

How to Worship the Lord (Part 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 January 2016

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] We began last week with a series of lessons.

Don't know how long will go, but how to worship the Lord! I've been reading ahead and thinking what direction. I'm actually excited for this.

But we're going to experience some great things. Not because of me. In spite of me. But you know at one time, every Baptist man and woman and child knew the name Hudson Taylor.

Within the evangelical world, and especially among Baptists, Taylor was revered. And he, along with a handful of others, were considered the fathers of modern missions.

They laid the groundwork. He ministered for decades in China, giving his life to the service of the Lord.

[1:21] There was a key to Hudson Taylor's success as a missionary in China.

And he was in China in the rough days. These were tough times. That key was revealed by his daughter-in-law, who wrote a two-volume history of Taylor's missionary work in China.

And this is what she had to say. The sun never rose over China that did not find Hudson Taylor on his knees worshipping God.

And that was not written as a metaphor. An expression of something a little different.

Meaning, that was what it was. She was telling the truth. Hudson Taylor worshipped God on his knees every morning of his service in China.

[2:30] By the way, Hudson Taylor served as a missionary to China for 18,655 days.

I did the math. 51 years. There was one morning, the sun rose and he wasn't worshipping. He was on his deathbed and he died about 10 o'clock that morning.

As far as we know, that's the only morning that he did spend on his knees. Hudson Taylor's life was an expression of his love for the Lord.

And because of his love for the Lord, he had a desire to be in constant communication with God through worship.

He was a man of prayer. And you've heard this before, you'll hear it again. Prayer is a form of worship.

[3:37] When we are praying to the Father, to the Son, we're a little hesitant to say to the Holy Spirit because it's been so abused, but the triune God.

We are worshipping. But let me tell you, there's a key here. In my readings, which go back months and Christmas time over in the Ozarks, we were over there and I had a lot of opportunities to read and study and reflect and worship.

Pray. Pray. I think there's a key here that unlocks the door of Hudson Taylor's life of worship.

And I've really become convinced of this. For Hudson Taylor, for me, for everyone in this room that bears the name of Christ. And that is, he spent time alone with God.

And I think that's vital. That is vital. Whatever you do, please mark that truth down in your mental file and refer to it often.

[4:59] But, we're going to see some other people tonight and in the future. And the common denominator was they spent time alone with God.

If we fail to grasp that very vital point as we work through how to worship the Lord, we're going to think Paul used this metaphor of a boxer swinging in the air at an imaginary target, but striking nothing.

So, for emphasis, let me repeat, the key to our worship of the Lord is to spend time alone with Him every day.

Spend time alone with Him. I told the Lord I wanted to spend time alone with Him. I didn't know that many. He was going to start waking me up before 6 o'clock in the morning. I'm not an early riser.

I can stay up late. I mean, there's nights I'm up until 9, 30, 10 o'clock. But, being alone with God, if you study the lives of the great missionaries, was their hallmark.

[6:16] William Carey. Robert Thomas, who ministered to ancient Korea before it was Korea. John J. Patton.

He was missionary to the cannibals at the South Seas of the Pacific. Adoniram Judson, who was a missionary to Burma, and so many others. They spent time alone with the Lord every day. Every single day. I quoted, I think, last week Martin Luther, who said, I've got so much to do today, I won't be able to get it in without three hours of prayer. There was another man, and probably someone that most of us in here are somewhat familiar with.

His name was Dr. A.W. Tozer. He has left us a treasure trove of knowledge concerning our relationship with God.

Volumes have been written. They still write them, and they put his name on them, but they're just taking some of his sermons and putting them different places and come out with a new book. He's long, long gone from the scene.

[7:29] Died, I think, in the late 60s. Dr. Tozer ministered in Chicago, and he spoke with a freshness that penetrated many hearts.

He said often, ministering in Chicago is tough because Chicago is a vile place. He said that in the 50s. It ain't got any better. It hadn't gotten any better. But he spoke with a freshness, and it was a penetrating way that he ministered and he preached.

One day, a young pastor approached the great minister and asked if there would ever be a time when they could visit with him and perhaps even have a word of prayer with him.

Well, by now, Dr. Tozer was getting up in years, and he said, absolutely. You could do that any day of the week. He said, if you ever want to have prayer with me, you will find me on the shore of Lake Michigan.

I told him precisely where he would be at at 5.30 a.m. Just make your way down. I'll be down there and join me.

[8:48] Well, one morning, the young pastor was so troubled that he remembered Dr. Tozer's kind invitation and he went to the lake. He made his way down to the shoreline, but he didn't arrive at 5.30 a.m.

He arrived at 6 a.m. and he spotted Dr. Tozer flying prostrate on the sand worshipping God.

A young pastor years later wrote, he said, I just couldn't bring myself to disturb Dr. Tozer and his time with the Lord that morning.

So he didn't fulfill his wish. And I'm sure Dr. Tozer would have been delighted to have him join him, but he just didn't want to bother the gentleman. The key to the success of A.W. Tozer, and let me suggest he's still successful, even though he's been dead now for 60 plus years, was the time he spent alone with the Lord.

Much of his ministry was spent instructing men and women on the necessity of genuine worship, which Dr. Tozer called the missing jewel in the crown of the church.

[10:22] Today, sometimes he's referred to as a prophet, and I don't think they mean that in the Old Testament sense, obviously. But he foresaw things that were going to infect and impact the church, much like Dr. Schaeffer did a few decades later.

And both of them wrote about it before they died. And much of it has come true. And if the jewel of the church was genuine worship, and it was missing in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Dr.

Tozer's life, where are we at today in 2016?

Where are we at? As members of the true church, the body of Christ, we are called to be worshipers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are to worship Him. And we will have much to say about the collective, corporate worship that is supposed to go on inside this building when the church meets Sunday morning, Sunday night, Monday night, Wednesday night.

We're going to have a lot to say about that, but not tonight. We'll get to that. We're going to be talking about individual worship for a few weeks. I do want to remind us that the Lord Jesus taught on prayer.

[12:02] Again, prayer is a form of worship. And we are to heed His words of instruction to us. And I want you to listen to the first lesson Christ taught the church on prayer.

And I did this in the, kind of the old King James. I mean, if King James is good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for us, right? Matthew 6.6 I've actually heard old-timers, stem-winders say only King James, you know.

They've used that. It's good enough for Paul. It's good enough for us. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet. And when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

There we have the God and Creator of the universe. God who cannot lie. The second person of the Trinity.

Very God of very God who took upon Himself human flesh, but never ceased to be God. He wasn't 50-50, God-man.

[13:17] He was 100% God, 100% man. And He tells us, when you pray, go into your closet, shut the door, and meet with the Father in secret.

And the Father will be there. And I would submit the Son will be there and the Spirit will be there. the one true God in three persons. Explain that in 25 words or less.

And He will see everything that goes on in your closet and reward you openly. He will see and hear. Now the Lord has just given us a key to worship.

And the first thing you must do is get alone with the Lord. Get alone with Him. Go to a place with no distractions.

Should we communicate with the Lord in a closet? Sure. Absolutely. Because that would be a place where we can be alone with the Lord.

[14:30] But it doesn't have to be where you hang your clothes or where you throw them if they're like someone I know very well. Your closet might be a room.

A room in your house that you set aside and your spouse understands what's going on in there. It may be a barn.

I wish my old barn was still standing a tornado hit it and didn't even dent it but the insurance company made me tear it down because they paid me for it. A barn can be your closet. A forest can be your closet.

Don't be solely focused on a place where clothes are hung. Although that could be your closet. A closet is some place where you can be alone with the Lord.

James and I were talking yesterday about praying when you travel you do 10 hour trips especially when you go to New Mexico and how he what a great time of prayer.

[15:36] I used to travel as a foreign arts investigator. Great times of prayer. When Jesus spoke these words to his largely Jewish audience there was no doubt they could conjure up an image church of the Holy of Holies.

They'd been under the Old Testament for 1600 years. The Holy of Holies was the place where once a year on the Day of Atonement the earthly high priest met with God and made a temporary blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of people's sins.

This was the earthly high priest going into his closet and he went in there on behalf of himself on behalf of his family and on behalf of the people of Israel.

If we really read Leviticus closely he had to make atonement for himself he had to make atonement for his family and then he could atone for the people. It was there that blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat.

And you can read about that in Leviticus especially chapter 16. So our lesson is this we come to the Lord alone and in secret there to commune with God on the basis of a blood sprinkled mercy seat.

[17:23] That's the basis of even approaching God. Like the high priest of the Old Testament we too commune with God on the basis of a mercy seat but ours is not temporal it is eternal.

Our mercy seat is Jesus Christ. That's the mercy seat. He was the Lamb of God slaughtered so his blood could be applied to the heavenly mercy seat.

The great reformer Martin Luther had this to say it seems to me but yesterday that Jesus died.

Wow. Meditate on that tonight in your closet. It seems like Jesus only died yesterday. That thought probably went a long way as the key to Luther's fearless challenge to the church at Rome.

we weren't there for that. I don't think we can appreciate that in our day. The battle he was fighting.

He was conscious that when he walked and lived in the presence of the Lamb of God who had been slain for him for he knew what was to come by the blood of Jesus and to meditate upon the slain Lamb of God.

[19 : 02] He understood what that meant. he was going before the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

When we worshipped yesterday at this church were we conscious that we had entered into the holiest place the very presence of God by the blood of Jesus to commune with him on the basis of a blood sprinkled mercy seat?

Were we really aware of that? Because my goal is if we weren't when we're through with this we're going to be aware of it when we walk into that sanctuary there to meet with God.

Don't think of the mercy seat as a piece of furniture inside the throne room of God the mercy seat of which I speak is Christ himself whose blood gives us access.

The Father sees the blood and he is satisfied. He's applied to our hearts and to our lives. I really believe if we can somehow get a hold of these thoughts in terms of our quiet time with the Lord in our closet.

[20 : 35] I believe our worship both privately and then corporately through the church will be revolutionized.

I really believe that. I'm going to make a few suggestions for your new quiet time. That's pretty bold isn't it?

First of all leave your watch outside. Don't be a clock watcher. Leave your watch outside.

Don't enter into the Holy of Holies with the Lord present with the attitude I hope I can spare him ten minutes today.

We're talking about the God of the universe. Instead go into your closet whatever your closet is.

When you get in there another suggestion be quiet.

[21 : 43] Just be quiet. Meditate on the fact that you have entered into the presence of the Lamb of God and that you were there to worship him.

Meditate on that. Also come to the realization that your time spent there, your quiet time, is a gift for the Lord.

You are presenting him a gift. You're not there to receive something from the Lord as much as you are there to give something to the Lord.

In my life at this church, and I know I speak for several in this room, I have experienced over 37 years now dozens of people telling me they were leaving this church because they're just not getting anything out of it.

This happened a few months ago. We don't go to church to receive. Worship is not a receiving, it is a giving.

[23 : 06] We go to church to give. We go to our closet to give. worship is a giving to a superior being that which he is due.

Simply because he is our superior being. People who tell me they are leaving because they are not getting anything out of the worship service don't have a clue what worship is.

And I'm not trying to be personal to anybody in here. I've got them in my own family. And it's breaking my wife and I's heart. Look to some of God's people that served him faithfully.

Look to them. King David has one central desire. I say has, he's still alive.

still has the same desire. That hasn't gone away. And this was the great thing that pushed him onward.

[24 : 22] And I think especially after his genuine repentance, you can read about the first psalm concerning Bathsheba and her husband.

He expressed this one thing in the 27th psalm. One thing I have desired of the Lord that I will seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire, and that's an interesting word in Hebrew, meditate and worship in his temple.

That's what he desired. He wanted to spend eternity with the Lord in the heavenly temple meditating and worshiping.

And that should be all of our desires. There we have in one verse Psalm 27 4 the desire of David.

And again I use the word desire in singular form because the one thing he desired was to worship the Lord and because he desired this one thing all things became possible to him.

[25 : 54] But this remained his desire. He didn't put over that to be a great king, to be a great warrior. He wanted to worship the Lord.

Worship is that which sets everything spiritual in motion. When we desire to worship, everything falls into place and operates properly in our life.

Probably the greatest Old Testament commentaries were written by Kylie and Delage. I don't know if I pronounced it or not, but I've said that for 40 years. I can't change. I've got their commentaries. They said this about David's desire. There is one thing that David desires. desires. He had an ardent longing which extends out of the past.

David lived a long time ago, didn't he, on this earth? And into the future and therefore runs through his whole life. The one thing sought is unfolded a lifelong dwelling in the house of God and that is to say intimate spiritual intercourse is the one desire of David's heart in order that he might behold and feast upon and then they say that's a clinging, a lingering, or a chained gaze, feast upon the pleasantness or gracefulness of the Lord.

[27 : 40] Wow. David's desire runs from the past even to this point in time to what is yet future because he's still alive and he's still in heaven and he's still worshipping.

Spiritual worship dominated David in his life and it dominates his life now in heaven. which we're going to get to in a few weeks when we study worship in the book of Revelation and that's where David's at.

All that mattered to him was intimate fellowship with the Lord and that we brothers in Christ here could have that same passion.

Intimate fellowship with the Lord every day. Many times a day. To be a true worshiper of God should be our passion.

I want it to be mine. It hasn't been. I want it to be. I do want to add something here so there's no confusion.

[28 : 58] If you enter into a quiet time with the Lord early in the morning that does not end your worship for that day. Don't ever adopt this attitude. Well I got that out of the way.

What am I going to do now? That's just the beginning. All we're doing is fine tuning our instrument of worship.

And don't ever adopt the attitude that if I get a few minutes in the morning with God then the rest of the day will take care of itself. Our first worship of the day picture is fine tuning or sharpening a stone.

We go from there walking in fellowship with the Lord for the remainder of the day. C.H. Spurgeon said this, the great Reverend Spurgeon, he said, I have never spent over ten minutes in waking time.

Well he's awake out of vital contact with God. Wow! Ten minutes. And he was back communicating with God and talking with God.

[30 : 18] No wonder God used that man so mightily. Ironically, Spurgeon died thinking he was a failure. A lot of God's great men did. A lot of them did.

Spurgeon, like David, purposed in his heart to seek to be a true worshiper of his Lord, for no man will ever experience true worship in a consistent manner unless he sets his will to do so.

I'm talking about the will. Let's talk about one other person with a passion for worship. His name was the Apostle Paul.

He revealed this fact in the book he wrote to the Philippian church. Philippians 3.10 That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings and I put in parentheses there intimate fellowship being made conformable unto his death.

What did Paul mean when he said that I may know him? Because he did know him. He met him. Talked to him. Saw him on the road to Damascus.

[31 : 49] was radically saved by the Lord Jesus. But even with that track record Paul was ruled.

His life was governed by a passion to know him ever more intimately. To know him in fullness was the primary thing in his life.

Everything else was secondary. Let's ask a question. Each of you ask this question within your heart right now as I have done and I'm doing is knowing Christ intimately and passionately the primary focus of your life.

It was in Paul. That is why he could say for Christ I have suffered the loss of all things and then he finished that verse Philippians 3 8 that I may win Christ.

He gave it all up. I would suggest that most likely Paul was on the fast track to be the high priest. Brilliant man. He was on the road to Damascus gaining favor with the Sanhedrin.

[33 : 16] He was going to go up and arrest Christians and Damascus bring them back to Jerusalem where they would be at the very least in prison probably executed. So I gave all that up

that I may win Christ.

Christ was everything to Paul. Christ was his goal. To win Christ to know Christ to love Christ to have intimate fellowship with Christ was his ruling passion.

It overruled everything else in his life. Until he met Christ duty was to Paul a chore. He was on the road to Damascus that was a chore.

After knowing Christ his new duties with Christ became a delight. He went from being a chore to the Sanhedrin to the delight in Christ and the things he wanted him to accomplish.

You know at Southern Baptist we are or used to be driven with a passion for souls. we witness we give to the cooperative program we give to Lottie Moon Annie Armstrong within our own church we have the gospel debt where we have carried on activities that are global.

[34:44] That's coming up in a couple months our time concerning the gospel debt. You know something interesting though about the Pauline epistles if you read them there's something quite interesting Paul never urges Christians to witness and he doesn't have anything to say about foreign missions now was Paul opposed to those things well of course not he shared Christ with many people he was a great missionary made four missionary journeys he planted churches he set the course for New Testament missions which exists even to our day so why didn't Paul stress these things in his letters I think he would tell us this if you have to constantly be telling Christian people you know you need to witness and you need to give to mission programs and when the opportunity comes up you need to go on a mission trip to fulfill the word spoken of

Christ to go that great commission if we have to tell Christian people all these things there's something wrong with them I think Paul would say that in his epistles!

Paul didn't have to remind Christian people to do these things what he did is he brought them to Christ and then he left them alone with the Lord he dropped them off and now all of a sudden they're alone with Jesus and once alone with Christ in an attitude of worship they and we will know what we should do when Jesus is central in our hearts what should we want to do well the first thing that comes to mind is tell others about him this is what he's doing in my life I want to tell you what he can do in your life when we truly know him and come to the realization that there are millions and billions of people out there that have never even heard of him or they heard of him in a blasphemous way we should be burdened beyond our capacity to bear it those missionary guys I mentioned earlier they were burdened they were burdened and you know when those guys went on a mission trip they went for a lifetime you didn't they took sailing ships you didn't say well I'm going to run back this weekend and check on a family and it didn't happen we should be burdened that should motivate us to sprint into action to speak to a lost and dying world about a savior who by the way that right now is very much alive he's alive and whose sacrifice was sufficient for them there is still room at the cross still room at the cross Jesus was central in the life of the great apostle Paul he should be central in our life as well in a meaningful even a measurable way if he's not then I would suggest either we are far too busy or perhaps we don't know him yet as lord savior now I've got two other examples that will take about 20 minutes so I'm going to stop tonight we're going to pick it up and we made a few references to them last time I'm going to pick it up with the story of Mary and Martha because there we're going to see a contrast between worship and serving and we'll find out there's nothing wrong with serving if we keep it in the right priority God wants people to serve but we're going to see that priority fine tuned by the

[39:42] Lord Jesus himself so what should we do then until that time and I wrote it down here go home tonight and get inside your closet moment