

## **We Become Like What We Worship**

**Sermon Delivered on November 3rd, 2019  
AM Service**

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### **Text:**

Psalm 115:1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. 2: Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? 3: But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. 4: Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. 5: They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: 6: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: 7: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. 8: They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

### **Introduction**

**Worship – It all begins with God.** That's our theme this year. For almost a year now we have focused on this very important activity in our lives both individually and corporately. We have looked at the **'what'**, the **'why'**, the **'who'**, the **'how'** of worship. I said at the outset that the goal of the study is not merely that we could have more intellectual knowledge about what worship is. But rather that we would learn how to worship God the way He desires to be worshipped. My prayer is that in considering what the Bible says about worship, that it would give you and me a new beginning in our private, family, and corporate worship of God and that we would be the kind of worshipers that God the Father is seeking.

Before we close this series of messages on worship, I want us to revisit the question, why we worship God, in terms of its benefit. Remember that we worship God not because of what we can get out of it. We should not treat God as a means to an end.

I like what A. W. Tozer wrote, *"God, being who He is must always be sought for Himself, never as a means toward something else."*

When we view worship as a way to get something from God, then we become like those backslidden priests that the prophet Malachi denounced.

**Malachi 3:14** It is vain 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?

Beware of using God as a means to an end. God is not a means, He is the end. God and His glory are the goal of life. We don't worship God because of what we get from Him, no, we worship God because He is worthy.

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

But having said that, it doesn't mean that there are no personal benefits from worshiping God, because there are. That's what I want you to consider with me this morning – the benefit of true spiritual worship. True spiritual worship benefits the worshiper.

In considering the benefit of worship we need to ask the question; **does it matter who and how we worship?** The simple answer is, yes it does. It matters who and how you and I worship because worship determines the kind of person we become. We become like that which we worship. Our character, behavior, affections and personality; our deepest and truest identity is formed and fashioned through worship. We reflect what we worship, what we love, what we trust. There are two sides to this, namely the dark side and the good side. **False worship ruins but true worship restores.**

### I – False Worship Ruins

This is what we read in our text ...

Psalm 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. 5: They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: 6: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: 7: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

Idols that are made of silver and gold or idols that are made of block of wood or stone, though they have the semblance of eyes, ears, noses, hands, feet, in reality, they have no eyes to pity, no ears to hear prayers, no mouth to counsel, no hands to help, no feet to come to rescue and deliver. **They have mouths, but they speak not.** Idols cannot communicate with their worshippers, they can neither promise nor threaten, command nor comfort. **They have eyes, but they see not:** Idols cannot see and tell who their worshippers may be or what they offer. **They have ears, but they hear not.** Idols cannot hear their worshiper's prayer much less answer them. **They have noses, but they smell not.** Idols cannot smell and appreciate the sacrifices of their worshippers. **They have hands, but they handle not.** Idols cannot receive that which is given to them, they cannot grasp the scepter of power. **They have feet, but they walk not.** Idols must be lifted up and carried by their worshippers or they could never move. They must be bolted down and be secured, or they would fall and break. In other words, idols are impotent, useless, powerless, and worthless. They are hollow, vain, and unprofitable.

What's worst is what we read in ...

Psalm 115:8 **They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.**

Those who make idols of gold and silver and all those who trust in them and worship them will be like them. This is a sober reminder to us. If you worship dead and lifeless idols made of gold and silver or block of wood or stone, you will become like what you worship, dead and lifeless.

Although we live in the twenty-first century, there are still countless people who worship false idols. Some worship the idols of money, houses, sports, pleasure, power, and position. However, these things have no more life than the dead idols of the ancient world. They will all pass away.

This psalm is a solemn reminder that we become like what we worship. Bob Thune puts it this way, *“When we worship false gods, we become like them. Our worship of money makes us greedy and stingy. Our worship of power makes us harsh and demanding. Our worship of approval makes us anxious and fearful. Our worship of success makes us busy and restless. The more we avert our gaze from the true God and chase these idols, the more ungodly we become.”*

A classic example of this is the Israelite in Moses’ days. Please turn to ...

Exodus 32:1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

While Moses was in the mount, receiving the Ten Commandments from God, the people got impatient in waiting for the return of Moses. And so, they gathered around Aaron and demanded him to make them gods.

Exodus 32:2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. 3: And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4: And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5: And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.

Aaron caved in to the people’s pressure and so he produced a golden calf and offered sacrifice to this idol.

Exodus 32:6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

So, the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented peace offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in wild and sensual party.

As Aaron and the Israelites worship this lifeless golden calf idol, like their mindless idol they become mindless, forgetting the Lord and His mighty and gracious deliverance. By carving this image before them, they have so changed the truth of God into a lie, their sacrifices become an abomination.

This is what Paul has in mind when he wrote ...

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2: And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3: And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4: And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5: But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the

wilderness. 6: Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7: Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8: Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

When God is dishonored, man is misled and ruined. False worship leads to false living and to immorality.

Exodus 32:25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)

Aaron had let the people get out of control making themselves look fools in the sight of their enemies. Their actions were unruly, uncivilized, and ungodly.

This is the dark side of the truth that we become like what we worship. The worshiper, rather than experiencing life-giving blessing, receives a curse by becoming as spiritually hollow, empty, rebellious or shameful as the idol they worship.

## **II – True Worship Restores**

But the good news is that while false worship of false gods, ruins, true spiritual worship of the true and living God restores.

In Genesis 1:26-27 we are read, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

God created man in His own image and after His likeness. He created man in righteousness and perfectly innocence, reflecting His righteousness and holiness.

Martin Lloyd-Jones says, “*Man was made intellectually and morally in such a way that there was a kind of integrity about him, nothing false, nothing imperfect, nothing wrong. There was a straightness, and uprightness. There was a truth. His nature was one; it was balanced; it was exactly what it was meant to be: moral and intellectual integrity, expressing themselves in "righteousness and true holiness."*

But something terrible happened in Genesis 3. Although Adam and Eve were given a righteous nature, they made a wrong choice and rebelled against their Creator. In so doing, the image of God in man was disfigured and defaced.

Today, though we still bear the image of God, yet we bear a distorted image of God. You and I do not reflect the image of God very well. We are scarred because of sin. We show the effects of sin mentally, morally, and physically. We are broken creatures. But the good news is that Jesus Christ came to restore that broken image in us. When God saves an individual, He begins to

restore the original image of God, creating a new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

[Ephesians 4:24](#) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

That redemption is only available by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour from the sin that separates us from God.

[Ephesians 2:8](#) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9:](#) Not of works, lest any man should boast. [10:](#) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Through Christ, we are made new creations in the likeness of God.

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

But the work of restoration in a believer is not done yet. We are work in progress. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote [2 Corinthians 3:18](#), where it says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Believers in Christ are all in the process of being transformed—day-by-day—in an ever-increasing way! By God's grace, we are not what we once were; and by His grace, we will be even better tomorrow!

John Newton the author of the well-known hymn "**Amazing Grace**" once said, "*I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.*"

God is on a mission and His mission is to transform us into the image of His dear Son. One of the means that God uses to restore us and transform us into His image is worship. True spiritual worship forms the worshiper's character and conduct. Isaiah is a classic example of this.

[Isaiah 6:1](#) In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. [2:](#) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. [3:](#) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. [4:](#) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Here in [Isaiah 6](#), the prophet had an encounter with the living God. As Isaiah encountered God in worship it greatly impacted him. It made a difference in his life.

First, Isaiah's perception of himself and those around him changed.

[Isaiah 6:5](#) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. [6:](#) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had

taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

It brought about conviction of his sin. As he encounters God's holiness, he recognizes his need to change his ways. When he reflected on the holiness of God it spurred on the desire for holiness in his own life.

Secondly, Isaiah's sense of calling changed.

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

This encounter resulted in him being called to go out to the world to be God's ambassador and prophet.

Clearly, the prophet would never be the same after this experience. Worship transformed Isaiah. When we worship God, we start to become more like him. Worship, then, can profoundly shape who we are. When we worship God, we start to become more like him. When we admire Him and praise His attributes, we start to desire those same attributes in our life.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Worship—true or false—is a critical factor in forming or deforming our character and conduct. What you worship, love and adore, you will resemble, either for ruin or restoration. You will be like your idols or like the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you will choose true worship this morning. When you give your life in devotion to the living and loving God you become filled with life and love. When you truly bow before the true and living God in worship, the only person who is truly worthy of our praise, life starts to change in profound ways. May God write this truth into each and everyone's heart this morning. God bless you all!

**AMEN!**