



BEHOLD YOUR GOD - WEEK 7
Beholding God in Worship

15. GIVING IN SECRET (MATT. 6:1–4)

The terrible thing about our acts of devotion is how easy they are to twist in order to put our faithfulness on display. Once we've made ourselves the object and focus of our generosity, we have undermined the act.

God has always promised reward for the faithfulness of his saint, but Jesus tells us that when you draw attention to your giving, the respect and awe you've inspired becomes your reward—invalidating further blessing.

Harvest Fair

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Frank Shelter and Anthology Church.

Closing prayer

INTRO: Here's the Issue - the restoration of true worship.

THE PROBLEM IS - We've made worship too much about how we feel.

“We come not together to amuse ourselves. We come to pay our adoration at the footstool of the great King, to whom alone be glory forever and ever.” (Charles Spurgeon)

If worship is about God, then how can it be about how we feel? But for worship to be about God we must see the worth of God. If we do not see the worth of God we will not worship Him.

Unfortunately, this happens in churches far too often. Because we do not hold up the worth of God to people, because we do not behold God as He is revealed in Scripture, present Him as revealed in the Scripture, we do not know His worth.

But here's the thing — we are still inclined to worship, because that's how we are designed. And because we're inclined to worship, we make it about other things. It's still clothed in Christian garb, but it's not really about God.

The point is this, when God is small in our eyes, we cannot help but make worship about us. In the present day church...

WE'VE MADE WORSHIP TOO MUCH ABOUT US.

This same tendency can be seen in our small group prayer time. We've been working on adjusting that, but old habits are hard to break. But our prayer times are more often

than not all horizontal. They're about us and our needs. That's where we begin. God is a secondary focus.

God's agenda. God's will. God's praise all come after our needs if those things are mentioned at all. So, our prayer times are not about God accomplishing His will in this world, but they're about us. Our prayers should begin the same place our worship begins — with the worth of God.

So, before we go any further, let's answer this question:

What is worship? It is simply us offering ourselves to God because He is worthy.

You don't have to feel a particular way to offer yourself to God. If it's His breath in our lungs, then we should let it out as we worship. We should give Him what is do to Him, not what we feel at the moment. When God is small and

you are big, it is next to impossible to get you to disbelieve your emotions.

Maybe you feel like a hypocrite if you praise God when you don't feel like worshipping. But it's not about your feelings, it's about giving Him what He is worthy of receiving — our praise. That is simply worshipping as an act of faith, rather than as an emotional impulse.

- **Church in Minneapolis**

Do you worship as an act of faith or do you worship based on how you feel? Because if you don't feel like it then you're probably not engaging in worship and you're not giving God what is due to Him.

BIG IDEA: Worship is responding to the worth of God.

We have to know God to worship God. The more we know Him, the more we will worship Him. And the more you know Him, the more

you can engage in worship by faith because you know He's worthy.

Today, we're going to look at three segments of Scripture and ask, "What do these tell us about the splendor of God?" Splendor is another way of saying what's impressive. In the splendor of God we will see His worth.

Then we'll ask, "How should we respond?" Because that's what worship is — responding to the worth of God.

1. | OUR WORSHIP TESTIFIES TO THE WORLD ABOUT THE SPLENDOR OF GOD.

Our worship reminds people that everyone worships someone or something.

“Because here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.” (David Foster Wallace)

That's very insightful, because the Bible teaches this same thing.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart,

That's the reality that we long for something beyond us, something transcendent. This is why everyone worships something.

yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

We are designed to worship God, but with a proviso. As much as we long, we will continue to long. We cannot come to the end of an infinite God, so there will always be longing in our worship of God because He is God.

So, everyone will worship something. Now, the dangerous thing is that the Bible also teaches that we will become like whatever we worship. In other words, what you worship will either fill you up or eat you up. Worship the One you're designed to worship and you will find fulness of life. Worship false gods or the creation or the creature instead of the Creator and you will be eaten alive.

Psalm 115:8

8 Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

- The characteristics of an idol (deaf, dumb and blind)

Be careful what you worship.

How we worship tells us something about how we view God.

Christian worship itself is a way of proclaiming God's worth. Where else do we

find groups of people gathering together to sing to an invisible being? It sounds crazy. It sounds crazy, until you experience the reality of being born again, until you experience this deep inner conviction of this outward proclamation — He is alive, that He's risen.

So, our worship testifies to the world that God is alive. God speaks to the world through the worship of the church, His people.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4

**3 For I will proclaim the name of the Lord;
ascribe greatness to our God!**

**4 “The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.**

**A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.**

Again, splendor is another way of saying what's impressive about something. In this case, what is impressive about God? His is a Rock. He's dependable. He makes promises to humanity and those who trust His promises by engaging them find that He is dependable.

He'll do what He says. "Every word of God proves true," as Proverbs says.

You can know Him and experience Him, in other words. You can worship Him. He's worth trusting.

He is perfect, which is why He can be trusted. Perfect in wisdom, perfect in knowledge, perfect in holiness, perfect in justice, perfect in wrath, perfect in love... what's our hesitation in trusting Him? All His ways are justice.

If you want to see how the justice of God plays out in real life, read the book of Proverbs. You'll find a cast of characters there that you can find everyday as you sit on the patio of Starbucks eavesdropping on their conversations — Scoffers, the Arrogant, Sluggards, the Diligent, the Simple, the Wise, Fools, the Wicked, the Righteous and Liars. And you'll see that all the choices of these different types of people make play out in real life just as Proverbs describes. All His ways are justice.

So, if we know this about God, that all His ways are justice, why don't we trust Him more?

“The sinner against the Lord may not be ready to give up control of his or her own life when told the message of God's love.” It may boil down to something as simple as you don't want to give up control.

God is faithful, just and upright, yet we are more likely to listen to our own wisdom than God's.

When we react rightly to the worth of God revealed here we trust Him with everything in our lives.

Practically speaking, is there anything that you trust more than God in your life right now?

So, our worship testifies to the worth of God to the world. Well, what are we telling the world about God's worth? That He is the only Being worthy of our worship.

2. THE SPLENDOR OF GOD IS THAT HE IS THE ONLY BEING WORTHY OF OUR WORSHIP.

- Impersonal force vs. the Personal God

1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

To the King of the ages — God is the God of history. So, we can worship Him as we see in hindsight how His hand Has shaped the history of the world and how it culminates even now in the Person of Jesus Christ.

There is no getting away from B.C. and A.D., even as contemporary people try and redefine it as BCE and CE. The reason it doesn't work is because even in BCE and CE the line of demarcation is the birth of Jesus Christ. God is the God of history.

That means I can trust Him with my future and the future of everyone I love.

Acts 16:31

31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

He is King of the Ages, Immortal - He never began to be, knows no beginning or end, no growth or age, nor will he ever cease to be (Gen. 21:33; Ps. 29:10; 45:6; 48:14; 90:2, 4; 102:25-27; Isa. 40:28; 1 Tim. 1:17).

He is immortal.

This is why Jesus said that He had the power to lay down His life and take it up again, because Jesus too is immortal.

Hebrews 7:16

¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

That's what it means to be immortal — to have an indestructible life. Jesus Christ not only defeated death because He is sinless, but He defeated death because He is immortal, by the power of an indestructible life.

And only Jesus Christ defeated death, so only Jesus Christ can share His victory over death with you. You have an immortal soul, which means you will live on after you die. But where will you live on is the question?

1 John 5:12

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

No other god will deliver you from death. He is the only God worthy of our worship... because He is the God who shares Himself.

3. THE SPLENDOR OF GOD IS THAT HE SHARES HIMSELF.

One of the greatest attributes we can know about God is that God is love.

And because He shares Himself...

Psalm 16:11

**11 You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures
forevermore.**

Now this is when worship becomes ecstasy. There will be a time when we will know the full manifest presence of God. But until that time we still owe Him our worship. We still owe Him the breath in our lungs.

“God wants worshipers before He wants workers. He calls us back to that for which we were created — to worship the Lord God and to enjoy Him forever. And then out of our deep worship flows our work for Him. Our work is

only acceptable to God if our worship is acceptable...” (A.W. Tozer)

Our worship is responding to the worth of God as an act of faith, because we have seen His worth.