

Title: Wanted! True Worshipers

Text: John 4:23–24

Let me begin today with a simple yet profound question:

What captivates your heart the most? Is it the joy of a hobby, the love for a family member, the satisfaction from a job well done?

Each of us, in our own way, pours devotion into something that gives our life meaning and joy. This very act, this deep-seated devotion, is a form of worship. And it's not just found within the walls of a church or the pages of Scripture; it's present in the everyday moments of our lives.

Now, consider this perspective from Philip Graham Ryken in his book 'Give Praise to God'. He asks, *'Does the Bible tell us how we ought to worship God?' and then answers, 'Yes... our hearts by nature are "factories of idols" rather than reservoirs of thanksgiving and praise to God. But, worship — whether true or false — is the natural instinct of the human heart.'* (pg. 15)

Here, Ryken is touching on a universal truth. We are all innate worshipers. It's etched into the very fabric of our being. Yet, so often, our worship is misdirected, focusing on the creation rather than the Creator.

Intrinsically, every one of us is a worshiper, designed to express reverence and adoration. Yet, often, our focus is misdirected. We find ourselves worshipping everything but God, despite our innate wiring to worship Him above all.

In the Old Testament, we see God establishing a distinct pattern for worship among His chosen people, the Israelites. His laws and the culture He cultivated for them centered around worship.

From the construction of the Tabernacle to the magnificence of the Temple, specific guidelines on how, where, and why to worship were intricately woven into their lives. They were taught to direct their worship exclusively towards the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

However, with the arrival of Jesus Christ, there comes a seismic shift in this paradigm of worship. Jesus didn't just redefine the norms; He revolutionized them.

Today, we delve into how Jesus changes everything - even our concept of worship. This is the crux of our exploration...

Main Idea: Jesus Changes Everything - Even Worship!

There is an important account that is found in John 4. Beth read it for us earlier. It is famously known as Jesus' time with "The woman at the well."

Tucked away in this account, we see an important transition taking place in worship because God in the flesh had finally arrived.

There are two concepts that Jesus changed about worship, and the first is...

1. True Worshipers are Not Confined to Location (vs. 23)

John 4:23 ESV

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.

This interesting conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well is one of Jesus' most profound for many reasons.

First, no self-respecting Rabbi would walk through Samaria

Show Map

Second, no "godly" Rabbi would be caught dead talking to a woman - especially a Samaritan woman.

Thirdly, Jesus beautifully models how to speak to someone outside the Kingdom. He uses so many powerful techniques to draw this lost soul into loving, truth-filled, gospel-saturated conversation. We do well to study how Jesus interacts with a woman who needs redemption. There is much in this passage about how to approach someone with the gospel. Jesus is the master Evangelist.

We could spend all our time this morning dealing with these subjects, but I want us to focus our minds and hearts on how Jesus handles the concept of Worship.

If you have spent any time in the Old Testament, you will soon realize that God had exacting requirements for proper worship.

In the Pentateuch, the first 5 books of the Bible, we see in painstaking detail worship concepts like..

Sacrificial lambs, sheep, goats, bullocks, etc., how and when to sacrifice them.

The office of the **Levites, priests**, and all those people and items that were to be involved in the worship process.

We see in great exactness the details of the **Tabernacle** (a place of worship while the children of Israel were wandering the wilderness for 40 years).

As well as the **temple** when the Israelites occupied their Promised land.

In addition we see the detail in how those **leading in worship were to dress**.

Over and over, we see in the Old Testament and even in the Gospels God's desire for a particular kind of worship in a specific place.

It is important to note that it was the TABERNACLE and then the TEMPLE where God met with His people.

Listen to what happened after King Solomon, son of King David, dedicated the new TEMPLE in Israel...

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 ESV

As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

This is the same Shekinah Glory that led the Children of Israel during their wandering in the wilderness.

And the TEMPLE was now the place where they would worship God.

Let's go back to the scene of Jesus with the woman at the well.

In this conversation, Jesus addresses a question that this woman presents. Honestly, I believe she presents this question to get Jesus off of her back about her lifestyle. Look at the text with me and you will see what I mean...

John 4:16-20 ESV

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 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 worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

Do you see what I mean? Jesus is calling her out about her adulteress lifestyle, and she wants to change the subject. And even in the attempt to change the subject, Jesus is not derailed but instead uses it as a teaching opportunity.

Look at his response...

John 4:21-22 ESV

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."

In other words, Jesus tells her that there is a time coming when Herod's temple in Israel will no longer be the seat of worship. A new age is upon them, and Jesus is the reason for the change.

Now, the Samaritan woman believed, as we see from her comments, that true worship and the true temple was on Mount Gerizim

(show map).

“this mountain - Recognizing Jesus as a prophet, she asked him a theological question about the proper place of worship, a key point of debate between Jews and Samaritans. Samaritans held that ‘this mountain’ (Mount Gerizim) was especially sacred. Abraham and Jacob had built altars in the general vicinity (Gen 12:6-7; 33:18-20), and the people had been blessed from this mountain (Deut 11:29; 27:12). In the Samaritan Scriptures, Mount Gerizim (rather than Mount Ebal) was the mountain on which Moses had commanded an altar to be built (Deut 27:4-6). The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim c. 400 BC, which the Jews destroyed c. 128. Both actions, of course, increased hostility between the two groups. - NIVSB

The point? While the Israelites were correct, regardless of who was right, Jesus was making it clear that worship would no longer be confined to a local place and time. Jesus is ushering in a new age that would allow worship from all tribes, tongues, and nations.

By the way, how can I say the Jews were correct on the this? Because of what Jesus says in verse 22...

John 4:22 ESV

You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

The Samaritans’ Scripture only contained the Pentateuch - the first five books of the bible. They rejected the further revelation that came from God. The Jewish Bible contained...

The Torah (Teaching, Law)

The Nevi’im (Prophets)

K’tuvim (Writings)

This is why Jesus says what He says in.....

Luke 24:44 ESV

*Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the **Law** of Moses and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** must be fulfilled.”*

Do you see this? The Law, Prophets, and the Writings (Psalms) declared Jesus.

The Samaritans missed this because they refused to acknowledge the whole OT canon of Scripture. And because of this, they missed that true and genuine salvation was from a specific people group - the Jews.

But now we move into the heart of what Jesus says about the radical change in worship that He introduces. Look at verse 23.

John 4:23 ESV

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.

Notice what He says. The hour that He spoke of in verse 21. The hour or the time of change that was upon the Jews was at last, now here.

Jesus was and is the Messiah. The hour of His arrival was now at hand. The long-awaited Messiah was now a living, breathing man who was speaking the truth to this lowly, sinful adulteress woman at the well.

And what is this long-awaited Messiah instructing this woman about? Worship. True and biblical worship.

In this verse, he predicts a change in worship - the location in both time and place.

In this verse, he instructs what this worship will comprise - It will be the worship of the Father (this is new), in Spirit, and in Truth. Notice he does not mention the place.

In this verse, he declares the Father's desire - God the Father seeks worshippers. Why? The more worshippers, the more glory He receives from those who recognize and revel in His immense worth.

After all, the word WORSHIP is derived from the old English phrase "Worth Ship," which means to ascribe worth or value.

By the way, is there anyone or anything that is more worthy than God in Heaven?

No! He is worthy of all praise, glory, honor, and blessing.

Listen to the words of the Apostle John in his Revelation regarding God the Son.

Revelation 5:11-14 ESV

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

They fell down and WORSHIPED.

God is worthy of all our worship, and that worship is not to be contained to one location or even one place in history. God is to be and will be worshiped by all people groups forever and ever, amen!

All places are places of worship to a Christian. Wherever he is, he ought to be in a worshipping frame of mind.

Charles Spurgeon

So, if Spurgeon is correct, what are the implications of such a thought? In other words, how do we apply the fact that our Worship of God is not relegated to a Temple (Which was destroyed in A.D. 70?) or by certain people?

First - You are the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore a walking, talking, place of worship.

Second - The grid by which you filter your activities is the reality that you are a temple of God. This works both positively and negatively.

Negatively - What should I take in to the temple? Our drive should be holiness.

Food -

Clothing -

Viewing -

Listening -

Does this activity bring glory and honor to my Father in heaven?

If you cannot worship the Lord in the midst of your responsibilities on Monday, it is not very likely that you were worshipping on Sunday!

A. W. Tozer - Whatever Happened to Worship? (20th century)

Positively - How should we worship God wherever we are? In other words, outside of our time at church.

Worship God in Prayer

Worship God in His Word

You cannot worship God in a vacuum. You cannot worship God apart from his revelation.

John F. MacArthur

Worship God in Quiet

Psalm 46:10 ESV

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Worship God in Life - in other words, as you are going through life praise Him for all you see, hear, taste, think, feel, and do!

1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Your bad attitude because of your work partner is an act of worship.

That gossip you are spreading around the church is an act of worship.

That purposed time in His Word and prayer is an act of worship.

All of life is an act of worship. You are either worshipping God or yourself.

Men who refuse to worship the true God now worship themselves with tender devotion.¹

A. W. Tozer

How would your life change if you view all of it as an act of worship to our Lord in Heaven.

Romans 12:1 ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Review - Jesus Changes Everything - Even Worship!

- True Worshipers are Not Confined to Location

2. True Worshipers Are Required to Worship God in Two Particular Ways (vs. 24)

As I mentioned earlier, the Old Testament had many requirements for proper worship. They were tedious and exacting.

How many of you have purposed to read through the Bible only to come to the book of Leviticus and get so bogged down that you give up? I bet a lot of you.

But Leviticus is an amazing book when you understand it in light of the gospel. Leviticus highlights the exacting and holy nature of our God and the impossibility of doing everything necessary to live up to that holy nature.

This is why Jesus is so necessary for you and me. Why? Because He can and does live up to God's holy and exacting nature. He is the exact imprint of holiness and the only one capable of satisfying God's holy and righteous requirements for a relationship with God.

God the Father sent God the Son into this world to live the sinless, perfect life that you couldn't pull off. All of us have broken God's law and proved we are incapable of perfection, the perfection necessary for a relationship with God.

But Jesus is capable of what we are not. Jesus is the epitome of perfection. And the amazing thing about Jesus Christ is the fact that He willingly stood in your place as a perfect substitute.

Substitute for what? A substitute for God's wrath and punishment that He is obligated to inflict upon you because His just and holy Character demands it.

God MUST punish you for your sins. He must!!

Or He could punish a proper substitute in your place.

The only one that qualifies for this job is God the Son, Jesus Christ. And because God loves you, He provided this amazing substitute. Because He loves you, Jesus willingly took your punishment upon Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

John 3:16–17 ESV

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Friends. It is crucial that you understand this so you can understand what true worship is.

Please hear me - if you do not have a true and proper relationship with Jesus Christ you CANNOT properly and truly worship God.

You are lost and on your way to hell. This is not me being judgmental. This is what John the Baptist, Jesus own cousin says in the Bible.

John 3:36 ESV

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Do you understand the implications of these words? There is only one way that the people of this world can truly and properly worship their Creator and that is through Christ and through Christ alone!

Any religion or philosophy that does not have Christ at the center does not have true worship.

Therefore, let me clearly say that we do not worship the same God as anyone who rejects or minimizes Christ and his deity.

This is such important backdrop information as we consider Jesus words in [John 4:24...](#)

John 4:24 ESV

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

Although all of humanity is created in God’s image and we are like Him, He is not like us. Jesus says this when He declares that God is Spirit.

The references in the Bible to God having hands or eyes or feet or other body parts are simply anthropomorphisms (attributing human characteristics to that which is not human).

Numbers 23:19 ESV

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind...

IN SPIRIT - Jesus is clear - **God is spirit** and therefore this reality directs our worship of Him. We are to worship God, who is spirit, in spirit.

What does this mean? How do we do this? What does this look like in the life of a follower of Jesus?

Worshipping God in spirit is a profound concept that goes beyond mere external rituals or formalities. It involves a few key aspects:

From the Heart: Worshiping in spirit means that our worship must stem from the heart, soul, and inner being. It's not just a physical or outward action but a deep, heartfelt expression of love, reverence, and adoration towards God.

Led by the Holy Spirit: As believers, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, our worship should be guided and energized by the Spirit. This means being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to shape our expressions of worship, whether in prayer, singing, service, or obedience.

God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Only the Holy Spirit can enable a fallen man to worship God acceptably. As far as that's concerned, only the Holy Spirit can pray acceptably; only the Holy Spirit can do anything acceptably.¹⁹

A. W. Tozer

Authentic and Personal: Worshiping in **spirit** requires authenticity. It's not about putting on a show or going through the motions but genuinely expressing our devotion and commitment to God.

Beyond Formalities: While traditional forms of worship (like church services, singing hymns, etc.) are valuable, worshiping in spirit transcends these. It's a continuous, daily attitude of glorifying God in all aspects of life, not limited to a specific time, place, or ritual.

In Relationship with God: True worship in spirit comes from a living, dynamic relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It's about knowing Him personally and intimately and responding to His love and grace in every area of life.

In essence, worshiping God in spirit is about a sincere, heart-driven, Spirit-led approach to worship that permeates every aspect of a believer's life, reflecting a deep relationship with God.

What does your spiritual worship look like?

Jesus doesn't just talk about worshiping God in spirit, but also.....

IN TRUTH -

Align Worship with God's Word: Ensure that your understanding of God and your worship practices are grounded in the Bible, His revealed truth. This means your worship should reflect the character and instructions of God as revealed in Scripture.

Live in Obedience to God's Commands: True worship involves living a life that is in line with God's commandments and teachings. It's about applying biblical principles to your daily life and making choices that honor and glorify God.

To worship God in truth is to worship him as he commands.

R. C. Sproul

Acknowledge God's Providence and Character: Recognize and proclaim the truth of God's nature – His love, grace, holiness, justice, mercy, and omnipotence – in your worship. Recognizing the truth of who He is changes our perspectives and causes authentic appreciation and worship of God.

Teach and Proclaim Biblical Truths: Use opportunities in everyday conversation to speak truthfully about God's Word. Encourage others in your Connection Group to grow in understanding and applying biblical truths.

Truth" means that we are to worship what is true about God. In other words, worshipping "in truth" occurs when we worship in accordance with what God has revealed about himself. That is true worship.

R. Kent Hughes

Repentance and Confession: Regularly practice confession and repentance, acknowledging your sins before God and thanking Him for His forgiveness. This keeps your relationship with Him grounded in the reality of His grace and your need for His mercy.

Prayer in the Truth About You: Engage in prayer that is both honest and in line with biblical truths. Speak to God openly, bringing your real self before Him, while also aligning your prayers with what Scripture reveals about God's will and promises.

Jesus wants the Samaritan woman at the well to understand what life will be like under the Lordship of God's Messiah. It will not be limited to a temple on a hill. It will be expanded to and through every confessing and possessing follower of Jesus.

The fuel of worship is the truth of God; the furnace of worship is the spirit of man; and the heat of worship is the vital affections of reverence, contrition, trust, gratitude, and joy.

John Piper

If we recognize the Spirit of God as the unique fountain of truth, we shall never despise the truth wherever it may appear, unless we wish to do dishonor to the Spirit of God.

John Calvin

Imagine if your primary thought of your Christian life was that of unadulterated, spirit and truth-filled worship.

Remembering that by your very recreated nature, are a walking, talking, living, and breathing worshipper of the God of the Bible.

Everything you think, emotions you feel, and decisions you make automatically run through the grid of worship.

“Someone hurt my feelings - how can I worship God in spirit and truth?”

“My spouse and I are not getting along - how can I respond in a way that worships God in spirit and in truth.”

“My child has walked away from the faith that I hold so dear - how can I worship God in spirit and in truth even though my heart is breaking?”

“I just lost my job - how can I worship my Lord in the midst of this frightening time?”

Listen, friends - I want to challenge you this morning to evaluate and do an overhaul on how you worship God.

Do you worship Him in spirit - engaging your heart, mind, and all your emotions, expressing your profound love and appreciation for who God is to you and all that He has accomplished in and through you? Is this how you regularly worship God?

Do you worship Him in truth - In other words, your worship is not directed by your emotions; instead, your emotions are enflamed because of the truth of God’s Word!

Because when you worship our Lord in spirit and in truth, He is truly ascribed the worth due Him!

Review - Jesus Changes Everything - Even Worship!

- True Worshipers are Not Confined to Location
- True Worshipers Are Required to Worship God in Two Particular Ways

Conclusion

The point of this sermon is to understand what Jesus was talking about with the woman at the well in regard to worship.

Now that Jesus has arrived, gone were the days of temple worship, sacrificing lambs and goats, and exacting standards and guidelines. Jesus took care of the need for all of this as he offered up the temple of His body for the redemption of ours.

Our worship is not confined to a particular place and time.

Our worship is comprised of an engagement of our spirit and His truth.

This drives authentic, God-pleasing worship.

What do we do with this? Why am I challenging you with this?

Because, my friends, we must be excellent in true worship. We become true worshipers by the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

We have a responsibility to pursue worship in every aspect of our lives.

Adults, parents - hear me. The children of this church MUST LEARN what true and authentic WORSHIP is.

Why?

Because they are born to worship, they are hard-wired to worship. But because they are sinners, they automatically desire to worship themselves, their desires, and even their emotions.

They naturally bow down and worship at the altar of self-gratification and self-aggrandizement.

God gave these children to you to show them the better way. The best way. Jesus Christ.

But friends, if we are also worshipping at the altar of self, how can we show them the true worship that Jesus talks about?

I believe there needs to be a mass repentance in this church and the evangelical church in America, where the American dream is replaced with a genuine desire to please God personally, no matter the cost.

What do the children of this church see you worshipping? That is what they will pursue as well.

Proverbs 22:6 ESV

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

This cuts both ways, friends.

This is why we must, as a church and as families.....

DRIVE WORSHIP HOME

If we do, we will ensure that the next generation will take the baton of faith and carry it into the future!

In the coming weeks, the DRIVE FAITH HOME ministry of ABC will attempt to equip you through the sermons, call to worship, and the DFH Center with tools to help you help your family become skilled in worship.

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to you to be a 'true worshiper' who worships in spirit and truth?
2. How does Jesus' teaching influence your view of worship in traditional versus everyday settings?
3. Can you recall a time when you felt you were truly worshipping in spirit and truth? What made that experience different?
4. Who are you praying for this week?
5. Who are you talking with about the Lord this week?

1.