

The Goal of Salvation

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] We're talking about how to worship the Lord or what constitutes true worship, I guess another way to put it.

We've been sitting at the feet of John as he records for us. I won't read it again today. We've got it memorized. As the woman at the well of Sychar in Samaria, we all pretty much know that the Samaritans were despised by most of the Jews.

I'm sure the disciples were confused because there were alternate routes they could have taken. The Lord said, I must go through Samaria because he had a divine encounter.

He's God. He knew that he had a divine encounter with this woman at the well of Sychar. We'll be talking more really about her next time, but mark some of this down in your mental files.

Properly worshiping the true God is the supreme activity of the human race in the universe.

[1:11] Scripture teaches, and this is an amazing passage, that the Father seeks true worshipers to worship him.

That's an amazing concept. It is at polar opposites with the imaginary human design systems of worship which proliferate around the world.

And in my travels, some 46 countries, I've been exposed to a lot of forms of worship that, I mean, you know they're not going anywhere.

If you look at human-designed religion, you find out the gods of imagination are always angry and unapproachable.

The Muslims who proliferate, they will never refer to God as Father. That's too intimate. Part of the beauty of Christianity, we can call God our Father.

[2:22] But they're always angry, they're always unapproachable. But the true God is described as a seeker. And the really dynamic thing about that concept is, we've gone through a period in recent church history, the seeker-friendly movement.

They're talking about, we're out seeking God, we're out doing this, we're seekers. The only seeker recorded in the Bible is God, the Trinity.

And God is seeking people to become his worshipers, to worship him in spirit and in truth.

And with that amazing concept in mind, we have been looking at the scriptures as they explain this concept of worship or true worship.

We live in a time when we have to add true to so many things, true church, true worship. We have already examined the reasons worship is so important.

[3:31] Scripture is filled with examples of worship. Destiny is marked by worship. Our destiny.

The eternal theme of redemption is worship. Now let's pretend we didn't know any of those. This fourth one will capture it all. Christ commands us to worship.

That says it all, doesn't it? So we have scripture, we have destiny, eternity, and Christ, all centered upon worship as a way of life for humanity.

And since God seeks true worshipers, I think we can sort of figure out from that that the very goal of salvation is worship.

Because he wants people saved that will then worship him and worship him for eternity. Now, you've got to memorize this fact.

[4:40] The goal of salvation is worship. That's how important it is. God redeems people so they will worship him.

You know, you ask people, why were you redeemed? Oh, to keep me out of hell. That's a byproduct. That's a byproduct. We have been redeemed so that we can worship God.

Paul has this to say in the second letter to the Corinthians. Second Corinthians 4.15. For all things, how many? For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more

people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

This grace is spreading. We've heard the example, you throw the rock in the pond and those ripples go for a long time. Even after we can't see them.

Well, the gospel was birthed in the holy lands and it's still rippling throughout the world. I promise you there were people saved today. And tomorrow there will be some people saved.

[5:59] Maybe not as many. Because God's looking for that last number, you know, that will be saved. But people were saved today. So grace is spreading to people that they may offer thanks to the glory of God.

Offering thanks for God's glory is engaging in an attitude of worship. You know, we tend to think, well, we can't worship until next Sunday, you know, or next Wednesday.

No, no. Thanking God that He has put His glory on display in Christ. That we see examples of His glory in the fingerprints of God in the heavens and in nature.

But that's an attitude of worship. Ascribing to God the credit for all that there is. Acceptable worship is a result of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

In other words, worship is centered upon the saving work of the Lord Jesus. Without that, we can't worship.

[7:13] And we won't worship. The Lord told us that He came to seek and to save the lost. And that really makes the passage in John come alive and makes it understandable.

The Father being a seeker. The Father seeks worshipers through the finished work of Christ. The Father seeks true worshipers.

And the Son seeks those whom He can save. That brings the two, the Father and the Son, together in a magnificent display of glory and power and sovereign love.

They're working together on this. And why wouldn't they? They've never worked apart. And there is a completeness of these two goals in the salvation of a human soul.

The Father seeks. The Son saves. Now add into the mix the Spirit of God revealing truth to those who are being saved.

[8:22] And you have a beautiful picture of the unity of the Godhead. All centered on worship of the triune God. In Psalm 22, just before the one we all memorized, Psalm 23, but both are Messianic Psalms.

In Psalm 22, David draws an inspired picture of the death of Christ. In it, a prophetic drama unfolds. Many of the verses of this psalm were direct references to Christ on the cross. I mean, the very first verse, which we talked about yesterday.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That is, of course, a reference to Christ's dying words from the cross. That verifies that He was indeed the Messiah, written about in Psalm 22, who came to die for His people.

From there through verse 21, we have a very detailed description of the crucifixion. And this was centuries before the mode of execution, that mode of execution was even known to the Hebrew people.

[9:43] The Romans introduced that form of execution to Israel, although it was practiced by pagan cultures surrounding Israel.

But, of course, the Old Testament law never called for crucifixion as a manner of death. And the Hebrews did not inflict crucifixion in capital cases.

The Bible called for stoning of those convicted of a capital offense. But there are many major crucifixion references in Psalm 22.

And they were fulfilled, every one of them, by Christ on the cross. They roared at Him like a lion when the accuser stood at the foot of the cross.

Verse 13, His bones were out of joint. And that typically occurs in a crucifixion. His tongue cleaved to His mouth from His great thirst.

[10:45] His hands and feet were pierced. They cast lots for His garments. That's all in Psalm 22. You need to go home at night and read that. And we could go on and on.

But beginning in verse 22, we see the reason for all this. I would tell of your name to my brethren. In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you.

You who fear the Lord, praise Him. All the descendants of Jacob, glorify Him. Stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.

For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, nor has He hidden His face from Him. But when He cried to Him for help, He heard. Everybody, that's worship.

Did you hear those praise? Glorify. Stand in awe. Well, that's all modes of worship. The psalmist goes on to reveal to us, by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, of course, that the work of Christ on the cross was done so that men would praise God.

[11:59] Praise, my brothers, is a high form of true worship. A sacrifice of praise. That's worshipping. The cross was intended to produce true worshipers, truly worshipping.

And then in verse 27 of Psalm 22, we read this. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before you.

So there we have a climax. It culminates in worship. Again, the goal of redemption, through the eternal blood of the Lamb of God, is worship.

And that's why when we get to heaven, it's going to be a heaven of worship. We've read many of those verses in Revelation. It is a time of worship.

We have another Old Testament passage concerning worship, this time in Exodus 19. So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words, which the Lord had commanded him.

[13:13] And the people answered together and said, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do. Everything he spoke.

This could be dubbed the greatest passage in the entire Bible on wishful thinking. Here, the Hebrew people arrogantly tell God that everything he commands them to do, they will do it, and God didn't believe it for one moment.

Now, I love to do a little paraphrase on this, and it is a paraphrase. You're not going to find this in King James. And it's not originally, I think I got it from M.R. Dahan, to be honest with you.

I mean, all good things I stole anyway, whether from MacArthur, Spro, Don, you know, the giants. But Moses, you know, goes up on the mountain and said, Lord, they'd like a set of rules.

If you'd give us some rules to live by. And the Lord says, Well, go back down, Moses, and tell those people. They don't know what they're asking for. They got no clue. See, it's my paraphrase.

[14:25] They don't know. So he goes down and tells the people. No, the Lord says, We're pretty ignorant on this point. We really don't want this. They say, You go back up there and tell God everything that He gives us, every word He has spoken to us as a command, we will do it all.

And Moses goes up, and he tells God that very thing. And that's biblical. He told them that. And then God says, Okay, Moses.

If they want to set a rule, I'll give them a set of rules to live by. Get off this mountain. Leave your shoes here. You're on holy ground. Well, take those shoes off. And get off this mountain.

And go down there. And you set up boundaries. And you tell the people, Don't approach that boundary and don't let an animal get loose. And approach it or I'll kill them.

I'll kill the animal. I'll kill the person. You tell them to abstain from physical relationships, to clean their bodies, and I will visit them in three days.

[15:38] And the Scriptures say there was thunder and lightning, and the people shook with fear. Well, you've got to remember something. Those very people had been for generations under the Abrahamic covenant of grace.

And now they're going to get a dose of law. Fellas, if you have to choose between grace and law, always vote for grace. Always vote for grace. I've had people tell me, I just want God's justice.

No, we don't. No, we don't. We want God's grace. We want His grace. The response to the Hebrews reminds me of a story by the late and really great Dr. J. Vernon McGee.

You had to love him. His first pastor was in Nashville. I may have told you this, but his first pastor was in Nashville. And he immediately came out of Dallas Theological and he immediately joined the Ministerial Alliance.

And it was being chaired by the local Episcopal Bishop of Nashville. And in Dr. McGee's first meeting, the bishop arrogantly announced that since Christ had fasted for 40 days, he, the bishop, said, I am now going to fast for the remainder of my life.

[16:59] I'm going to do better than Jesus. And he said, henceforth, I will reject all solid food. I will live only on water and fruit juice.

Now, you had to really know Dr. McGee and listen to him for years to understand the very dry humor he has had. I'm sure he's still funny in heaven. And only he could do this.

I do it on radio. But there's this, what I would call this pregnant pause. And then Dr. McGee says, when he collapsed, and I just started laughing at the radio, this guy keels over, didn't die. They got him to a hospital, put a bunch of fluid and blood in him, you know. But he says, when he collapsed, God didn't believe that Episcopal brother and he didn't believe the Hebrews either. God knew that the Hebrews would never be able to approach him on the basis of their law keeping. Any more than we can approach him today on the basis of our good works or righteous living. [18:08] Fellas, if you're laboring under the assumption you're fulfilling the law yourself, remember, we can't fulfill the greatest commandment. For one second. To love God with all.

We've never done that. No one has ever approached God on the basis of self-righteousness. No one has ever had clean hands and a pure heart by which, on the basis of that, they were able to draw near to God.

And again, that greatest commandment is to love God with everything we have. Every human violates that commandment at any given moment during his or her life. I first heard that from Dr. Sproul and he said, we live in continual need for a Savior.

Because we live in continual sin. We're not fulfilling the greatest commandment. We have never and will never achieve total love in this life. It will come, but not in this life.

Now, having given them the covenant God then brings the Hebrews to Exodus 20. Then the Lord said to Moses, Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, You yourselves have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven.

[19:26] You shall not make other gods besides me. Gods of silver or gods of gold. You shall not make for yourselves. You shall make an altar of earth for me and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen.

In every place where I cause my name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. If you make an altar of stone for me, you shall not build it of cut stones. For if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it.

And you shall not go up by steps to my altar so that your nakedness will not be exposed.

Remember that part that says, don't make any gods of gold. What did they do a few days later?

Made the golden calf. Aaron had a perfect explanation when Moses asked him, he says, You know, we melted that gold and that calf came out. Like our guy, we were interviewing one time, he killed some people and he said, Well, there was this shotgun just appeared and it went off.

Well, yeah, you were aiming it at people. Now, what is the point of all that? Men have no right of access to worship God on their own.

[20:42] Try as they might, in the world's religions, they have no right of access. They can't keep his law for a moment. We've seen that. So God has established an altar where men and women can go and worship to properly worship.

The people had to bring to that altar sacrifices. And we're talking the Old Covenant. God was revealing to the Hebrew people and through them to the world that the basis of true worship was sacrifice.

Such sacrifices made communion possible between God and man. But what did those sacrifices in the Old Testament point to? Christ.

It's Christ. And if what I've just said is true, and it is, it stands to reason that an ultimate and eternal sacrifice made possible ultimate and eternal communion with God.

All of the sacrificial system pointed to Christ. The Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world. Christ crucified is the basis of true worship.

[22:02] Christ crucified. No one, regardless of his or her good intentions, can worship the Father acceptably apart from the crucified Savior of the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ. I had people tell me, I don't believe in Jesus, but I do believe in God. How does that work? It doesn't. Worship is always an issue of salvation.

Only the saved can worship God in spirit and in truth. The very basis of worship is sacrifice. Now, Isaiah saw this clearly.

For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before me, declares the Lord, so your offspring and your name will endure, and it shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before me, says the Lord.

You know, there's a flow in the book of Isaiah, the fifth gospel, by the way, it's often referred to as. It starts with judgment. It then reveals the coming of the Messiah.

[23 : 12] It culminates in eternal worship in the eternity of eternities. The coming of Messiah produces true worshipers for all eternity.

For all eternity. Now, back in the New Testament, Paul had this to say in the first letter to the Corinthian church.

Most of us associate the 14th chapter with the role of tongues in the early church. But in 1423, therefore, if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?

People will say, look at that and say you've lost your mind. I had experience with that. We had a music guy here that formed a charismatic church. Many of us know his name. And my neighbor, a country boy, he came in and he knocked on my door about 8.30 when he came to the back door. Scared me to death. Almost shot him. And I saw who it was. I go out there and he said, man, I got some questions. I got some questions. His eyes were about that big. He visited that church Friday night.

[24 : 27] And they put on quite a show, I guess. And he said, all I heard were these people were speaking gibberish and the pastor's wife was pirouetting like a ballerina all around.

And I said, why did you go there? Why did you go there? Paul then tells us how to reach an unsaved man. Again, Corinthians, next verse.

But if all prophecy and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all. Now the word prophecy there is not foretelling as in a sense of the end times.

That's preaching. You want to reach an unsaved man? Give him the word of God. And do it like we do it verse by verse.

Expository preaching. John MacArthur, I said, you know, teaching the world one verse at a time. He's got that copyrighted.

[25 : 29] When you give a man scriptural truth, look what happens next verse. The secrets of the heart are disclosed and so he will fall on his face and worship God.

There we go. Declaring that God is certainly among us. When we give them scripture, they read it, they understand it through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Then, they fall on their face and worship God. Hearing the word of God, the man is convicted by his sins that he thought he was keeping secret.

This deep look inward leads to conviction causing him to fall down and enter into true worship.

Those who do that have been brought to true conversion.

How do you know if someone's truly saved, they will worship God? worship God. Worship is the goal of evangelism and the result of it.

[26 : 34] Well, that amount in your head for a little bit. We engage in the joy of worship and desire that others experience that.

That's what evangelism is. Hey, come here. We want to show you how to worship the true God, the living God. We'll get together. He'll even come visit us. You won't see him in the physical form, but you'll see him in the faces of the saved people.

And therefore, we tell others about Christ who then begin to worship him. You see that as a circle? We replicate ourselves.

We replicate. Listen to this great truth recorded by Paul in Philippians. It is there that he defined who Christians are.

Christians are those who worship God in the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

[27 : 41] Philippians 3.3 Who are Christians? They worship, they glorify, and they put no confidence in the flesh. That is a true Christian. He is one who worships God in the spirit.

He glorifies Christ, and he knows he doesn't have a single reason to put confidence in his flesh. I was in New York City with a good friend of mine, FBI agent, and we were having lunch and talking theology, and he was a good Methodist boy and active, and I said, what's your, you know, I was talking to him about grace, and he said, well, I believe you're saved by grace, but you're kept by works.

I said, well, how are you doing? He said, not too good, but I'm going to do better next week. Next week never comes, does it? Next week never comes.

The key that opens the door to true worship is salvation found only in Christ. Worship is so important. You know, how important is it?

The Father seeks. The Father's not sitting on a throne slumbering with a big gray beard hoping that someone will get saved today, and if they didn't, it says, well, son, no one got saved today, just rolls their hand, maybe tomorrow.

[29:00] That's not the true God. God is seeking worshipers through redemption that is found only in Christ.

Any true believer who does not worship properly is denying the very object for which they were redeemed. Our worship is not some peripheral issue, guys.

It is the very core of our status as the redeemed of the Lord. It's what it's all about. Well, this is, I think, our tenth lesson in our journey through true worship.

And, finally, in only ten lessons, we've actually now come, next time, to the actual conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well.

We haven't talked about that, and we're going to talk about that, and there's a whole lot to learn about their exchange. It's a typical, it's almost bottomless.

[30:02] You read it, and reread it, and you pick up something all the time. We can learn a lot between the conversation between Jesus and this, how do we put it, loose woman.

Jesus knew intimately the worship habits of the Samaritan people, and he's going to have a lot to say about it. Of course, he knew intimately the worship of the Jews.

He's going to have some stuff to say about that too. Now, suppose, as we close this out, just for a moment, that Christ came physically back to this earth and examined the worship habits of every church.

He traveled throughout the land, throughout the world, and looked at their worship habits. What do you suppose he would say with a lot of churches today, with a majority perhaps of churches?

So let me bring that a little closer to the home. Give me something to think about. What would Jesus say about the worship at Highland Park Baptist Church?

[31:15] That's for you to ponder, you to answer in your own heart. What would he say about your worship? What would he say about our corporate worship? Next time, we may get in some insight into that, as we're going to examine in even more greater detail Christ and the woman at the well.

Thank you. Thank you.