

WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

- “Worship” comes from an Anglo Saxon word equivalent to our words “worth” and “ship”
- Worship is the practice of recognizing the “worthship” of the person who is the object of the worship
- Worship is honor paid to a superior being...it means “to give homage, honor, reverence, respect, adoration, praise, or glory to a superior being”
- The most common NT word for “worship” is *proskuneo* which means “to kiss toward, to kiss the hand, to bow down, to prostrate yourself”
- The idea of worship is that one prostrates himself before a superior being with a sense of awe, reverence, honor, and respect
- As believers, we bow before God, and prostrate ourselves before Him in respect and honor, paying Him the glory due His superior character
- Thus, worship is a heart-felt attitude of thankfulness, love, holy fear, and submission to Scripture that magnifies the glory of God by rejoicing in *who* God is and *what* he has done for us through Jesus Christ
- Worship is the supreme act of every Christian...To exalt and magnify the Creator God is our highest calling
- Thus, at the core of all a church does is worship

Ephesians 3:21 ~ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

- Worship is utmost! This alone is why the church exists

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever...If the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, man will not be well served and God will not be duly honored. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God.

John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 11-12.

- No other activity of the church, including preaching, missions, equipping, transcends its ultimate priority of worship!
- All of history is moving toward one magnificent end: the white-hot, fervent worship of God and His Son among all the peoples of the earth for eternity!

Revelation 4:1-11

Revelation 5:6-14

Revelation 19:1-10 (esp. vs. 1, 3-6, 10)

Revelation 21-22 (esp. 21:22 and 22:8-9)

- In order for us to effectively understand the primary mission of the church, we must understand that all other activities in the church are secondary to this one
- The primary reason God has called believers together into the church is that we might corporately worship Him
- Thus, reverent corporate worship is not an option for the church...corporate worship centers on God and constitutes the very reason the church exists!

GOD IS PASSIONATE TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIMSELF

- God is the most God-centered person in the universe....God's greatest passion is for Himself, for His own glory

The ultimate foundation for our passion to see God glorified is his own passion to be glorified. God is central and supreme in his own affections. There are no rivals for the supremacy of God's glory in his own heart. God is not an idolater. He does not disobey the first and great commandment. With all his heart and soul and strength and mind he delights in the glory of his manifold perfections. The most passionate heart for God in all the universe is God's heart

John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 15.

- The chief end of God is to glorify God and enjoy himself forever...He is jealous for his own honor and He is right to seek His own glory
- The reason for this is because He is infinitely worthy of honor

Exodus 14:4, 17-18 ~ Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and **I will be honored** through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." And they did so...As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; **and I will be honored** through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, **when I am honored** through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."

Exodus 20:5 ~ You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, **am a jealous God**

1 Samuel 12:20-22 ~ Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the Lord will not abandon His people **on account of His great name**, because the Lord has been pleased to make you **a people for Himself**."

2 Samuel 7:23 ~And what one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem **for Himself** as a people **and to make a name for Himself**, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Your land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, from nations and their gods?

2 Kings 19:34 ~ For I will defend this city to save it **for My own sake** and for My servant David's sake.' "

Isaiah 43:6-7 ~ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Isaiah 43:25 ~ "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions **for My own sake**, And I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 48:9-11 ~ "**For the sake of My name** I delay My wrath, And **for My praise** I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off. "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. "**For My own sake, for My own sake**, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And **My glory I will not give to another**."

Isaiah 49:3 ~ He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom **I will show My glory**."

Psalm 106:7-8 ~ Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; They did not remember Your abundant kindnesses, But rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them **for the sake of His name**, That He might make His power known.

Jeremiah 13:11 ~ For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me,' declares the Lord, '**that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise and for glory**; but they did not listen.'

Ezekiel 20:14 ~ But I acted **for the sake of My name**, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had brought them out.

Ezekiel 36:22-23, 32 ~ Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but **for My holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight... **I am not doing this for your sake**," declares the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

Romans 9:17 ~For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, **to demonstrate My power** in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

Romans 9:22-23 ~ What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so **to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy**, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

Ephesians 1:4-6, 12, 14 ~ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to **the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved...to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be **to the praise of His glory**...who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, **to the praise of His glory**.

- If this is true, how does this square with 1 Corinthians 13:5 ~ Love does not seek its own?
- It is right for God to seek His own honor and be jealous for His own glory because He is infinitely greater than anything in the universe
- God delights in what is most delightful; thus His greatest delight is in Himself

OUR PASSION MUST BE TO SEE GOD GLORIFIED

- God's passion for His own glory and to be worshipped is the foundation for us worshipping and exalting Him

We Were Created for Worship

- Our ultimate purpose for living is to worship the Lord

Isaiah 43:6-7 ~ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Ephesians 1:12 ~ to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

- Question One of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*: What is the chief and highest end of man? Answer: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever

Worship Needs to Define our Whole Life

- Worship is not something that is confined to a compartment of our life; it is to define the entire aim of our life

Romans 12:1 ~ Therefore 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.

1 Corinthians 10:31 ~ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17 ~ Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

1 Peter 4:11 ~ Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:15 ~ Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

- Thus, true worship is more than music, more than songs, and more than just what takes place at church on Sundays
- Everything we do as believers should have worship as its goal

Worship is Frequently Commanded in Scripture

Psalms 95:6 ~ Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Psalms 96:9 ~ Worship the Lord in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth.

Psalms 99:5, 9 ~ Exalt the Lord our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He...Exalt the Lord our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is the Lord our God.

Psalms 148:1-3 ~ Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light!

Worship is Frequently Illustrated in Scripture

Exodus 34:6-8 ~ Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

Isaiah 6:1-3 ~ In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

Matthew 17:1-6 ~ Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

Acts 2:46-47 ~ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Revelation 4:8-11 ~ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

WORSHIP MUST BE IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

John 4:23-24 ~ 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 in spirit and truth.

- Jesus lists two essential ingredients in true worship: spirit and truth....both are necessary for true worship
- There are two extremes when it comes to worship
 - Worship in spirit without truth (what the Samaritans were doing) - they had the right heart but wrong content (only accepted first 5 books of the OT)
 - Worship in truth without spirit (what the Jews were doing) – they had the right content but wrong spirit/heart...their worship had degenerated into cold, lifeless, external ritualism
- True worship involves light and heat

Worship then is the result of a heart that has *right information* about who God is and what God has done, and then has the *right response* to that information. True worshipers respond in a way in keeping *with* God's character and actions, as a response *to* his character and actions, and this has the effect of *glorifying* his character and actions.

Jesse Johnson, <http://thecripplegate.com/hebrews-1321-true-worship-the-true-church/>

In Spirit

- Worship involves a heart that is genuinely impacted by the truths of God and His Word through the power of the Spirit of God
- A heart that is broken over sin...a heart that is undivided and centered on God...a heart that is in awe of God and His nature...a heart that is overwhelmed by the Gospel of grace

In truth

- True worship must be based on fact...it is first cognitive before it is emotive
- The only way to truly worship the Lord is to discover what He has revealed about Himself in Scripture
- If we are to worship in truth, then we are to worship God as He is defined in the Bible and as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ

John 17:17 ~ Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Psalms 119:142 ~ Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.

Colossians 3:16-17 ~ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

- Every failure in worship, or life, or ministry is directly a result of wrong thoughts about God

Acts 17:22-29 (vs. 23 ~ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.)

- If a people's worship of God is based on incorrect information about God, then it is actually worshipping a God in the image that they have made in their own mind.
- True worship is always based on the revealed truth of God's Word
- To ascend to the heights of worship is to first descend to the depths of truth

The Essence of New Covenant Worship

- Worship which is in "spirit and truth" marks a contrast between Old Covenant and New Covenant worship
- New Covenant worship involves worshipping from a heart that loves Jesus and is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit
- Thus, all true worship has to be done by those who possess the Spirit of God and whose worship is focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ (who is the embodiment of truth)
- Jesus later repeated his statement that worship must be by the Spirit and in truth:

John 14:16-17 ~ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 *that is* the Spirit of truth

1 John 5:6 ~ It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

- This promise by Christ shows that worshipping God must be by the means of Christ
- Thus, the essence of New Covenant worship centers on Christ and is the exclusive privilege of those who experience salvation through Him
- Jesus is the truth (John 14:6) so when the Holy Spirit saves a person, they are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of the truth
- True worship is connected to the Truth (Christ) because it is always based on right knowledge of God
- When true worship is directed towards Jesus, then worship is rightly informed because Jesus is the incarnation of God

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- What implications does this have for how we "do church?" Preaching? Evangelism? Counseling? Music? Children's ministry?

Because God is worthy of worship and seeks to be worshipped, everything in our worship services should be designed and carried out not to call attention to ourselves or bring glory to ourselves, but to call attention to God and to cause people to think about him. It would be appropriate for us frequently to reevaluate the various elements in our Sunday services – the preaching, public prayer, leading of worship, special music, celebration of the Lord's Supper, and even the announcements and the offering. Are they really bringing glory to God in the way they are done?

Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 1005

- How do you prepare your heart to come prepared to worship on Sundays?
- What are some implications for how we shepherd our families?