

6/30/24

[Connection] Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. Welcome to our friendship Sunday! Hopefully you came with a friend, if not today is a great day to make some new ones! Thank you for joining us this morning. My name is Joe Shepherd and I am one of the pastors here. If this is your first time worshipping with us, I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you more. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

[Title] While you're doing that, we are going to dive into our sermon series called 'Church is Crisis' where we have been studying the book of 1 Corinthians. We are in week 13 of our series. Where we have been talking about Paul addressing the problems and questions that the church had. Paul is pushing the church to excellence in the way that they work out their salvation in order to not only grow spiritually but to represent God well. This week we are going to be talking about this idea of Worship.

Today our scripture is going to be found in **1 Corinthians 10:1-22**. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there, if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one, we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of **1 Corinthians 10:11-12**. So let us stand as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth in God's word.

[1] SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 10:11-12

"Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

INTRO

When we talk about this idea of worship, we have to first understand what worship is. It will be the guiding principle that we will work from as we look through this passage. With this working definition it will help us understand how and why Paul is calling them to purify their worship of God, in order to glorify him fully.

[2] Worship is valuing and treasuring God above all things.

One of the issues that the church was facing was their relational and geographic proximity to pagan or idol worship. It was something that was woven into the fabric of the culture around them. Involvement or exclusion from it affected social relationships, political positions and financial or economic success. The church felt that in order to live in the world they had to have some involvement in the practices, either to allow their business to provide for them or to have influence for the gospel in the lives of the people in the city. Paul in our passage this morning is warning them of the dangers of being too close to pagan worship. The danger that Paul is addressing is their issue of misplaced worship, or this lack of placing value in God above all other things.

Paul in his warning about misplacing their worship or their lack of understanding of what it means to worship God, they actually voided any worship. They may have thought they gave worship to God, but in fact it meant nothing. He will use many of the stories of the Israelites in the Old Testament as a comparison to the church in Corinth. He will even state that through this parallel between the Hebrews and the believers in the church that they are positioning themselves to be disciplined, just as the Israelites were.

In the teachings leading up to this chapter Paul has addressed this temptation of idol worship before. In chapter 8 they were worried about the practice of eating meat sacrificed to idols. Based upon the culture and economics of the city it was nearly impossible to have meat in your diet and it not have been at some point coming through the pagan temple. Paul told them that it is a religious freedom they have, so it is permissible as long as it is seen as just food by the one participating in the meal. However, even though it is permissible, it can cause others difficulty in their faith. With that in mind practicing this freedom is not worth the risk and should be avoided, if not, done privately so that you do not cause someone to stumble because its appearance.

In chapter 9 Paul explains that he lives this out as an example to them through the refusal of financial support of the church to be effective for the gospel. All of this in the previous 2 chapters sets the stage for him to make this comparison between the church and the Israelites in the time of the exodus.

BODY

[3] 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ"

He refers to the stories that he is about to tell as stories about our fathers. This is Paul saying that there is a spiritual relationship that the church has with the Israelites in the Old Testament. They were God's chosen people and now the church in the New Covenant has been grafted into that promise¹. This group of Israelites, specifically the ones that came out of Egypt, through the deliverance with Moses, were all 'under the cloud' as Paul says.

This word 'all' is used 5 times in verse 1-4 and it is Paul pointing out that every Jewish person that participated in the exodus, enjoyed the blessing that came from it. Paul points out 4 of those blessings, the first being under the cloud. In the story of Exodus, the cloud would appear to them, leading them by day and a pillar of Fire by night. The cloud is often throughout the entire Old Testament as a representation of the presence of God². In this benefit that Paul points out he is saying that our spiritual fathers had the presence of God with them. Through God's presence they received supernatural guidance and deliverance.

The second and third blessing is all of them passed through the sea talking about the parting of the red sea, when they fled to escape Egypt's army³. And they were baptized into Moses. This is the first parallel that we see Paul make. Just as Christians we baptized into Christ for salvation⁴, Israel's salvation came

¹ Romans 11

² Exodus 13:21, 14:19-20, 40:34

³ Exodus 14:21-31

⁴ Galatians 3:27

from God but through their prophet Moses. We know this is a parallel that Paul is making, because in the story of Israel, they weren't baptized like Christians are. When they came through the red sea they were walking on dry ground. Passing through the Red Sea was pointing out their dependence on Moses and Christian baptism is pointing out our dependence on Christ.

The fourth blessing is, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. This is pointing to the food and that water that God provided for the people while they were in the desert. God miraculously provided manna and quail from heaven⁵. When the people needed water, on 2 occasions God made water flow from the rocks with a divine command⁶.

God did these things for the people out of kindness for them, they were his people, so he provided for them. God's kindness, however, was not a guarantee that God would not discipline them, if they strayed away from him. As many who know these stories know and we will see in a moment God definitely let them have it sometimes. When they sinned against God, they face the consequences of it.

Paul says that they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. To answer your question, no, there is nothing in the story of Exodus or Numbers that said there was a literal rock that traveled with them and gave them water. Paul is pointing to God's constant provision for the people and that provision ultimately came from Christ.

In the story of the rock at Rephidim, Exodus 17:5, it says that God stood on the rock in front of Moses and Aaron at the place of Horeb. In the Story of water from the Rock at Kadesh, Numbers 20:6, it says that the glory of the Lord appeared around them before Moses struck the rock and brought forth water. Paul believes these to be what are called Christophanies. These are appearances of Christ before the incarnation in the New testament. The parallel then that Paul is making is that both the Israelites and the Church in Corinth have experienced deliverance through Jesus. Israelites experienced it through provision from God, and the church experienced it through the salvation in Christ's death.

For all of you Old Testament Scholars out there, you will notice that these events in Paul's telling of them here are out of order. That is because Paul is following Moses' telling of the history of Israel in Deuteronomy 32, not the actual events in Exodus and Numbers. This will play a part later, but in case you're scratching your head that is why.

[4] 1 Corinthians 10:5

"Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

This word 'nevertheless' is Paul telling them he is delivering the punchline. There are all of these great things that happen to and for the people of Israel, but they still kind of sucked. It's like this positive build up, positive build up and then huge let down. He is saying that in spite of all of the things that God did for them, the Israelites were still forced to wander in the desert till that generation died out.

Even though the presence of God was with them, even though they had a faithful representative in Moses, even though Christ was with them and provided for them their every need, still the people complained about everything. They complained about what God had provided, they rebelled against

⁵ Exodus 16:13-15

⁶ Exodus 17:1-6; Numbers 20:1-11

God, and they retreated into idol worship. Israel went too far in their behavior, and died due to God's retribution and were disqualified from any opportunity to serve him or represent him.

[5] 1 Corinthians 10:6-7

"Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.'"

This word that Paul is using for 'now', is like a conjunction. Its saying 'yeah they really sucked, but...'. This is Paul saying that these things happened with Israel to be an example to those who hear about it and those who are in the faith. He is telling the Church in Corinth specifically do not follow their example in complaining about all the things that Christ has provided.

The first generation that Moses delivered from Egypt experienced God's might, power and glory, and they still disobeyed. Their idolatry and disobedience led to their punishment. This is Paul warning the church to avoid idolatry or else they will face punishment just like the Israelites did⁷. They were idolaters, referring to the golden calf in Exodus 32. The Israelites fashioned the golden calf while Moses was up on the mountain. They turned from God because they began to doubt. This phrase 'they ate and drank and rose up to play' is a quote from Exodus, and talked about the sexual immorality that happened in their worship to this idol. Which is why in verse 8 Paul says...

[6] 1 Corinthians 10:8

"We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day."

This is Paul pointing out the sexual immorality that happened with the Israelites in Numbers 25:1-9, where the men had adult relationships with the Moabite temple prostitutes. In judgement God sent a plague on them that killed 23,000 of them in a single day.

[7] 1 Corinthians 10:9-10

"We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, ¹⁰ nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer."

This is another time when Israel was in the wilderness. They felt far from God because they were enduring their punishment to wonder in the dessert for 40 years. They created a dynamic where they would do something that they knew was wrong, to see if God still cared or was going to do anything about it. Which up to this point God has always done something about it so I don't know why they kept testing that theory.

Specifically, this is Paul referring to 2 different stories, the first at mount Hor they spoke out against God and Moses because they were impatient as they traveled. Because of this, God sent venomous snakes in the camp and many people died⁸. The other story was at Korah, they rose up a rebellion against Moses and Aaron complaining and grumbling about their circumstances. Those who were guilty of this grumbling, the earth shook and a hole in the ground swallowed them up.

⁷ Numbers 14:28-30; Psa 78:30-31

⁸ Numbers 21:4-9

Grumbling against God, despite his continued provision and protection, was pretty typical of the Israelites in the wilderness⁹. Every time, because of their rebellion, they were destroyed. Paul points out that this judgement of God was carried out by an angel or divine being with the name the destroyer¹⁰. Which is crazy it sounds like a Marvel villain. The avengers against the destroyer.

[8] 1 Corinthians 10:11

"Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come."

All of these things that happened to Israel are an example that we are to learn from. They are for our instruction. They were admonishments regarding the consequences of unwise or sinful actions. In other words we have their example so that we can learn from them and not make the same mistakes.

But Paul includes this phrase saying this instruction was provided by the one whom the end of the ages has come. This is Paul connecting the situation with the Hebrews saying it is all a part of God's sovereign plan. God's sovereignty meaning that everything in this world falls under God's control. Which we will talk about in a moment.

[9] Before we move on, we have to clearly point out the parallel that Paul is creating between the church and the Israelites. Paul at this point has listed 4 sinful events of the Israelites, where God chastised them. The first is idolatry, when they made the golden calf. The second is the sexual immorality with the Moabites in the pagan temple. The third is testing God, where they spoke against God and against Moses before the snakes. The fourth and final one is their grumbling, where they complained about God's severe treatment of them.

Paul says that all of these things are examples for all believers not just Jewish Christians or not just for Paul and other ministers. Paul is saying to the church in Corinth, that if they knew this example, they would have avoided all of these sins. But in the last 9 chapters, Paul has addressed where Corinth has fallen into all of these sins.

[10] Chapter 8 Paul is warning them against idolatry. Chapter 5 and 6 Paul is warning and addressing their sexual immorality. Chapter 3 they were creating division in the church drawing unnecessary lines in the sand, testing God. Chapter 9 they were speaking out against Paul as the Apostle over the church.

In all of the situations with Israel, God disciplined them, and if Corinth is following the example of the Israelites, Paul is warning them to repent. Otherwise they are going to fall just like Israel did. They need to change, or they will face the same consequences. Consequences that will result in them no longer having the opportunity to serve God, or represent him.

[11] 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

⁹ Ex 15:22-17:7; Numbers 11:1-35, 14:1-12,26-35; Deuteronomy 1:27

¹⁰ Exodus 12:23; 2 Samuel 24:16; Psalm 78:49

The church in Corinth did not consider themselves in danger of anything. Paul is saying this thinking is foolish, they need to notice what they are doing. They participated in idol feasts (ch 8) and felt they were safe because they were in Christ. They did not consider their position to be tempted like the Israelites to fall back into idol worship. They believed they had the Holy Spirit, so they were safe. Just like the Israelites, they had the presence of God, and still, fell into idol worship.

Temptation to fall into sin has come to both of them, and the chance of them falling into sin like the Israelites did is still the same.

This temptation that Paul is talking about is a 'testing'. This is their temptation to return to the pagan temples and worship idols. No matter what their motivation is, maybe it was to prevent themselves from being socially, politically, or financially ostracized. A reality that might happen if they refuse to go to these pagan celebrations. No matter what their motivation is, it still puts them in a dangerous proximity to be tempted to fall into sin. They are to avoid sin, as Paul has said repeatedly. Trials, temptations and testing are going to come no matter what, but we should not be subjecting ourselves to it unnecessarily.

The thing that they Corinthians has to understand, is God is sovereign over everything. He is in control over their social status, their political positions and their financial resources. No matter what happens to them, God is in control of it. Paul illustrates this in saying that God is even sovereign in the temptations and testing that they will face.

Throughout scripture temptation to sin is depicted as God testing the faith of his followers¹¹ or allowing heavenly beings to tempt people¹². However, God himself does not tempt us.

[12] James 1:13-15

"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."

God is pure and holy and is so separated from sin, sin by nature is the opposite of the character and nature of God. Because of God's nature he cannot be tempted by evil and therefore cannot tempt anyone with evil. But it is by our own desire that we are tempted, like Paul mentions in Romans 7:21-25. That desire when we are tempted gives way to sinful acts which leads to death¹³.

This testing of our faith can build up our faith and our character¹⁴. God then demonstrates his sovereignty over the temptations that we face, by placing its limitations. In verse 13 Paul points out 3 of these limitations.

[13] First we will only be tempted by what is common to man. This means that we will only face a temptation that is unexceptional. It will never be out of the ordinary. It is a temptation that all men will face. It may be a unique presentation, but it is always the same temptation¹⁵.

¹¹ Genesis 22:1

¹² Job 1:6-12

¹³ Romans 6:23

¹⁴ James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5

¹⁵ Matthew 4; Hebrews 4:15

The second limitation is that we will not be tempted beyond our ability to fight against it. The temptation that we face will never be so overwhelming that you did not have the ability to resist it. This is where people will often get the common saying that 'God won't give me anything that I can't handle', which is not true. Sometimes God gives us situations and circumstances or those circumstances might just be natural consequences of sin, but God may allow those things to happen because you cannot handle them. If you cannot handle them on your own that is an opportunity to depend on him. This is talking specifically about the temptation that we will face, when we are tempted to sin. When tempted we can avoid the sin that we are being tempted with.

The third limitation is that when we are tempted, God will provide a way out. This is God's provision in the testing. He gives us this provision so that we can avoid the sin when we are faced with it. Another phrase that people think it in the bible, that I know even I have been guilty of saying is that, 'during the testing, the teacher is silent'. Many people find this encouraging when we feel like God isn't speaking to us when we are facing hard circumstances. According to what Paul is saying, that isn't true either. When we are facing the temptation to sin, God is throwing you a life-raft saying here is your way out.

This escape however is not that the temptation will disappear. The way out is the ability for us to endure. For the church in Corinth their temptation was to return to the pagan temples, and their escape, is God supernaturally helping them to do what is right, which is to flee from the idolatry.

[14] 1 Corinthians 10:14-15

"Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say."

Because Paul loves the people in the church, he wants them to flee from this temptation of idolatry. Run from it and stay as far away from it as they possibly can. He speaks to them this way because he knows that they will understand his instruction and if they were to test the things that he is saying to them, he knows they will be proven to be true. He demonstrates this through the example of the Lord's supper, or the practice of Communion.

[15] 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

The cup of blessing is a reference to the cup of the Lord's supper, which symbolizes the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins¹⁶. The sacrament of communion is not just highly symbolic, but it is deeply spiritual practice for the believer to participate in. The elements of communion enhance fellowship with both Jesus and the other believers.

Paul points to this through these rhetorical questions with a negative particle. Which means the question is negative, so the answer is then positive. The cup and the bread of communion signify participation, a sharing in the blood and body of Christ.

We talked to the Old Testament Scholars, now if there are any New testament scholars, you might be thinking hey these are out of order, Jesus broke the bread first, before he drank the wine. And your right.

¹⁶ Matthew 26:27-28

Paul reverses the order of communion here because he is setting up a movement from the vertical union between believers and God, to a horizontal union between believers and themselves. Here's what I mean.

[16] Participating in the blood, is partaking in the cup's contents in communion. It is a believer identifying themselves as members of the new covenant in Christ¹⁷. This is the vertical union that happens in communion through the cup.

[17] By participating in the body, the bread is the symbol of Christ's body. By participating in the bread, believers testify to their union with Christ – not just in his death, but also in the achievements brought about by his resurrection. That is through grace and mercy believers are now the body of Christ in union as one bride. This is the Horizontal relationship between believers.

[18] 1 Corinthians 10:18-19

"Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹ What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?"

Using the word 'participants' and 'participation', Paul is drawing heavy parallels to the Old Testament to communicate what happens at the Lord's supper. Old Testament believers were 'participants' with God in the Jewish sacrifices and received the benefits of the sacrifice, which is atonement for sin, through the accompanying meal afterwards¹⁸. Participating in the elements in faith, also mean sharing in the benefits of Christ atonement. God uses the supper to give grace to believing partakers, that is the remembrance and proclamation of Jesus' sacrifice.

Paul then addresses what he is implying to them through this. Food offered to idols carries no true spiritual significance. He already addressed this in chapter 8:1-13. Based on the teaching in Chapter 8, for the sake of appearances, it would be better to avoid this food. Avoiding it would save the conscience of the weaker believers. Idols in and of themselves are inanimate objects made from piece of wood or metal. They truly hold no real significance. The significance of them, in the world, is what they are given by demonic deception and human worship¹⁹.

[19] 1 Corinthians 10:20-22

"No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²² Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"

Paul is recalling Deuteronomy 32 again. He is saying that the demons deceived worshipers into believing that the gods behind the idols were real. And just as believers are participants in Christ death through a union embodied in the Lord's supper, in the same way pagans are unified with demons, through the perversion of communion in idol worship and meal. So, when these Christians went to the temples for these meals or these festivals, they became sharers with demons. In this context, they share in the demonic rebellion against God. Perhaps even inadvertently promoting the worship of a false god as the demons did, by their presence in the temple, which is still idolatry.

¹⁷ Matthew 26:28

¹⁸ Leviticus 7:11-18

¹⁹ Isaiah 46:1-11

Paul says that drinking of the cup or partaking in the table of the Lord is Fellowship with God and his church, and drinking of the cup or partaking in the table of demons is fellowship with demons and the rebellion of Satan²⁰. This is creating an obnoxious contrast. Obviously, these things are polar opposites of each other, and they cannot exist in the same person.

When worship, that rightly belongs to God is given to anything else, it is attempting to provoke jealousy from God. Now the story of Exodus says that God is a jealous God²¹. God's first commandment is that we should have no other gods before him²². But if someone is attempting to make God jealous that is not going to work.

For a husband to feel jealous about his wife, she has some sort of sway over him, so that he would feel fear about being replaced in her affections for another. Paul's point is that believers do not have that kind of influence over God. When God becomes jealous because his people have become adulterous, he punishes them like he did with Israel²³.

APPLICATION

Every contrast and parallel that Paul is trying to create between Israel and Corinth is an attempt to establish the gravity of their situation. It is to show the outcome of the circumstances when someone was in the same situation as them. It is all an attempt to get the people of Corinth to change their worship and change their perspective on worship. Which is why he says things like if they go to the pagan temple they are sharing with demons, even though in chapter 8 he said they have the freedom to do so. Paul is showing them that this idea of worship carries a huge weight.

[20] The problem Corinth and the Israelites faced is they did not understand the 2-fold nature of worship. There is the inner essence and there is the outward expression. Jesus makes this distinction in...

[21] Matthew 15:8-9

*"This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

[22] What Jesus is addressing is that if both are not consistent with Christ it equals zero. It is just worshipping in vain. All worship is in essence a matter of the heart. What that means is, if there are outward expressions of worship, but the heart is unaffected then it is not worship.

Worship depends on a right spiritual, emotional and affectionate heart. Which means that we are to have a grasp on God's supreme value. Worship is derived from the 'worth ship', it is praise because of an understanding of its worth. True worship is based on right understanding of God's nature, and it is a right valuing of God's worth. Of course, God's worth is infinite.

[23] Worship then is valuing and treasuring God above all things, because we know his worth is greater than all things.

²⁰ Imagery borrowed from Isaiah 65:11 and contrasted with 'table of the Lord from Malachi 1:7&12

²¹ Exodus 34:14

²² Exodus 20:3-5

²³ Deuteronomy 32:21-24

In the inner essence of worship, it is the response of the heart to the knowledge of the mind. When the mind is rightly understanding God, and the heart is rightly valuing God, then we have the position of the heart of true outward expressions of worship. This is what Jesus meant when he said in John 4:23-24, that there will come a day where people will worship in spirit and in truth.

How this applies to this passage in Corinthians, is for the Jews, they followed the Law, which is an outward sign of worship. However, their hearts were unconvinced of God's infinite worth. Without the inner essence of worship, their outward expressions were void and worth nothing. We see this through their constant doubt, grumbling, turning away from God, and blatant disobedience.

[24] What is worse is that they had everything that they needed to succeed. They had the very presence of God among them in the form of a cloud. They had God's constant provision through Christ. They were given a Godly leader and prophet Moses, and they had God's continued guidance. Even with all of those things, their hearts were not changed. In Paul's parallels Corinth possesses the same things, and he is saying that if they continue to be tempted by worship that is misplaced, it is evidence that their heart is also, unchanged.

[25] Just like Corinth, we as the modern church possess all of the things that we need to succeed in our faith. We have the very presence of God among us, in the form of the Holy Spirit, we have God's provision through Christ which is his salvation through the death on the cross. We have Godly leadership, which is the example of Christ who came to be the prophet that was greater than Moses. And we have God's continued guidance through his word.

Even though we may have all the things to succeed, where we fail, is when there are things in our lives that we value, over our relationship with God. That is the temptation that we face where our worship is misplaced. As with the Israelites and with the church in Corinth, when our worship is misplaced, it is a sign that our hearts are unchanged.

For many of us we have the outward stuff, right? We go to church every Sunday or maybe once a month. We attend bible studies. We hang Christian saying in our homes. We post bible verse on Facebook and Instagram. We have the bible app on our phones. Or we even have a funny but convicting Christian bumper sticker like, 'are you following Jesus this close'. Right?

[26] We have the outward covered, but we lack the inward.

At the first sign of hardship, we begin to doubt if God is really good. When we face trials, we grumble and complain because this isn't what we wanted. When we feel unfulfilled, we turn to other things to give us that gratification, like pornography, relationships, achievements or recognition from our peers.

When the inward heart of worship is absent, then all outward acts of worship are void.

It means nothing. When we attempt to worship God in the outward, but it is not reflected in the inward, you are worshiping something else and you are just wasting your breath singing songs. The things that we turn to instead of God, the things that have our hearts, the things that we believe to be worth more to us than God, those are the things that you are worshipping. Because worship is what we were made to do. We innately place value in something or someone and will praise the things that we believe to be of value. If we are made to worship, it is not a question of if we are worshipping, it is a question of what are we worshipping.

[27] What we have to understand of all of the things in existence, everything in the past the presence and the future, **there is nothing that is worthy of our worship except for God.** Why waste time worshiping the creation when we can worship its creator. God is the only one that can bear the weight of worship. When the inner essence and the outward expression are in alignment with God, there is a lot of trust there, but here is why God is the only one deserving of that trust and our worship.

The God that created the universe is the only one that can be worshiped and not grow arrogant. He is the only one that can be worship and will not abandon you or harm you. He is the only one that can be worshiped and will be your father and he will call you, his child. Not because he demands it but because he gave up his life to be able to rescue you back to himself. Nothing else that you may place your worship in, will ever come close to that.

When we worship other things, even if it is inadvertent like it was with the church in Corinth, that is a dangerous place to be. Just like with the Israelites all the things that God has provided for us, was done out of his kindness towards us. His kindness, though is not a guarantee that he will not discipline those he loves, if they stray away from him.

[28] Romans 2:4, says that the purpose of God's kindness, his long suffering and his patience **is to bring us to repentance.** That is to bring us to turn away from our sin and return to Him as our Father. Jesus when he came and died and through his act of love provided all of these things that we listed earlier. That was done so that we can be rescued. Redeemed away from sin and death and held in righteousness and life. Isn't that worthy of our worship?

Today we face the question, what are we worshipping? If it is anything that is lesser than the one whose value is infinite, then it is worship that is misplaced. If you believe you are worshipping God, then the question is, does your heart align in worship with your actions. If not your worship is void.

This morning we are going to take communion as the body and bride of Christ. But I want us to take a couple minutes to prepare our hearts for this time of worship. Don't let this just be outward, but let your heart be changed by the overwhelming mercy and grace of God.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

COMMUNION