you.

And so, by the way, notice in verse 6, there's a distinction between the Holy Spirit and this idea of spirit or this characteristic of spirit.

Verse 7, Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

D.A.

Carson describes this idea of spirit this way, or quality of spirit.

He says, More commonly, the Spirit in the Old Testament is renovative, it's creative, it's life-giving.

Barrett, another commentator, rightly draws attention to John 3.8, where what is spirit cannot itself be fully apprehended, but its effect cannot be denied.

That's important.

You can't see it, can't fully wrap your mind around it, but you see the effect.

It is known through its sound.

So God is not just the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, but the triune God, right?

God is spirit.

Notice, go back to chapter 4.

He's talking about the Father, the Father, and then he says God is spirit.

I think he has the triune God in mind here.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, our spirit, and their triuneness.

They're unseen, full of life.

and all that characterizes life.

So you can imagine, right?

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit existing together, full of love, full of joy, full of vitality, full of happiness, together for all of eternity, before anything was ever made, right?

Before the universe was spoken into existence, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit existed together.

full of life and joy and vitality.

I mean, that's the universe of meaning that's in those three little words, God is spirit, right?

He is life itself.

He is joy and happiness itself together as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That's what I mean when I say God is true worship.

It's not proper to say that God worships himself, right?

We wouldn't say that God worships himself because worship is given to a superior by a subordinate.

So something that's lower gives worship to something that's greater.

And God the Father, Son, and Spirit are equal in worth and dignity.

They share the same nature and worth.

But it means that part of being the triune God is that they praised and adored and enjoyed each other for all of eternity.

Part of what it means to be God and a triune God is that there's love and adoration and praise for one another that exists within the Godhead.

And the mind-blowing connection here in this passage is that God desires to bring people like you and me

into that circle of adoration and enjoyment.

He wants to give us and bring us into new life and fullness of joy in his presence, right?

He wants to bring us into that circle of praise and adoration.

But this kind of worship and this kind of happiness

is not just a side benefit of God's people, right?

It's not just a side benefit for God's people.

It's a necessary requirement that defines God's people.

I'll say that again in case you missed it, right?

And spirit and truth is not just a side benefit for God's people to experience on a Sunday when his people are gathered.

Rather, it's a requirement that defines God's people.

In other words, God demands true worship.

Look at that last phrase in verse 24.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Jesus ends these few statements on worship with the must, right?

Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

And again, the must, the force of the requirement comes from the fact that God is spirit, right?

Or it comes from his nature.

If we are to join, if we're to come into God's life and happiness, we must be like him, holy as he is holy, alive spiritually as he is spirit, right?

But as we all know, there's a problem.

Romans 5 describes that problem.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned, therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men,

so one act of righteousness leads to justification in life for all men.

We're dead, right?

And Paul makes it really clear that because of sin, we're under the power of death, which keeps us outside of this circle of God's enjoyment and worship.

And Paul makes it really clear in Ephesians 2 that this death, physical death, is not the only way that we're dead, right?

We're dead spiritually, and that's actually more fundamental than even our physical death.

And he says in Ephesians 2, And he says in Ephesians 2,

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith.

And this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

That's worship, right?

Those good works that he prepared beforehand that we should walk in him is worship in spirit and truth.

If you didn't catch it, we were separated from God.

We were kept from true worship by sin

But then Jesus leads us into worship.

His sacrifice paid the penalty for our sin for all those, right?

An hour there is all those whose hope and faith are in him.

And in John 2.18, we see, 18 to 22, we see that he's the true temple, right?

He's the true temple and it's in him and through him, excuse me, that we meet God.

And we'll see later in John 11, right?

that he is the resurrection and the life, not just of our bodies, but of our souls as well.

And it's Christ's death and resurrection that brings about the turning point where we're given the Holy Spirit who indwells us and empowers God's people, brings about the fruit of the Spirit, and makes worship in spirit and truth possible.

He's the way, right?

He's the way that we enter into the love and praise of the Godhead

the praise and the adoration that the Godhead gives to one another.

He's the truth by which we know how to worship rightly, the way that he tells us to and calls us to worship him.

And he's the life that we need to worship in spirit and truth, right?

The way, the truth, and the life are all necessary for true worship or worship in spirit and in truth.

In short, Jesus is our worship leader, right?

Every time.

We step up on stage to lead a song or to pray publicly or to read scripture or to give a testimony or to preach a sermon.

We do so knowing that we're not inventing something new up here to give back to God or we're not inviting God into our orbit, right?

We're stepping into his.

We don't invite God to come join us in what we're doing.

Jesus leads us into what God's been doing for all of eternity and what he will continue to do with his people for all of eternity.

We look to Jesus to bring us in experientially today as he already has brought us in positionally when we were born again.

When we're at home, when we're going about our day, positionally, whether you experience it or not, feel it or not, you are positionally with Christ in the heavenly places.

We ask Jesus through the Holy Spirit and through the means that he's giving us of gathering together in the word and prayer and all these other things to help us experience that reality both together and individually in our quiet time with the Lord or as we're acting obediently throughout the week.

Jesus leads us in worship.

We follow together as we worship in the spirit full of God's life and united with him.

So if you didn't catch it, that's kind of what I think spirit means there.

We follow together, worshiping in spirit, full of God's life, united with him.

So that life, by the way, would be like fruit of the spirit and tangible change.

But it also means that we feel the truth that we're saying, right?

Maybe not always, but there are times where

All of us, right, are made alive, body, soul, spirit, are made alive by the truth that God has given us, made alive by God himself.

In truth.

So we worship, we follow him in spirit, and we follow him in truth, according to his word and what he has told us about himself and how he wants us to follow him.

True, soul-satisfying worship.

That's like the key.

Remember, don't forget the context that we're talking about this in.

We're talking about living water,

I'm thirsty, I'm constantly chasing after things that don't satisfy.

I keep coming up short on all these things that I'm trying to entertain myself with or distract myself with or make my life meaningful with.

I'm coming up short with those things.

What is that soul satisfying thing?

It is worship that's rooted in God himself.

Because God makes true worship, God is true worship, and God demands true worship.

Matt Papa, in a little book called Look and Live,

says this, he says, glory entices and begins worship.

The vision of glory is where the journey of worship starts.

The reason we are always worshipping is because we are always looking at something.

And sometimes the glory appears so great, so massive, so important, you will sacrifice whatever it takes to get it.

That is why after being a worship leader for 15 years, I have chosen to focus on the topic of glory and

rather than worship.

Worship is the natural byproduct of seeing glory.

Glory is foundational to worship.

And if I can point just a few eyes to the glory of Jesus in these pages, songs of worship and lives of praise will rise unending to my glorious King.

Listen, we need, you need more glory.

God creates the spirit and truth worship he demands from us.

God does that, right?

You're like, I don't feel it.

I don't get it.

I can't, you know, this sounds really good, but it feels out of reach.

God creates the spirit and truth worship in you that he demands from us.

What you and I need is more of God.

We need more of the deep truth of God and we need more of the life of God in our day-to-day walk in life.

God's not interested in true lifeless facts, nor is he interested in our good vibes performances.

Rather, he desires life-giving praise and adoration for his glory and our eternal joy and happiness.

Let's pray.

God, I ask that you would do in me and in us what we can't do for ourselves.

Lord, we want you.

We want more of you.

Lord, I pray that you would fan that flame that you've put there in the first place.

And Lord, that you would help us to forsake those things that are holding us back.

Lord, would you help us to just put them aside?

Would you help us to search with all that we have for that treasure in the field, that pearl of great price, and sell all that we have to obtain it.

Lord, he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

And Lord, would you help us to see you as you really are.

Help us to see how great you are, how worthy you are of all that we have and all that we are.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.