

"Inheriting the Promises!" 2021 Summer Series at the Village Church

#4- "True Worship with the Father!" John 4: 23 "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!"

Introduction: IL- We're obsessed with our phones, a new study has found. The average cell phone user touches their phone 2,617 times a day- no small number! The research firm tracked 94 users over five days, all day to arrive at that average... probably the most interesting thing in all this was that the people surveyed completely underestimated their phone touching and they were shocked by the numbers!

How many touches take place between us and God in a day? If the number of times we were in contact with God, worshipping Him on a daily basis, could be tracked, would we be shocked by the result? God loves to connect with us any time of the day and any day of the week for a lifetime!

The Father longs for our worship, with two conditions: that it comes from within our spirit AND that it corresponds to the Word of truth!

...that it comes from within our spirit!

IL- Many years ago, Thomas K. Beecher once preached for his brother, Henry Ward Beecher, at the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. Henry was a very famous preacher, and many people had come to hear him. When Thomas stood up to preach, some people began to move toward the doors. Realizing that they were disappointed because he was filling in for his brother, Thomas raised his hand for silence and announced, "All who came here this morning to worship Henry Ward Beecher may leave now. All who came to worship the Lord may remain."

Jesus directs His words on true worship to a sinful Samaritan woman and not to religious priests or Pharisees! He turns our thinking to the subject of the nature of man and his worship of God. Some Bible teachers are convinced that man is a two-part being, the physical and the soulish making up who we are. Others, like myself, believe that 1 Thessalonians 5: 23 is a clear example of man as a three-part creation of God. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I am convinced that God made our bodies with five physical senses to connect with our surroundings, with a soul to express emotions and make decisions, and He created us with spirit- the part of us that connects with the divine, the part that knows intuitively that God exists and the part that yields itself to God to be saved by His grace. Then with that transformed spirit, we can and should long to commune with God in true worship. Thus, it is possible for anyone who is a child of God by faith to worship God from the heart in sincerity.

While Jesus was on earth He received worship from people like Thomas who, when he saw and heard the risen Savior, simply exclaimed- "My Lord and my God!" (John 20: 28) Angels worshiped Him- in Hebrews 1: 6 we read, "And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world He says, "Let all God's angels worship Him." The wise men who came to see the infant

Jesus worshiped Him in Matthew 2: 11- and many more while He was on earth. That brings us to the question: What is worship? Simply put it is adoration and reverence of God! A worshiper is one who BOWS before His awesomeness! It is not a certain place, time, format- it is a relationship that grows, from our perspective. Maybe the reason Jesus spoke this way to the Samaritan woman is because her heart was soft and ready to respond to truth, whereas many Jews just went through the motions and adhered to the letter of the Law but not to the lovely Person of Jesus! For a true Christian the object of our worship is respected to the highest degree! The important thing is not the response- Did I do it right?, but the real condition of my heart! I find it important in our text that verse 23 is almost repeated word for word in verse 24: "God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth!" Real worship acknowledges that God is supreme, that He is who He says He is and does what He says He will do!" One thing in this verse that He does, and it is a promise we can claim today, is that He "is seeking such people to worship Him!" He SEEKS formerly dead people who were enemies of His but whose lives have been changed and who have a brand new take on life. In Luke 19: 10 we read- "The Son of Man came to SEEK and to SAVE the lost!" THAT is reason enough to praise and worship Him any time, anywhere!

The Father is to be adored and valued above all! That worship from the heart, in sincerity, is not because of what we get out of it, but because of what we GIVE to God through it! It is heart, soul, mind and strength all concerned with God's glory. That means the choices we make, the emotions we may express, the thoughts our minds dwell on and the service we perform once we are up off our knees and ready to do His will! THAT is true worship. For that to be true, we must not succumb to the letter of the Law and say that worship "HAS" to be done in a certain way or at a certain time or in a certain place! **IL-** I've been to a real, live Cowboy church and they praise God in their own, unique "western way". I've also been involved in worship and service with the Christian Motorcyclists Association and they take a totally different approach with the way they dress and the long, flowing hair many of the bikers have- they are one of a kind when it comes to worship styles! But if the issue of our spirit worshiping God, in private or in public, is the primary focus of our thoughts and words in prayer or in song or in silence, then we know that even the most gorgeous cathedral means nothing unless true worshipers go there to adore and reverence God. "In spirit and truth is not an 'either-or' but a --'both-and'. 1 Samuel 16: 7- "The Lord sees not as man sees- man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart!" And if it is 'both-and'- our spirit deeply involved and truth held on to to the end- then the second condition is critical...

...that it corresponds to the Word of truth! God's Word gives us the truth we must turn to if we want to know God's take on worship that honors Him. Our worship of the Father comes by the merit and mercy of the Son and under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit. God's Word also gives us considerable liberty when it comes to the HOW of worship. Our sitting or standing or kneeling; our singing, playing an instrument or just quietly pondering the words of a hymn or praise song that exalts the Lord- that is up to each person. If I choose to have my quiet time of worship with the Lord at home in the early morning hours or late at night before bed time- that is my decision and mine alone. But ALL of my worship, alone or with other believers, is to be in

truth- in the bounds of what God says in Scripture about TRUE worship. So, that means I need to get into the Bible for myself and not depend on a preacher or internet broadcast to tell me what I should think or do! If I study the subject of worship, for example, I discover that the word 'worship' is in my Bible 96 times. I realize that both Old and New Testaments highlight the importance of worshipping God! 1 Chronicles 16: 29- "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name, bring an offering and come before Him! Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness." Hebrews 12: 28- "Let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire!" **IL**- Ronald Allen, in his book, 'The Wonder of Worship' writes: "There seems to be less general knowledge about the content of the Bible among otherwise informed people than at any time in post-Reformation history!" We must not just be familiar with our Bibles, we need to be full of the Bible's truth!

The Bible is to be our training manual for true worship! We must become dedicated students of ALL of our Bible- not just one section or one book or even one Testament. **IL**- I actually knew of a pastor in the midwest who served his church for 6 years but never preached from the Old Testament because he couldn't understand how it applied to believers today! I can give you one key example of the opposite- to demonstrate that so much of the Old Testament applies to you and me in 2021! I love the Psalms- all 150 of them. But listen to just one verse and see if you catch the connection to you and me this morning- Psalm 51: 10- "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, a renew a right spirit within me!" David sinned and confessed his sin and wanted his heart to be right before God again. How about you and me? God is listening when we worship and sing and pray with hearts made right by the blood of Jesus! Ultimately worship can be described as, "**being occupied with GOD!**" We cannot have a better 'occupation'!!

Conclusion: IL- St. Augustine lived in the late 300's AD in what is now known as Algeria. He was a significant religious thinker who became a Christian at age 30 and wrote two important books- City of God and Confessions. In Confessions he wrote a poem called, "Late Have I Loved You" in which he told God- "You were with me, but I was not with You!" I think those words could be said by many professing Christians! We know from our Bibles that He is always with us if we know Jesus as Savior. But are we always with Him in His presence in close fellowship, heart to heart in true worship based on the Bible? That is a question only YOU can answer, knowing that God already knows the answer!

It was also Augustine who is quoted as saying- "Christ is not valued at all unless He is valued above all!" May we say, "God, I want **that** kind of heart for worship!!"

Closing Song- "Heart of Worship"