

34. The Gospel of John—4:23-42

“True Worship” Pt.4

(6/24/18)

We have been doing a study on worship here at Calvary on Sunday mornings—so far in our study we have looked at:

I. The Definition of Worship

The most common NT word for worship is "proskuneo" which means to *"kiss toward."*

The word comes from the ancient custom of kissing the hand of a superior as when a person would kiss the hand of a king, a governor, or someone of superior rank.

But the word was also used to convey the idea of bowing down or prostrating oneself on the ground before a superior as a sign of total submission.

In the Christian context we simply apply this into our relationship with God by saying that worship is giving to Him the honor, respect and reverence due Him as a Superior Being.

It is also the bowing down of our life before Him in total surrender and submission.

Both of these define what worship is all about for those of us who are children of God.

II. The Act of Worship

When it comes to worship there are only 2 kinds—true worship and false worship or *acceptable* and *unacceptable* worship.

This is implied from our text in John’s gospel where Jesus said that the Father is seeking true worshipers—

John 4:23 (NKJV)

²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

The fact that God is looking for *true* worshipers implies that there must be *false* worshipers out there—a fact that Jesus affirmed when He said to this Samaritan woman—

John 4:22 (NKJV)

²² You [plural—‘you Samaritans’] worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

When the Lord said to this Samaritan woman, “*You worship what you do not know,*”—He essentially condemned the Samaritan mode of worship as false and unacceptable to God.

A. Unacceptable Worship

1. The Worship of False Gods

2. The Worship of the True God in a Wrong Way

3. The Worship of the True God in a ‘Self-styled’ Way

4. The Worship of the True God in the Right Way with the Wrong Attitude

B. Acceptable Worship

John 4:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The only kind of worship the Father will accept is:

1. In Spirit—which a person cannot do until they are first born of the Spirit (born-again)—

John 3:3 (NKJV)

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again ['born of the Spirit'], he cannot see the kingdom of God."

No one, no matter how religious they are, can offer God acceptable worship if they haven't been born of the Spirit (a genuine born-again Christian)—regardless of how 'religious' they are.

But once a person is born of the Spirit (saved)—they must also then worship God:

2. In Truth—according to the truth of God as revealed in His Word.

Matthew 15:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ *These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.* ⁹ *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*"

This would include religious rituals, ceremonies, the lighting of candles, the praying of rosaries, bare-foot processions until the feet become bloody—these are all techniques that man has developed over the centuries with which to worship God.

He never commanded them, authorized them—nor will He accept them.

Any so-called worship that is not according to the truth in God’s Word will be rejected by God now, and so will the worshipper who offers it to Him someday, on the Day of Judgment—no matter how sincere they are:

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.

I. The Definition of Worship

II. The Act of Worship

III. The Heart of Worship

The Father is seeking worshippers who will offer Him true worship from a passionate heart.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your relationship to Jesus Christ with 10 being a full-on, totally sold out and on fire commitment to Him?

Anything around 4, 5 or 6 is lukewarm and it’s out of that kind of a heart where worship becomes ritualistic and mechanical—not dead but on ‘life-support’.

You keep going through the “motions” but you’ve lost the emotion in your relationship with Jesus. (Revelation 2:4-5)

Now, since true worship starts in the heart, we must constantly check our hearts to make sure that our heart attitude is right—not only with God but also with those around us.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT2)

²³ “So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴ leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice [worship] to God.

Malachi 2:13-14 (NLT2)

¹³ Here is another thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, weeping and groaning because he pays no attention to your offerings and doesn't accept them with pleasure. ¹⁴ You cry out, "Why doesn't the LORD accept my worship?" I'll tell you why! Because the LORD witnessed the vows you and your wife made when you were young. But you have been unfaithful to her, though she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows.

John 4:25-34 (NKJV)

²⁵ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*." ²⁷ And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" ²⁸ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹ "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰ Then they went out of the city and came to Him. ³¹ In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." ³³ Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

This doesn't mean that Jesus had no need of physical food—but rather that His great passion in life, the thing that He lived for and that sustained Him—was doing the will of His Father and finishing the work He had given Him (the Son) to do.

John 6:27-29 (NKJV)

²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." ²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

You see, Jesus knows that man does not live by bread alone, but "*by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*" (Deut. 8:3); and in His Word, God has clearly revealed His will from 'cover to cover'—that the lost be saved!

John 6:40 (NKJV)

⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

This is the Father's work that Jesus referred to in John 4:34—to declare the love of God for this fallen world and to go to the cross and die so that the lost could be saved:

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 5:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Luke 19:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

This is the Father's will and work—and it must be ours also.

One author said,

"It is sad to see many professed Christians "drift" through life, like sleepwalkers, who never really make the most of opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him".

John 9:4 (NKJV)

⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.

This is a solemn reminder to everyone who is a Christian that life's "day" is swiftly passing, and the night is coming when our service on earth will be forever over.

"There is only one life it will soon be past and only what is done for Christ will last."

Psalms 90:12 (NKJV)

¹² So teach *us* to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

None of us knows how many days we will have in our lives—but here we are being told to make "*everyday count*".

How? By walking with purpose and not wasting our opportunities to be used by God—as Jesus went on to teach:

John 4:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

This was December in Samaria.

Grain crops were planted in November, which meant that about this time the grain was a foot or so high and still green.

It wouldn't be harvested for 4 more months—not until the middle of April.

So, Jesus is saying, “*you say there's 4 months till the harvest—but I say to you look! Lift up your eyes and look at the fields—for they are already white for harvest!*”

What was the Lord talking about?

Well, remember that the Samaritan woman Jesus had witnessed to (who had gotten saved) had gone to her town (Sychar) to tell the men about Jesus (she had been shunned by the women).

While she was gone the disciples and Jesus entered into a discussion about *spiritual* food.

While they were speaking, the men of Samaria came from the village to meet Jesus and talk to Him themselves.

When it says in verse 30, “**Then they went out of the city and came to Him.**” (NKJV)—it is in the imperfect tense in the Greek and should be translated, “*were coming to Him.*”

In other words, when Jesus said, '**There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'**? **Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest**'—the Samaritans hadn't gotten there yet, they were still coming.

And I believe at the moment He said these words in verse 35 that, just as the disciples were looking out across those fields—they saw this group of Samaritans coming up the road and their white robes could be seen over the tops of the green grain.

Jesus is saying, that the harvest of grain may still have 4 months to go—but the harvest of souls for the Kingdom is now!

This is the work of God—to harvest souls.

Someone who commented on this said—

“Don't say, *“In 4 months I'm going to get with it. In 4 months I'm going to get serious and start witnessing”*—Jesus said, *“open your eyes and look around you—the time is now!”*”

For some reason, when it comes to witnessing for Christ—most Christians in America feel, whatever the situation—*“the timing isn't right, nor is this the proper place.”*

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT2)

⁴ Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest. (Comment)

It takes faith and courage to sow the seed (gospel) in a world hostile to our God and His Son—but we must do it anyway, even when the circumstances don't look ideal.

I suggest to you this morning that the fields of Elk Grove, Schaumburg, Chicago, Lombard, Northlake, Arlington Heights—are white for harvest.

The field where you work or go to school; the neighborhood where you live is ripe and ready for harvest—and there is no time to waste!

We are currently in the fourth (and final) study in our series on True Worship and in the third main point of this study, a point I have called, “A Heart for Worship”.

And when we talk about having a heart for worship—understand that that includes having a heart for the lost because—winning souls is a form of worship. (Romans 15:15-16—True Worship Pt.2)

“Those who win souls are wise and will shine like the stars in heaven forever!” (Daniel 12:3)

Are you wise? Is your life dedicated to the harvest of souls for the Kingdom of God?

And when I say that I’m not saying that every one of you becomes an evangelist like a Billy Graham (hang on to that thought).

John 4:36-38 (NKJV)

³⁶ And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷ For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NLT2)

⁶ I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. ⁷ It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God makes the seed grow. ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. ⁹ For we are both God’s workers...

Mark 9:41 (NKJV)

⁴¹ For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

There are many people with different ministries that God uses (and rewards) in the process of saving a soul.

John 4:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

Verse 36 does *not* teach that a person *earns* eternal life through the faithful reaping of souls (evangelism)—but rather they earn ‘**wages**’ (eternal rewards) for faithful service to the Lord and gather **fruit** (saved souls) which will live forever in heaven.

In other words, there is no greater work a person can do than the work of saving souls—because it yields eternal rewards for the sower/reaper and eternal life for the receiver—and nothing is more important nor will have a longer lasting impact than sower the gospel and reaping souls for the Kingdom of Heaven!

“**...that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together**”—in heaven, both the sower and the reaper will rejoice together.

One author—

“In natural life, the field must first be prepared for the seed, and then the seed must be sown in it. Later on, the grain is harvested. Thus, it is in the spiritual life also. First of all, the message must be preached, then it must be watered with prayer. But when the harvest season comes, all who have had a part in the work rejoice together.”

Very few people ever get saved the very first time someone witnesses to them—often, it takes multiple times and numerous people to share the gospel with someone before they accept Christ.

Therefore, the one who finally leads a person to Christ should not exalt themselves as if they were the *only* instrument God used in this person’s salvation—besides, as Paul said:

1 Corinthians 3:7 (NKJV)

⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

John 4:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

The Greek word translated “**labor**” in verse 38 is translated “**wearied**” in John 4:6.

The work of saving souls is *hard* work—not just in the sowing of the seed of the gospel into a person’s life—but also the accompanying months (if not years) of prayer until the seed penetrates their heart, germinates and produces fruit (salvation).

Sometimes a person might have been praying for someone to get saved for years—and here you come along and witness to them and they receive Christ and you say to yourself “*that was easy!*”—not really (v.38)

➔ Christopher Luan story (his mother’s prayers)

One of his mother’s prayers for her son (she wrote them all down in her journal) goes like this:

“I will stand in the gap for Christopher. I will stand until the victory is won. Until Christopher’s heart changes. I will stand in the gap everyday and there I will fervently pray. And Lord just one favor—don’t let me waver! If things get quite rough, which they may, I will never give up on my son—nor will You. Though the enemy seeks to destroy, I will not quit as I intercede though it may take years. I give You my fears and tears, as I trust every moment I plead.”

John 4:39-42 (NKJV)

³⁹ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of His own word. ⁴² Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

These despised, defiled Samaritans responded to Jesus and were saved—while most of the religious people (Jewish people) rejected Him.

(Talk about how the ‘defiled’ hippies of the Jesus Movement responded to Jesus while those in the mainstream church remained dead and unsaved)