

Fellowship Notes ~ Sunday, June 9th, 2019

R E A L
Worship

Part 1: “Real Worship is _____”

John 4:24

“Worship” = to ascribe or declare the worth of something; to place value in the thing being honored; to bow down, to do homage; to kiss toward; to serve or minister

Jesus’ Definition of Worship

1. Worshiping God includes our spirit (4:24a)
This includes our emotions, feelings, and heart
2. Worshiping God includes truth (4:24b).
The Bible is our source of truth in worship.

“Worship is the response of all that man is to all that God is and does.”

~ Unknown



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Worship

Part 1: “Real Worship is DEFINABLE”

Sunday, June 9th, 2019

This morning we’re beginning a new message series that we’re focusing on this summer called Real Worship. The inspiration for this series came out of our Better Together Emphasis that we had earlier this year.

During our Better Together Emphasis we spent one week in the Scriptures considering the fact that we we’re better together when we worship together.

And I was preparing for the message on that topic I came to the realization that biblical worship isn’t something that I’d ever spent a good deal of time personally studying. Nor had I ever preached a message series on it either.

So back in March I promised you that not too far down the road we would take up a study on worship and I expressed my belief that in doing so we would experience spiritual growth if we commit ourselves seriously to this study. Well, today is the day.

Now I feel the need to apologize this morning. I feel as though I've robbed myself as well as robbed you of the blessings and benefits of better understanding what God has to say about this important topic...

And it IS an important topic! The Bible indicates that one of the primary reasons God created us in the beginning was for the purpose of worshiping Him.

All of us are living creations of God. We have imbedded within our DNA a craving for and the need to worship. And that worship was created by God to be toward God. God made us to connect with Him.

And God wants that connection that we call worship to be a lifestyle for us – something that we do every day, not a once a week occurrence. Now in this sinful world we live in, sometimes living a lifestyle of worship can be challenging. But the day is coming when worshiping God will be the pinnacle of the existence of everyone who knows Jesus as Lord and Savior.

I believe that one of the primary factors of what will make heaven heaven for every child of God, is the pure, unadulterated, unhindered, unfettered worship that we will experience in that perfect setting where sin will be no more. I am looking forward to that day. If you are too say, "Amen".

Unfortunately for now, we ARE living in a sinful world, and because of sin the vast majority of people in our world haven't the foggiest idea that they were made to worship God.

In fact the vast majority of people's lives are wrapped up in a web of a variety of things and people they worship, though they wouldn't call it worship, and as a result they're filled with despair and hopelessness and they're misguided and going in every direction except the right one.

Take this tortilla here as an example. Seems like a harmless and simple little food item. But for Maria Rubio of Lake Arthur, New Mexico a tortilla like this became an object of worship.

One day in 1977, Maria was making breakfast burritos for her family – something she did every single day.

As she was warming up the tortillas in a skillet one by one, she pulled one off the skillet and noticed something strange. The skillet marks on the tortilla resembled what she perceived to be the face of Jesus.

After breakfast she excitedly showed her family and neighbors who all agreed that the image bore a striking resemblance to the familiar iconic image of Jesus they were used to seeing in their Catholic faith.

A while later, she took it to her priest and asked him to bless it because the Jesus tortilla had changed her life. He was reluctant but did indeed bless it. After that she took it home and put it in a shadow box with some cotton.

Then her husband made a special alter for the box to rest on and they put it in a small shed in their backyard and invited people to come and see the tortilla Jesus.

Within a few months over 8,000 people had been to the shrine and everyone agreed that the face on the tortilla looked like the face of Jesus – everyone that is except one reporter who thought it looked like Leon Spinks the reigning world heavy weight boxing champion at the time.

In just a few years, tens of thousands of people made the pilgrimage to the Rubio's backyard shed to see tortilla Jesus. Over time the image of Jesus on the tortilla faded and was hard to make out. But that didn't stop people from coming.

One day Mrs. Rubio's granddaughter convinced her to let her to take it to school for show and tell. Sure enough that day at school someone dropped it and it broke and that brought an end to the Rubio's backyard tortilla Jesus shrine.

Stories like this have become as common as the evening news with people claiming to have seen Jesus in everything from a pizza to a misshapen Cheeto. And inevitably people flock to things like this and pay homage – they worship.

(Hold up tortilla) But is worshiping a tortillia with a burned-on likeness of Jesus on it what God has in mind for us?

For a great many Christians today when they hear the word “worship” the first thing they equate with the concept of worship is music. And yes, music plays a big part of worship. But worshiping God is a lot more than simply music.

So how do we know what worship is? How do we know how God views worship? How do we know when we're worshipping God? IF we've worshiped God?

Each week of this series we're going fill in the blank as to what real worship is at the top of your notes. And for today here's what goes in the blank...

REAL WORSHIP IS DEFINABLE.

Before we define real worship let's consider the word itself. Our English word worship is actually a contraction of 2 words: *worth* and *ship*. (NOTES) It means to ascribe or declare the worth of something; to place value in the thing being honored.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word most often translated worship means "to bow down, to do homage."

In the New Testament, the two Greek words most often translated worship mean "to kiss toward" - conveying the idea of showing reverence or obeisance to someone; and "to serve or minister".

Placed in the context of the biblical injunction to worship, to worship God is to lift up the Lord, to declare His value by honoring Him. Worshiping God involves one's attitudes (like awe, reverence, respect), and actions (bowing, praising, serving).

Worship of God is both experiential and active. It involves the mind, the emotions and the will. The clearest use of the word worship is found in Psalm 29 when the Psalmist, David, writes...

(Slide)

“Ascribe (worship) to Yahweh the glory due His name; worship Yahweh in the splendor of His holiness.”

Psalm 29:2

The Psalmist here is telling us that worship isn't just a good idea, it's a command. God not only desires our worship, He demands our worship because He is worthy of our worship. His name is worthy of our worship. And He is worthy because He is holy. We worship a holy God!

In the gospel of John there is recorded a conversation that Jesus had in which He clearly provided for us God's view of worship. We're going to study this passage in more detail in upcoming messages...

But for today I want to show you the centerpiece of what Jesus had to say about worship and it falls in verse 24. READ.

This verse is the theme verse of our whole series on Real Worship and it is our memory verse this week...

(Slide)

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

John 4:24

Notice it doesn't say that those who worship Him must worship with music. Again, music is a part of, it's an expression of worship. But Jesus chose 2 words to describe what our worship of God must look like.

(Slide) 1. Worshiping God includes our spirit (4:24a)

This isn't referring to the Holy Spirit or else the letter "s" would have been capitalized. It's referring to the human spirit. This is the subjective side of worship.

Worshiping God should include our spirit, which is our emotions and our feelings. Worshiping God shouldn't be heartless or disconnected from how we feel. Worshiping in spirit puts warmth and expression into our worship of God.

Jesus' point also is that our worship is not based solely on religious rituals or places. He opened up worship to include not just when we're in a setting like this today, but you can worship with your spirit, expressing your feelings toward God anytime, anywhere.

But the contrary is also true. When we ARE in a setting like we are today, we mustn't think that by just being in a worship service that that automatically means we're worshiping God.

Or just because you participated in communion or singing along with others in a worship service, or recited a prayer that you worshiped God.

Worshiping God is done with your spirit – your heart, your emotions, your feelings, not by just going through the motions or actions of a religious experience.

I've participated in church services where I can tell you, a whole lot of religious actions were going on, but based on the spirit of those there, not much worship was happening.

So the question we have to ask ourselves this morning is, Am I engaging my spirit in worshiping God? Do I express my feelings for Him and to Him? Is my heart engaged as I express to God the worth that He is worthy of receiving?

Secondly Jesus also said that...

(Slide) 2. Worshiping God includes Truth (4:24b)

This is the objective side of worship. Meaning, our worship should be consistent with revealed truth. It should be based on the facts of who God is. Jesus called those facts truth. Where do we find the truth about who God is? In the Bible which is also called the Word of Truth.

It's in the Bible that we learn about who God is and it's with the Bible that we proclaim the facts of His worth, of why He is worthy to be worshiped and praised.

So while spirit is important in worship, the substance of our worship is just as vital and important. If we err in truth then our worship will not be God-honoring, and it will be false worship, just as much as worship that lacks heart and emotions and feelings.

So real worship of God should be a healthy balance of heartfelt expressions of worship to God based on and intermixed with the truth of who God is as declared in the Word of Truth. We see both of these in Psalm 95...

(Slide)

“Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”

Psalm 95:6-7

With the meaning of the word worship and the explanation of Jesus as to what worship is, as our background, let's get back to seeking a working definition of biblical worship.

Lots of authoritative churchmen down through the years have taken a stab at this. Here are a few good ones...

(Slide)

“Worship is the total adoring response of man to the one Eternal God self-revealed in time.” ~ Evelyn Underhill

(Slide)

“To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.” ~ Archbishop William Temple

(Slide)

“Worship is the innermost being responding with praise for all that God is, through our attitudes, actions, thoughts, and words, based on the truth of God as He has revealed Himself.” ~ Pastor John MacArthur

(Slide)

“Worship is what we were created for. This is the final end of all existence—the worship of God. God created the universe so that it would display the worth of His glory. And He created us so that we would see this glory and reflect it by knowing and loving it—with all our heart and soul and mind and strength.” ~ Pastor John Piper

Here’s the one I like. It’s simple and memorable. Say it with me out loud together...

(Slide)

“Worship is the response of all that man is to all that God is and does.”
~ Unknown

Worship isn’t a single activity or even a hoard of activities. It’s not a 90-minute appointment we go to each week that we call a church service. It’s not simply the singing part of the church service. It’s not mindless, robotic motions in sync with others.

Worship is the response of all that we are to all that God is and all that He has done and continues to do. And it's something that ironically, is missing in some who claim to be Christians and in churches who claim the name of Christ.

A few years ago a newspaper story told the tragic account of a baby christening party in a wealthy suburban home. The parents opened their very expensive home to many family members and friends. It was quite the social event.

As the party accelerated into the evening, finally someone asked the parents, "So, where is the baby?" At that moment, the mother wasn't quite sure and her heart skipped at her own hesitation.

Then she remembered she left the baby asleep on the bed in the master bedroom. When they got to the bedroom, they found the little child still on the bed.

But all the guests hadn't even seen the baby laying there and they had piled their coats right on top of it, suffocating it to death under all the coats.

And in a similar way, it is a spiritual tragedy that the Lord Jesus, the One we come to worship each and every Sunday. The One the whole service is intended for...Jesus can get buried under all the other things that we do together.

It is possible to come to a service like this and pretty much do anything and everything BUT worship the Lord Jesus who deserves our worship because He loves us and He died and rose again for our salvation. Yes it is.

Or, in spirit and in truth, we can worship Jesus through everything that we do together here today.

It boils down to whether you, and I, will give ourselves to the Lord in worship, with our heart, with our mind, with our feelings and our emotions, expressing our love and gratitude to Him, because He is worthy.

STAND / BOW HEADS & CLOSE EYES