

Fellowship Notes ~ Sunday, June 16th, 2019

R E A L
Worship

Part 2: “Real Worship is... What Everything is All About”

John 4:19-24

Part 1: Real Worship is Definable

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

The story of the Bible is the story of God’s plan to gather the worship of all the peoples that He has made. Worship is at the heart of what God has always been doing in the world and continues to do today. God desires worshipers. All of history is moving toward one goal: the eternal worship of God and His Son by people from every tribe, language, and nation.

“The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever! The 24 elders, who were seated before God on their thrones, fell facedown and worshiped God, saying: We thank You, Lord God, the Almighty, who is and who was, because You have taken your great power and have begun to reign.” Revelation 11:15-17

“Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, having the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth – to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He spoke with a loud voice: ‘Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and spring of water.” Revelation 14:6-7

“Lord, who will not fear and glorify Your name? Because You alone are holy, for all the nations will come and worship before You because Your righteous acts have been revealed. Revelation 15:4

“Then the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying: Amen! Hallelujah! A voice came from the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His slaves, who fear Him, both small and great!” Revelation 19:4-5



225 North Ave. Norwalk, IA. 981-0699 ~ www.fellowshipnorwalk.org

R E A L
Worship

Part 2: “Real Worship is...What *Everything* is All About”
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Read John 4:19-24 (THEME TEXT)

REVIEW:

(Slide)

(Notes) REAL WORSHIP IS DEFINABLE.

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

We also have a verse that is the theme verse of our whole series on Real Worship and it was our memory verse last week and because it’s so central in this study, we’re going to make it our memory verse this week just to make sure we all got it under our belts...

(Slide)

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

John 4:24

(Slide)



The 1992 Presidential election was an interesting one. George Bush had successfully navigated the war in Iraq in 1991 and so therefore enjoyed an approval rating of over 90%. His bid to be re-elected seemed like a sure thing.

But by August of '92 things had changed drastically. America was going through a recession. James Carville, the primary campaign strategist for Bill Clinton, knew this was the topic that the majority of Americans were thinking about and considering in who they would vote for.

In order to keep the Clinton campaign on track and keep their campaign workers focused on what was most important, he wrote this on a white board in Bill Clinton's campaign headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas:
(IT'S) THE ECONOMY, STUPID!

Bill Clinton and his campaign team stayed on track with this message and the rest, as they say, is history! Clinton did what many thought was impossible. A nationally unknown governor from a small state unseated a successful sitting president.

And that campaign message became a saying that many have used a way to emphasize what they believe to be most important and to establish focus. They just fill in the blank with whatever priority they seek to focus on.

Fellowship, it can be easy for all of us to get off track spiritually and miss what's ultimately most important. I don't want you to get to the end of your life and have missed what is ultimately the reason for your existence, the reason God saved you and the reason He's going to take you to be with Him in heaven for eternity.

So let me put this on the board so that doesn't happen to any us:

IT'S WORSHIP, SAINTS!

This morning I'm just going to tell you up front what to put on the blank at the top of your notes... Real Worship is... What Everything is all about.

We're going back to the basics folks. The basics of everything! You would think that most Christians would know the basics of everything and therefore possess both a biblical and a thorough understanding of worship. Unfortunately that's not the way it is for even many followers of Christ.

So let me just lay this this out there for you as plain as I can up front, then we'll work through the Scriptures to piece it all together.

The basics of what everything is all about – and I'm talking everything: the Bible, creation, life, sin, death, the need for a Savior, salvation itself, the history of the world, why we're all here...

How everything on this earth is going to end, what heaven and the eternal existence will be like for believers and non-believers,...the basics of everything can be summed up as follows - and this is on your notes as well...

(Slide)

The story of the Bible is the story of God's plan to gather the worship of all the peoples that He has made. Worship is at the heart of what God has always been doing in the world and continues to do today. God desires worshipers. All of history is moving toward one goal: the eternal worship of God and His Son by people from every tribe, language, and nation.

Remember when you were in school and the new yearbooks came out? Everyone got excited. When we got one of those in our hands – see if you remember this – the first thing we started looking for was the pictures of all our beloved teachers and our principal...Is that right?

Of course not!!! What's the first thing you looked for? Your own picture, right?! Come 'on, you can admit it. You wanted to see your picture in there and if there were any pictures of you on any of the pages other than the one with the picture of you when you were part of the Library Club.

Most of us make the mistake of approaching the Bible the same way we approach getting our copy of the school yearbook...

When we look into the pages of Scripture we look for the wrong thing – we look for ourselves. In fact, what the vast majority of Christians do, is, we write ourselves in as the main character of God's Word.

Everything that we read in the Bible about God's activity from Creation, to the sending of His Son...All the way to the end of time when we will be with Him forever in heaven – all of it – we think that it's all about US.

But the Bible isn't about us. It's about Him. Afterall, He existed before we did. It's about God's priority, God's plan and God's purpose in gathering worshipers from all the peoples of earth to be with Him in heaven for all eternity.

The reality is that we – mankind - are not the center of history. God is at the center of history. In fact that's why the record of the universe is called history, it's HIS STORY. And it's a story with worship at the center of it.

Now there's a couple of reasons why people - when they read and study the Bible - they don't see the Bible as God's story. In fact they miss out on the whole theme of the Bible altogether.

One reason is the one I just gave a moment ago. Since we tend to be self-centered creatures, we tend to write ourselves in as the main character of the Bible.

Another reason why we miss out on seeing the Bible as God's story is that we tend to look at it from the "bottom up" instead of from the "top down".

What I mean is, when we read and study the Bible we usually are doing it from OUR perspective – a human perspective.

A human view of the Bible is one of looking upward. When we read the Bible or hear it taught we ask ourselves, “What can I get out of this?” “What can MY family and friends get out of this?” “What can people get out of this?”

We do the same thing with worship services by the way, don’t we? We ask the wrong questions. We SHOULD be asking questions like:

- “What is this service about?”
- “Who is it for?”
- “How can I bless God with my worship this morning?”
- “How will I glorify Jesus Christ as I come and join the congregation in worshipping Him today?”

But instead we ask questions like...

- “What will I get out of this worship service today?”
- “Will they sing my favorite songs?”
- “Who’s going to talk to me this morning?”
- “What will my family and friends get out of this worship service?”

We approach worship from a bottom up, human perspective, and we wonder why we come away feeling empty and unfulfilled at times.

And because so many Christians approach God and worship in this way, and experience the emptiness from this approach, to them worshipping God with His people becomes empty, ho-hum, and worst of all, optional.

Think about it: we are here together this morning, worshipping the God of the universe in spirit and in truth. He is right here among us in this service. His Spirit is active and is drawing us to glorify Jesus and experience the blessings of drawing close to Him. James put it this way...

(Slide)

“Submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded people! Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

James 4:7-8,10

Do you believe what the Bible says here is true, amen?! Then, where is everybody? Why is it that on any given Sunday anywhere from 40-60% of the church family – any church family, our church family, is AWOL?

Why is it that in American Christianity, those who claim to be Christians, consider themselves faithful in worshiping God with their church family IF they make it to Sunday worship 2 Sundays a month - 50% of the time?

Question: Would a person’s boss consider someone a faithful employee if they showed up for work 50% of the time? Would your spouse consider you a faithful spouse if you didn’t mess around with someone of the opposite sex 50% of the time?

Would your team consider you a faithful teammate if you only showed up for 50% of the games?

If they wouldn’t, then why in the world would any true follower of Christ ever get the idea that if they showed up to worship the Lord with their church family half the time, that it makes them a faithful worshiper of their Lord Jesus Christ?

Unless... unless they haven’t the foggiest clue that in reality they’re not just follower, they’re also a worshiper. Unless they haven’t got a clue that when they come to worship, they’re not here for themselves, it’s not about them.

Unless they don't understand that worship is about God. And worshipping together in a church family is about making much of Jesus Christ – TOGETHER!

And we can exponentially magnify our worship of the Lord when we do it together – so that more people will see our Lord for who He is and join us in worshipping Him.

Maybe if we American Christians could understand worship from a top-down perspective, from God's point of view, then the state of American Christianity wouldn't be the way it is today.

Maybe our churches would be brimming with Christ-followers excited to worship Jesus Christ together on Sundays, because they worship Him in spirit and in truth all the through the week, and not just on Sundays.

Maybe even our evangelistic efforts would be producing more disciples of Jesus and the kingdom of the Lord would be expanding and pushing back the kingdom of darkness like we were meant to!!!

Now, let's take this bottom-up, top-down perspective to looking at the Bible and specifically at worship. In the Bible we learn that Jesus Christ came to the earth. Why did he come to the earth? Think about that. How would you answer that?

How many of you would say that Jesus came to the earth to die for our sins – say, "Amen". That's a correct answer, but it's not a complete answer.

In fact, it is in many ways a man-centered, bottom-up viewpoint. You see, dying for our sin wasn't Christ's ultimate purpose. In fact, Jesus Himself said He came to glorify the Father.

Jesus came to the earth to bring glory to the Father. It wasn't for the sole purpose of dying for our sins. In dying for us, Christ brought glory to the Father.

When we begin to understand the Bible in this way then begin to see it from a “Top Down” perspective – from God’s perspective. God’s perspective is and always has been about His glory – that His name receives the glory He deserves.

Now to fully understand the Bible we must learn to see God as the main character, not us. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning...God – right?” So what we need to ask is something like this: “What is God getting out of this?”

Let me ask you another question and see if we don’t tend to have the same “bottom up”, “man-centered” perspective to our thinking: Why did God save you? Just think about that for a moment.

Was it to keep you out of hell? Was it to give you an eternal inheritance in heaven? Certainly those blessings are true for anyone who places their faith in God’s Son. Praise the Lord and hallelujah!

But was there also a greater purpose for your salvation? What does God get out of forgiving you of your sin and making you a joint heir with His Son Jesus Christ for all of eternity? What would God’s “Top Down” purpose be for you?

Could it be that God saved you and God saved me because He wants us to glorify Him with our lives like Jesus did? And could it be that He is most glorified when He receives from us the worship that He deserves?

I’m saying there’s a priority that God has established for every person on planet earth. And that priority is part of the plan that He began way back in Genesis chapter 1, with creation...

And it’s a plan that will culminate someday at the throne of God in heaven. That’s where God’s plan comes to it’s ultimate fulfillment. Let’s take a look at that ultimate fulfillment...

Turn to Revelation. READ Revelation 5:6-10 and 7:9-12

Do you see the parallels here between these two passages of Scripture? We're told here that the group of people gathered around the throne of God include people from "every tribe, and language and people and nation". It says that in both places.

Someday, in heaven, there will be saints at God's throne who are representatives of every kind of people and every nation who have ever lived on this earth.

And what will we be doing? In chapter 5 it says we will be "singing". In chapter 7 it says we will be "crying out to God". Verse 11 uses a word to describe what we'll be doing – worshiping.

We'll be worshiping God together. Isn't that amazing? Right now on this side of heaven we have so many denominations, and so many schisms and so many different groups and camps of people who each have their own take on this aspect of the Bible and that aspect of Christian living.

In fact the splintering of Christianity is so vast and complex today that it's hard to even get a couple of churches to get together and of all things... pray together! (BOOK ON DENOMINATIONS)

But what we're witnessing here in Revelation in these passages is the end of God's story when all the saints of all the ages, those who by faith have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will be gathered together and we will do what together?

- Hold an evangelistic crusade?
- Have a heaven-size potluck? We will, but that's not what it says here.
- Gather around a heavenly firepit and sing Kumbaya with smores for everyone?

It says we will worship God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together! Jesus will be the person who brings us together in heaven and worship will be the activity that binds us together.

And that day is what God right now is preparing for. It is His priority. All of history is moving toward one goal: the worship of God and His Son by people from every tribe, language, and nation.

Fellowship, when you understand that the main character in the Bible is God – not you and not me – and you begin to read HIS STORY from a “Top Down” perspective – a godly perspective...

And when you understand that God is working in you and in every people and tribe and nation on planet earth to call out worshipers out of every people group, to bring glory to Himself...

And when you realize that the end of HIS STORY is seeing the diversity of peoples from planet earth worshipping him around His throne...

Then we begin to understand God’s heart for worship. And why He sent His Son to the world to die for our sins. The Father sent His Son Jesus to seek and save lost sinners for the specific purpose of producing worshipers.

And that is the primary reason this morning that God has saved you. If you know Christ as your Savior today, it is because God saved you for the express purpose that you would worship Him and His Son now in this life on earth, and forever in heaven.

Our earthly lives are preparation for eternity. God wants us to practice a lifestyle of worship unto Him now, because when we get to heaven, we are going to have the privilege of worshipping Jesus in-person, face-to-face and that will be our greatest joy in heaven.

Now does that mean we should discount the blessings of our salvation? Absolutely not! But that’s usually not a problem we struggle with. We’re all about the blessings of escaping hell, and walking on the streets of gold and getting a new body for eternity, and so many more.

But the blessings of salvation are additional benefits of salvation, not the ultimate purpose of your salvation. We are saved to glory God and we glorify God most when we live lives in worship of Him.

Over and over again in the Bible from beginning to end we see this basic truth that God is and always has been seeking real worshipers from among lost sinners.

It began with the angels when God created them before the earth and humans were created...

(Slide)

“You alone are Yahweh. You created the heavens, the highest heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them, and the heavenly host worships You.”

Nehemiah 9:6

Then God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden where they worshiped God as a lifestyle. And even after sin broke their fellowship with God, God shed the blood of an innocent animal to cover their sin so that they begin anew worshipping Him.

Later in Genesis, Abraham and his descendants worshiped God. In the books Exodus, Leviticus, Number and Deuteronomy, the narrative is all about worshipping God. That’s what the history of God’s people – the Israelites – is all about. It’s what the promised land was all about.

And the rest of the historical and poetry books in the Old Testament are all somehow related to worshipping God or God calling His people back to faithfully worship Him.

In the New Testament, Jesus the Messiah arrived on earth, and those who rejected Him did so over the issue of worship, and those who accepted Him, their overwhelming response was worship.

And finally, in the book of Revelation the worship of Jesus is the culmination of history. It's repeated over and over again...

(Notes)

"The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever! The 24 elders, who were seated before God on their thrones, fell facedown and worshiped God, saying: We thank You, Lord God, the Almighty, who is and who was, because You have taken your great power and have begun to reign."

Revelation 11:15-17

"Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, having the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth – to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He spoke with a loud voice: 'Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and spring of water.'" Revelation 14:6-7

"Lord, who will not fear and glorify Your name? Because You alone are holy, for all the nations will come and worship before You because Your righteous acts have been revealed.

Revelation 15:4

"Then the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying: Amen! Hallelujah! A voice came from the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His slaves, who fear Him, both small and great!"

Revelation 19:4-5

The message that God has given from before time began until the end of time, from Genesis to Revelation, the theme of the gospel, the theme of history...

The theme of eternity, is the real and true worship of the living God and His son Jesus Christ – something that representatives from all the peoples that God has made will enjoy together for all eternity.

(Slide)

“All the nations – and you made each one – will come and bow before you, Lord; they will praise your great and holy name.”

Psalm 86:9

One more note: worshiping God and His Son Jesus is something that every person ever created will do. Some, those who fail to accept Christ as their Savior and thus reject Christ and eternal salvation, will do so against their wills – and then experience the eternal judgment of damnation in hell.

The rest of us, those who believe by faith that Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried, rose from the dead and is coming again, will worship willingly in spirit and in truth – and we will experience the unimaginable glories of heaven for all eternity.

(Slide)

“Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who...humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death – even to death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow – of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth – and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:5, 8-11

Question: Where will you be when the saints of all the ages, when the people of God representing every people, nation, tribe and tongue, will be worshiping God together singing and proclaiming His praises in spirit and in truth?

(POINT TO WHITE BOARD) Remember this: It's about Worship, Saints!!!