

## Worshipping God in 2010

### Part 5

#### Introduction

- This morning we are continuing in our very worthwhile study on worship – and as we have been learning, worship is to be our highest priority – it's what we have been created for
- The psalmist said in **Psalm 73:25-28**, “Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works”
- Here is man who longed to worship God – God was his all, whether in this world or the next – and he saw it as good to draw near to God whom he had put his everlasting trust – and it was just as good to worship Him, or, as he says, to declare all His works
- Others since the psalmist wrote, and since the Bible wrote, have expressed their longing to worship God which, I think, is instructive to us – one such puritan wrote:

“My God, I feel it is heaven to please thee,  
and to be what thou wouldst have me be,  
O that I were holy as thou art holy,  
pure as Christ is pure,  
perfect as thy Spirit is perfect!  
These, I fell, are the best commands in thy Book,

and shall I break them? must I break them?  
am I under such a necessity as long as I live here?  
Woe, woe is me that I am a sinner,  
that I grieve this blessed God,  
who is infinite in goodness and grace!  
O, if he would punish me for my sins,  
it would not wound my heart so deep to offend him;  
But though I sin continually,  
he continually repeats his kindness to me.  
At times I fell I could bear any suffering,  
but how can I dishonour this glorious God?  
What shall I do to glorify and worship  
this and best of beings?  
O that I could consecrate my soul and body to his  
service,  
without restraint, for ever!  
O that I could give myself up to him, so as never more  
to attempt to be my own!  
or have any will or affections  
that are not perfectly conformed to his will  
and his love!  
But, alas, I cannot live and not sin.  
O may angels glorify him incessantly,  
and, if possible, prostrate themselves lower  
before the blessed King of heaven!  
I long to bear a part with them in ceaseless praise;  
But when I have done all I can to eternity  
I shall not be able to offer more than  
a small fraction of the homage  
that the glorious God deserves.  
Give me a heart full of divine, heavenly love.”

- Here we see from the psalmist and this humble Puritan hearts full of worship – the attention is full fixed on God in both His Person and works, in His glorious divine attributes, hearts full of praise, commitment to

this majestic God, and a recognition of unworthiness and sinfulness in light of the perfection of the blessed Trinity

- We have been studying the subject of worship from the Bible, a subject that permeates the book from cover to cover – and one of the motivations in our study is to gain an accurate understanding of worship
- Much of the church today, as we have documented in our previous studies has lost its bearings concerning the biblical mandate of worship – it's not that much of the church has ceased worshipping – it's that it has ceased worshipping in a biblical manner
- And we saw from the New Testament last week that the New Testament church is to take heed from the mistakes made by Israel concerning Israel's worship – from their beginning, Israel constantly fell into idolatry
- It's not that they abandoned the true God altogether – it's that they syncretized the true worship of Yahweh with the pagan cultures and religions around them, that is they mixed what God said about worshipping Him with what they were forbidden to do in worshipping other gods of their day
- This is what the church is told to avoid: syncretizing its worship with its culture, using whatever emotional and existential prompts and props to stimulate worship, rather than the pure Word of God – and the church has fallen into a syncretized worship simply because, like Israel, it has lost it's biblical bearings
- Very little, if any, of worship today in many churches is biblically directed – but as believers, we must constantly bring ourselves back to the Word of God to either affirm or readjust our practice of worship

*And in our study we have been asking the question, “How will we worship in 2010?” And we have said that . . .*

**I. First, we should worship with *the proper understanding***

- We need to first construct a working definition of worship from Scripture – and Scripture tells us that in our worship we are to attribute worthiness to God because of who He is and what He has done – worship is about the Great God of heaven, not about the little sinners on earth
- And the first truth we learn about worship is that it is:
- **#1: A bowing to the ground** – the primary word for worship in the New Testament is προσκυνεω, meaning “to bow to the ground” or “to prostrate oneself” – when we worship God, we bow our hearts before Him
- This is why the psalmist said in **Psalm 95:6**, “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker” – for the psalmist it was a literal bowing down – but more importantly, it was the attitude of his heart that was the most important element, and attitude of inferiority in the presence of a very superior Being
- But another truth we learned about worship is that it is . . .
- **#2: A religious service to God** – this is the word λατρευω, which means “to do service to God” – it’s used in **Romans 12:1** speaking of our religious service to God as Christians – the NASB says “present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your *spiritual service of worship*”

- Just as the Old Testament worshipers presented living sacrifices to the priest as an offering to God in religious service to Him, which was their highest calling, and just as the Levites literally presented themselves to God as living sacrifices for their whole lives, so we as Christians in the New Testament are to present ourselves to God as living sacrifices to Him
- And we also said that:
- **#1: Worship is *responsive*** – all worship in Scripture is a response to divine revelation – when we see God reveal Himself in Scripture or in history, we respond in worship, in attributing worthiness due to Him for His Person and works – but we also said that . . .
- **#2: Worship is *transcendent*** – it cannot be confined to a certain building or a specific time – rather it goes beyond those things to a habitual lifestyle of heart-service to God
- So a short definition would be this: *Worship is the true believer's response to the revelation of God*
- An expanded definition would be: *Worship is both a conscious event and a lifestyle where the true believer responds to the revelation of God in His person and works, bowing his heart to Him as His Lord and Master, attributing to Him His due worth because of who He is and what He has done, and serving Him acceptably*

*But beyond worshiping God with a proper biblical understanding . . .*

## **II. Second, we should worship with the *proper priority***

- Worship is to be the highest priority of every single created intelligent being – it should be:
- **#1: The priority of the world** – it was to be . . .
- **#2: The priority of Israel** – it’s to be . . .
- **#3: The priority of the church** it will be . . .
- **#4: The priority of the millennium** – and it is and will be forever . . .
- **#5: The priority of heaven** – and I showed you from Scripture these several priorities
- So for all created intelligent beings, worship is to be thee priority – it matters not whether a person is saved or not – as I mentioned a couple of times, Jesus even told Satan that his priority was to be the worship of God – He said to Satan in **Matthew 4:10**, “You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve”

*So we are to worship God with a proper biblical understanding and with the highest priority – but this week we want to look at . . .*

### **III. Third we should worship with *the proper elements***

- The Bible tells us that there are certain necessary elements to our worship – and there is no more comprehensive passage on the elements of true worship than John 4:20-24
- I think you know by now that one of my favorite passages in Scripture is the account of the Samaritan woman also known as the woman at the well – we are familiar with this portion of Scripture – but its review never tires me
- You remember that Jesus was having much success in His ministry early on – His ministry almost

immediately overshadowed that of John the Baptist, who himself had an overwhelmingly successful ministry

- But by divine design, Jesus' ministry was increasing and John's was decreasing – and when the religious authorities perceived that Jesus' ministry was becoming too successful, verses 1-3 say that Jesus left the southern portion of Judea and went north toward Galilee
- But verse 4 says that He “needed” to go through Samaria – this is John's way of telling us that Jesus was not forced out of the south by potential religious opposition but that it was God's plan all along for Jesus to go through Samaria at this exact time to rendezvous with an adulterous woman and save her
- And striking up a conversation with her, He did something culturally abhorrent:
  - **1) Jesus talked with a woman in public** – men in that day did not do that
  - **2) Jesus talked with a Samaritan** – in those days that Jews and Samaritans hated each other and would never have talked to each other even in the most desperate situations as Jesus points out in the account of the good Samaritan – but . . .
  - **3) Jesus talked with an adulterous** – this woman, according to verse 18 had already had 5 husbands and the man she was living with when Jesus came to Samaria she wasn't even married to – she had gone so far in her sin that she even broke the cultural protocol of marrying her sixth husband – she simply lived with him – but another culturally abhorrent item to be mentioned is . . .
  - **4) Jesus shared a vessel with a Samaritan** – He asked her for a drink, which was not allowed – this word for

“:have no dealings with” in verse 9 can mean “to share no dishes with” – this, according to a Jew, would render the one who drinks from the same vessel as a Samaritan unclean

- So Jesus breaks with all tradition, all protocol, and all perceived Jewish laws of uncleanness – and He offers the woman living water, the gift of salvation, which, if she accepts it, will last forever
- But she interprets this water to mean some kind of physical water, because she says in verse 15 that she doesn’t want to keep coming outside the city to this well to draw water anymore
- And its at this point that the conversation turns to worship – and this passage inserted in this historical account is probably the most comprehensive doctrinal teachings on worship in the Bible
- And Jesus tells the woman in verse 16, whom He has just convinced to have this living water, to go and call her husband, to which she replies in verse 17, “I have no husband”
- And after Jesus recounts to her her probably entire sinful past, telling her that she has is right in saying she has no husband, that she has had 5 husbands, and the one she is now living with is not even her husband, she immediately recognizes Jesus as a prophet of God, because He knew all bout her past, something only a prophet of God could know
- And from verse 20 through verse 24 we have Jesus’ comprehensive teaching on worship – and in this passage we are going to see 6 necessary elements that must be incorporated into true worship –and it’s going to take us a few weeks to go through these – but let’s begin with:



- **#1: True worship *desires purity*** – g
- **#2: True worship *transcends locality*** – p
- **#3: True worship *recognizes/embraces deity*** – g
- **#4: True worship *embraces sovereignty*** – l
- **#5: True worship *pursues spirituality*** – p
- **#6: True worship *commits to veracity*** – o

## **Conclusion**

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