

The Father Is Seeking Such

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[0:00] Well, good news, this is lesson 5 on how to worship the Lord and I finally got to my text.

So we can leave the introduction now behind and move into the heart of our lesson. But if we're going to truly and accurately and acceptably worship the Lord, then we've come to a section of Scripture tonight, and we'll be there several Mondays, that we're going to have to deal with.

Found in John's Gospel, I'm sure most of you know where I'm headed right now, and that's John chapter 4, verses 20 to 24.

That is the conversation the Lord had with the woman at the well of Sychar. Let me read that to you in John 4, starting in verse 20.

This is actually the woman speaking, the woman of Sychar. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people, that's the Jews, she called Jesus you people, say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

[1:25] Jesus said to her, woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For such people the Father seeks to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.

The word worship appears in that passage in various forms about eight times.

And if we're going to understand what it means to be involved in true worship, that's what we've been talking about, although we've been hitting kind of the private side, haven't we, the closet.

[2:40] We're going to branch out now into some of the more public forms of worship. But if we're going to be involved in true worship, we've got to do business with this passage of Scripture.

This was really the defining moment in the Lord's earthly ministry concerning worship. You know, we come to church, maybe Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Monday, or Wednesday, and we've come to what is commonly referred to as the fellowship of worship.

We sometimes might refer to the church as the worship center. I hear that more and more. Not necessarily here, but other places. Don comes to lead us, lead the church in worship, corporate worship, collective worship.

We're looking for a worship leader, I guess. Jonathan was our worship leader. And some of this is going to be repetitive, redundant or whatever, but the primary problem with the church in the 21st century is that people attend different churches with the wrong motive.

And we've talked about this before, and it's real important. Many people, and you know, I hate to maybe be so dogmatic, but maybe the majority of people today, in our day, come to church to see and actually expecting that they're going to get something out of it.

[4:14] Well, let's go down there and see, you know, how the music is, and how the nursery is, and how, you know, all this other stuff. I heard a preacher yesterday from First Baptist Dallas, and he read a survey, and I wish I had a copy of it, but what was the most important thing, the ten most important things where you choose to worship?

Number one on the list was parking. Is there adequate parking close in? And number six on the list was, does the preacher give a good lesson, a message?

He was number six. I don't know what the whole ten was. I'd like to find out. People come because they want to get something out of the music, they want to get something out of the preaching, and especially they will come, if we're Baptists, if there's a meal involved.

People will show up afterwards, with a meal afterwards. So people largely come expecting to receive something, and there's a lot of people, and I'm thinking mentally back over 37 years in this

church, a lot of people that have left because they didn't feel like they got enough out of the church, or out of the worship, or out of the music, or out of the preaching, or whatever, and they just didn't hang around very long.

And they will go to another church expecting it to get better, and usually it's not, and then they go to another one, and it's bounce around. I had a friend here, he's dead, I won't say he's with the Lord, but he's dead.

[5 : 50] But he had attended eight churches in this town in 30 plus years. But he wasn't happy with any of them. He died, he hadn't been to church for three or four years when he died. He just said, then I'm going to teach what I want.

But remember that, and regardless of what has gone before or comes after, remember this, worship is not a giving.

Worship is a giving. We give worship to the Lord. When I say that, and we'll probably expand on this later, but when we do it the proper way, we receive back, don't we?

A thousandfold. But worship itself is to be a giving experience. We come to offer to God something that He desires, something that is honoring to Him, and worship is a giving experience.

And you know, if we haven't given Sunday morning, Sunday night, Monday night, Wednesday night, in our closet, then we really haven't worshipped. We haven't worshipped.

[7 : 08] Now, when we say worship, what do we mean? And we've covered this before. Worship is honor paid to a superior being.

That's what worship is. It means to pay homage, give honor, reverence, respect, adoration, praise, and glory to a superior being.

It comes from a Greek word that literally means to kiss toward. To kiss toward. The imagery is bowing down and kissing the hand of a superior.

When we bow down in worship, literally or figuratively, we are giving of ourselves, giving our hearts, giving even of our possessions to the Lord.

There is a portrait of this, and it's a little difficult. I'm going to mispronounce the words. I'm not Don Coleman. I can't pronounce these complex words. Then the Lord said to Moses, take for yourself spices, doctee, oink, and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense.

[8 : 24] There shall be an equal part of each. With it you shall make incense a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. You shall beat some of it very fine and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting.

That's the tabernacle where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves.

This is incense made for the Lord in worship. It shall be holy to you for the Lord. Whoever shall make any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people.

Normally in Hebrew, the word cut off means killed. Since this is a recipe from the Word of God for perfume, I think we can conclude, one, it had a very lovely fragrance.

A very special fragrance. It was a perfume designed by God to be offered during worship by the Hebrews and it was for his nostril.

[9 : 35] The smell was unique to him. And it wasn't to be tampered with. You didn't set a little, keep a little with you to give to your wife on Valentine's Day.

Didn't do that. This was a picture, beautiful picture of Old Testament worship. True worship, our worship in the New Testament era rises to God just as did this fragrance which was holy to him.

To be true worship, it is to be unique, separated, sanctified, and holy. It rises from our hearts into the very nostrils of God.

And let me again show you an expression of worship this time found in the New Testament, John 12. Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover came to Bethany where Lazarus was.

And this is after Jesus had raised him from the dead. So they made him a supper there and Martha was serving but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with him.

[10 : 43] Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

And then that superhero, Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples who was intending to betray him, said, why was this perfume not sold for 300 denarii and given to poor people?

Now he said this not because he was concerned about the poor but because he was a thief and he had the money box he used to pilfer what was put into it.

Therefore, Jesus said, let her alone so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For you always have the poor with you but you do not always have me.

And the Bible tells us, you know, elsewhere that the glory of a woman is her hair. Mary took that which was her glory as defined by Scripture and offered it to the Lord.

[11:58] And interestingly, those who washed others were considered to be the most menial of slaves. The foot washing which Christ did. That was reserved for the lowest of the low slaves.

The lowest of the low. She uses that she uses that which is her glory to wash that which is typically dirtiest on a person.

Your hair. I tried not to look at over here because some of you don't have any. I don't have very much. You ever been around somebody with dreadlocks? I had to move.

I was at the chapel service at Wesleyan one time. I wasn't a reflection on the young man. I'm sure he's a great Christian young man but I'm sorry. You've got to bathe around. There's a lesson here. True worship can be very humbling even humiliating on what we have to deal with before the Lord. We have to humble ourselves.

[12:57] And we note that the ointment Jesus is talking about here was very costly. That was actually the cost was a year's wage. For me it would be like \$20,000.

For David \$400,000 or \$500,000. You know radio man. The actual cost was a year's wage. True worship can be costly. Christ was not receiving welfare.

He was receiving a glorious offering that was both costly and humbling to offer. And we know of course from that story we've talked about that Martha was she was busy working while Mary was busy worshipping.

The church has really become a group of Marthas. And we need to be a group of Marys. We really do. We need to be those who sit at the feet of Jesus and worship Him.

And I think we're becoming far too busy to take time to legitimately worship the Lord. And when we are too busy to do something correctly then we will do it carelessly or even indifferently.

[14:04] One thing that may be helpful is to contrast ministry with worship. Often I think we're guilty of confusing or even mixing the two.

Ministry is that which comes down to us from God. It flows from the Father through the Son is energized by the Spirit who has equipped every true believer with certain spiritual gifts by which he or she ministers to others.

worship travels in the other direction. Worship begins with us but the power of the Holy Spirit flows to and through the Son to the Father. So we see that pipeline.

Probably the most important statement I will make maybe tonight or even in the series is this. God seeks acceptable true spiritual worship.

God seeks. and you know it's interesting the last few years we've gone through all these movements in church particularly in the West in the United States and in the West and one of those we went through the seeker movement interesting term people are out seeking they're seeking what church to go to and they're seeking this and that.

[15:21] there's one seeker in the Bible and it's God God's the seeker every word in that sentence is vitally important to us God is seeking what does that mean?

Mull that over in your heads it is God who is seeking people to engage in true worship again the woman the well talking to Jesus Jesus talking back to her when he said but an hour is coming and now is this is the hour woman which was a nice term lady this is the hour when true worshipers will worship the father in spirit and truth for such people the father seeks to be his worshiper there's the seeker and I don't think that hour has left us I think it's still with us though 2000 years later if God is seeking after true worshipers then we need to ask ourselves a question don't we are we true worshipers look inward don't look at that answer that's inward inspection of your heart do we truly worship

God is worship our ultimate priority in life do we come faithfully and frequently with a heartfelt commitment to worship the living God do we do that corporately in the church it's available Sunday twice Monday Wednesday other times do we do it in our closet we've talked about that for four weeks the psalmist used a phrase for worship that does not make it into the English translation is your heart boiling over with worship that's psalm 45 is your heart boiling over with worship worship is a heart so warmed by the presence of God that it boils over true worship boils over in praise and adoration just think about boiling pot it basically it's going to boil over let me give you an important

thought the importance of worship how important is true worship and I think we need to lay hold of this concept because we're going to go from here in the next few weeks concerning the importance of worship we're not supposed to be indifferent at this point we need to really have our consciousness seared with the theme of the importance of worship and let me give you some reasons for the importance of worship and none of these are original with me

I know that is going to shock some of you scripture demands true worship all of life is affected by true worship true worship is the major theme of redemptive history we were saved to be what worship worshipping creatures and then the fourth one true worship is commanded with the start and finish it's demanded and commanded and the first reason we shall cover is the fact that scripture demands our worship I think we read frequently in the word of God about worship we've been doing that for four weeks the theme of worship permeates the Bible Old and New Testament I mean go read Leviticus don't do it in bed with the body you'll get a nose blade but Leviticus is amazing it's a phenomenal book read that and you know I tell people the God which the Jews approached in worship so cautiously!

[19:31] I mean the high priest they even tied a rope on him if he made a mistake and God killed him in the tabernacle in the temple they reeled him out like a fish they couldn't go in after him they came with this reverent awesome fear now we don't approach the throne of grace like that do we we don't but the God we approach is the same God he's just as holy just as awesome and to be feared which for the believer is reverential trust but he hasn't compromised his holiness we don't come cringing in fear we come as children coming into the presence of his father you know my dad died in 2000 I never feared my dad or mom probably sometimes I should have but I never did I never feared them when I left home for good and my dad called me in with tears in his eyes he said son I don't know why I'm adding this son if you ever get in trouble you come to me you come to me he said

I don't care what it is I don't care if you've gotten on drugs you come to me if you've murdered somebody you come to me my heart and my door are always open to you the bible has worship everywhere the book of psalms is a book entirely devoted to worship we can look elsewhere and see God designing plans for worship listen to this this is the book of exodus all the way back this is Moses is writing the Pentateuch exodus 20 I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery you shall have no other gods before me you shall not make yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth you shall not worship them or serve them for I the Lord your God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children on the third and fourth generations of those who hate me but showing loving kindness to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments that's a command to worship the true God right out of the Old Testament very similar to Exodus 34 14 for you shall not worship any other God for the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God I think we can conclude that worship is obviously a priority first because God commands it he commands it when the rich ruler came to Jesus and asked what's the greatest commandment Jesus responded by saying love the Lord thy God with all thy heart soul mind and strength that is ultimate worship have we ever achieved that all no but it's not to perfection it's to be the direction of our life in this life obeying the first commandment is our ultimate priority that is why humans exist in the first place we exist when we were made to worship the living

God and we gain a sense of the priority of worship when we consider the importance of God having a place where men could worship in the Bible God described creation in 31 verses creation of the universe he described the creation of the uncountable stars and galaxies hundreds of billions of them we don't know how many actually in three words we say five because the Bible says in Genesis he made the stars also but in the Hebrew it says he made stars five words to describe the construction of the tabernacle a temporary place of worship made of animal skins God used 243 verses why that's where they're going to worship him for a few generations before they build the temple in Jerusalem 243 verses devoted to the construction of a temporary place of worship five words to tell us about the creation of all the stars the billions upon billions of stars in those verses by the way concerning the tabernacle he gave very specific details and measurements and furnishings so the people could worship him in spirit and in truth

God is deeply concerned with worship the tabernacle was built for worship and you know if you've ever seen drawings of that thing it wasn't particularly a pretty structure that wasn't God's focus it was what went on inside that was important and there's a principle here not all of us are attractive

some less than others I might say I won't look at anybody but what matters to God is what goes on inside of us that's what matters inside the tabernacle was a holy place inside the holy place was the holy of holies dare I say this I think the ultimate closet you know what guys we got the holy of holies walking around with us as believers the holy of holies was a perfect cube inside this cube was the ark of the covenant on top of the ark was the mercy seat once a year on the day of atonement the high priest would enter this area sprinkle blood on the ark for the atonement of the people on the mercy seat dwelt the shekinah of god

[26:05] I said the shekinah glory of god that's like saying glory glory of god the shekinah of god that is where the tabernacle received its name god tabernacled inside there remember that passage where it was in john where it says and it jesus took upon himself human flesh i'm told in a greek language he said he came and he tabernacled with us that's what he did well god in the old testament tabernacled in there it is where god met with his people to receive worship i would suggest to you the person in that old testament tabernacle was the second person of the trinity they knew god was there why they could see his shekinah they could see the glory emanating outward god provided for the people a place to worship we see the priority of worship in the seraphim and we talked about them the seraphim as they flew in the throne room of god isaiah saw that and reported he said these beings these seraphim they had six sets of wings i mean try to fathom that with two they covered their face so that they would not look upon the lord's holy glory with two they covered their feet because they were in the holy presence of god and when god second person of the trinity in the burning bush told moses take off your shoes you're on holy ground when i taught romans in here i took off my shoes i taught it barefoot all sixteen chapters we were on holy ground i said with two they covered their face so they would not look upon his holy glory covered their feet because they're in the presence of a holy god and then with two they flew about the throne let me tell you something two-thirds of their wings were devoted to the priority of worship two-thirds of that the book of romans is a book of worship for eleven chapters paul prepares us for worship by describing in detail the deep doctrinal truths of the bible of the lord and after those eleven chapters of doctrine this is what the holy spirit said through paul romans 12:1 therefore now remember always figure out what the word is therefore it's what preceded it therefore based on what i've just told you for eleven chapters i urge you brethren by the mercies of god to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to god which is your spiritual service of worship and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of god is that which is good and acceptable and perfect well after learning the great doctrines of god we're to break out in spiritual worship peter understood this first peter 2:5 you also as living stones what kind of stones living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to god through jesus christ we have been made for spiritual sacrifices and that comes through spiritual worship that's what we've been made for

worship is the very core of our being eternity is determined by how we worship you realize that a billion 200 million people worship by bowing toward a rock in mecca i've always suggested to my muslim friends you guys are worship and created things that rock was created by the living god and you could pick the world's religions whether buddhism hinduism just go down the isms go down the isms eternity is determined by how we worship there are two kinds of worship that we can offer to god we can offer acceptable worship that is pleasing to him or we can offer unacceptable worship that is not pleasing to them i don't think there's any other middle ground here either our worship is acceptable or it's unacceptable the vast majority of the world offers unacceptable worship that is not pleasing to god god does not accept most worship that is offered to him he didn't accept a lot of worship that's offered to churches anymore he just doesn't having said that most worship offered today is not acceptable god i'm going to close on that cheery note and we're going to pick it up there next time and as jaymer mcgee said until next time may god richly bless you my beloved you Thank you.