

## Worship in Spirit and Truth - 1 Types of Worship

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AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

### Text:

John 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20: Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21: Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22: Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24: God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

### Introduction

In the past Sundays we have been looking at the **who of worship**. We ask the question, “*Who is to be worshiped?*” The answer is obvious. We must worship God and God only. And what kind of God is He? Our Lord describes Him for us in ...

John 4:24 **God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**

God is a spirit. He is a spiritual being. He is **invisible**, **immanent**, and **transcendent**. He is beyond us and beyond our comprehension. He is **indescribable** and **incomparable**. It is sad that this great and awesome God is unknown to many people, even to those who claim to be Christians. But I pray this morning that we would all know Him, and that we would all grow in our knowledge of God because **the greater our knowledge of God, the greater will be our worship of God.**

Here in our text, the woman at the well brought up the subject of worship.

John 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20: Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

The Samaritan woman’s concern is where is the proper place of worship. The woman had asked our Lord where is the true and proper place of worship, Samaria or Jerusalem?

Our Lord responded in ...

John 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall **neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem**, worship the Father.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

The hour is coming and now is – the transition of abolishing the Old Testament sacrificial system and establishing a new way of approaching God had come. The Lord responded by declaring to her that real worship is no longer to be limited to a certain place. **As God is Spirit, not bound by space or time**, so His worship from that time forth would no longer be confined by physical location. **The heart of worship is not about the location primarily.** The ‘where’ of worship can be **anywhere**. What is most important according to Jesus is not the ‘where’ but the ‘who’ and the ‘how’. This morning let’s focus on the ‘**how of worship**’.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers** shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for **the Father seeketh such to worship him**. 24: God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The Father is seeking true worshippers. As I have said before, the Father seeking true worshippers, **implies that there are true worship and false worship**. There are basically four types of worship, namely, **Scripture-Deficient** Worship, **Spirit-less** Worship, **Self-serving** Worship and **Spiritual** Worship.

### **I - Scripture-Deficient Worship**

John 4:22 **Ye [Samaritans] worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.**

**Who are the Samaritans?** The Samaritans were the descendants of the ancient northern kingdom of Israel. During their captivity they intermarried with the Assyrian who settled in Israel. These Samaritans had developed their own brand of religion. Hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Samaritans had **built their own temple** on **Mt. Gerizim** to rival the one in **Jerusalem**. Here, they offered sacrifices according to the Mosaic code. They **follow the first five books of Moses (Genesis–Deuteronomy)** but **reject the rest of the Old Testament** Scriptures. They insist that the proper place of worship was Mount Gerizim. But their temple was destroyed in about 128 B.C.

John 4:22 **Ye worship ye know not what ...**

The Samaritans worship is a **Scripture-deficient worship**. Their worship is false worship because it is **not according to the revealed truth of God’s word**. Their worship was **very sincere**, so sincere that when their temple at Mt. Gerizim was destroyed **they continued** to carry their worship **despite the fact they had no temple**.

They had **priesthood** of their own, they had **sacrifices**, and they were **very sincere** and **earnest** and yet their worship is unacceptable because the Samaritans have **rejected all the Old Testament Canons except the first five books of Moses** and have instituted their own priesthood and sacrifices. **Sincere** worship **but** it was **devoid of truth**.

The Samaritans remind us of the Athenians whom the Apostle Paul encountered on Mars hill.

Acts 17:22 **Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.** 23: **For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found**

an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

Here is a **worship offered with devotion**, but it is a **worship offered in ignorance**. It is a false worship because it is a worship offered in the **absence of a knowledge of God's will** concerning **who God is** and **how He is to be worshiped**.

This is what Paul accused Israel of doing when writing to the Romans.

Romans 10:2 For I bear them record that **they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge**. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

**Sincerity in worship is not enough**, worship **must be regulated by the truth** found in the Scriptures. God does not accept worship, **no matter how sincere** it is, **if it is void of the knowledge** of the true and living God. He does not accept worship based upon **superstition, tradition** and the **imagination of men**. Worship must be based on a revelation from God.

As someone has said, *"Ignorant worship is like throwing darts at a bull's eye while blindfolded--sure you might hit the mark but more than likely you will do a lot of damage. Ignorant worship is not pleasing to God for He is not glorified by accident, but by a conscious praise of His name."*

Our worship must be based on God's truth and His Word is truth.

## **II - Spirit-less Worship**

Not like the Samaritans whose worship is without knowledge and truth, the Jews have the truth. They know the truth.

John 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: **we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews**.

The **Jews for the most part know what or who they worship**. God had graciously revealed Himself to the nation of Israel. They have been given that honor and privilege.

The Apostle asks in ...

Romans 3:1 **What advantage** then hath the Jew? or **what profit** is there of circumcision?

What is the advantage and value of being a Jew? He answers his own question ...

Romans 3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that **unto them were committed the oracles of God**.

To begin with, the Jews have been **entrusted with the very words of God**. The Jews are the direct **recipient** of the **divine revelation**. They have the true knowledge of God and they know what or who they worship. They **worship according to knowledge**, but the problem is their **worship is without spirit**. They **have the word of God**, they have the holy **priesthood**, they have the proper **sacrifices** but as a whole, their worship was **spiritless**. It was **heartless**. It was **lifeless**. For this reason, their worship was false worship. It was unacceptable worship. The Lord addressed this in ...

Matthew 15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8: This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but **their heart is far from me.** 9: But in **vain** they do **worship** me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

We see here our Lord denouncing the heartless worship of the Jews. They were in the **right place**, they put on the **right attire**, they believe the **right doctrine**, they say the **right prayers**, they sing the **right songs**, they bring the **right animal to sacrifice**, but the Lord is not pleased with their worship. Why? Because their worship was **truth without spirit**. They draw near to God with their mouth and honor Him with their lips; but their heart is far from God. Their **overall attitude** and **motive** in coming before the Lord is **unworthy of God**.

Listen to what the prince of preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote about heartless worship ...

*“There are 'professors' in this world who are perfectly content if they have gone through the 'mechanical part of public devotion'. If they have occupied their seats, joined in the hymns and the prayers, and listened to the preaching, they go away quite content and easy. They would not like to be absent from the solemn assembly, and their conscience would prick them if they neglected the outward ordinances, but having gone through them, and complied with the accustomed 'form', they are perfectly content with themselves, and think they have done that which is lawful and right, lovely and excellent.”*

Oh, let us be reminded that **to be in the right place** at the **right time** and **say the right words does not necessarily mean** that we have worshiped God. **Prayers, songs, and sacrifices** are altogether **unacceptable unless offered by inward devotion** and accompanied by **purity of heart**. If we come full of knowledge but without life and heart, our worship would be vain. I pray that we would not be **guilty of coming into the presence of God** and offering sacrifices of worship and thanksgiving, **without our hearts in them**.

### **III - Self-Serving Worship**

The third kind of worship is **self-serving worship**. This is the kind of worship where the worshipers are **more concerned of what they can get not what they can give**. They come to worship services and ask the question, *“What’s in it for me?”* And there’s nothing new under the sun, **similar question was asked by some of the Jewish people in Malachi’s time** in ...

**Malachi 3:14** Ye have said, **It is vain [useless] to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?**

R. G. LeTourneau used to say, *“If you give because it pays, it won’t pay.”* We can also apply that principle to worship: **if you worship because it pays, it won’t pay**. Our motive must be to please God and glorify Him alone. We **worship God not because of what He will do for us, but because of who He is and what He is to us**.

Warren Wiersbe in his book **“Real Worship”** wrote ...

*“We worship God because He is worthy and not because we as worshipers get something out of it. If we look upon worship only as a means of getting something from God, rather than giving*

*something to God, then we make God our servant instead of our Lord, and the elements of worship become a cheap formula for selfish gratification.”*

Don't get me wrong, there are personal benefits from worshipping God. We get real and lasting blessings when we worship God. But **if we worship God because of what we can get** is our **ultimate motive** then it is **no longer worship**. When worship becomes commercial, it is no longer worship. Worshipping the true God with wrong motive is **just as wrong and serious as worshipping false gods** with a sincere motive. Worshipping God for what we can get out of it is essential using God as means to an end. **God will not be used.**

A. W. Tozer wrote,

*“Whoever seeks God as a means toward desired ends will not find God. The mighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, will not be one of many treasures, not even the chief of all treasures. He will be all in all or He will be nothing. God will not be used. His mercy and grace are infinite and His patient understanding is beyond measure, but He will not aid men in their selfish striving after personal gain. He will not help men to attain ends which, when attained, usurp the place He by every right should hold in their interest and affection.”*

Our motive should be to please God and glorify Him alone. It is not what we can get from God but what we can give Him.

[Psalm 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. 2: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?](#)

It is God that we desire not just His gifts and His blessings. The purpose of worship is not to get something for ourselves. We worship because God alone is worthy of our worship.

#### **IV - Spiritual Worship**

In addressing the Samaritan woman, Christ spoke of the fourth kind of worship which is what I call, “**spiritual worship**.” Our Lord said that those who worship God must “**worship in spirit and in truth**.” Real worshipers worship the Father in spirit and in truth! Please note how **worship in spirit is combined with worship in truth**. This tells us that **we cannot have one without the other**. It must be in spirit and in truth. What does this mean? That will be our focus next time we meet.

#### **Closing Thoughts**

So far, we have covered the first three kinds of worship, namely **Scripture-deficient** worship, **Spirit-less** Worship, and **Self-serving** Worship. These three kinds of worship are false worships and are denounced in the Scripture.

Even **today there are three kinds of worshippers**, yes **even among professing Christians** fall into one of these three classes of worshipers. Some worship **sincerely but void of truth**, others worship **according to knowledge but no heart for God**, and still **others worship using God as means to an end**. I pray that none of us fall into one of these classes of worshipers. I pray that we would all be true worshipers of God who worship Him in spirit and in truth. Let us ask the

Lord to make us more and more real worshipers. I long to see more people become true worshipers of God. And let us pray that God would raise among us true worshipers.

### **To the lost**

Let me speak to those who are still lost. If you are not saved today, you have not rendered one single worship to God. **For without faith it is impossible to please Him. It is impossible to be a true worshiper unless you have been born again.** But God is inviting you to come to Him. Go to Him like the woman at the well. Our Lord revealed Himself to the Samaritan woman as the living water. Come to the living water. Come to Jesus! Come and put your trust and faith in Him. Come to the One who alone can save.

### **To the children of God**

Has the Lord spoken to your heart about this matter of worship? If your worship is not what it ought to be and if it is not worship that is pleasing to the Lord, I invite you to come to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and cleansing.

**Isaiah 1:18** Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Here is God's gracious invitation to all men. God stands ready to cleanse and forgive all who will turn to Him. Go to Him for life and assistance. He will make the very thing He seeks and requires. Take His Word today, believe and apply it.

**AMEN!**