

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

John 4:19-24

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 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. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." NKJV

In this encounter with the woman at the well, last week we talked about the Samaritan worship system and how it was based on unscriptural doctrines. It also was in ignorance of the true God they thought that they worshipped.

Then Jesus introduces the concept that real worship, genuine worship would be in spirit and truth. But what does that mean? Worship in Christianity takes on all sorts of forms and practices. It even embraces doctrines not found anywhere in the Bible. There are some churches that have a great deal of truth and their worship is centered around truth but they have little spirit in their worship, no passion, no love. There are also churches who display much emotion and worship with their spirits fully engaged. But then they are full of all sorts of error, as Jude said even denying the Lord, 2 Pet 2:1. Our focus, what we hope to have is worship that is equally in spirit and in truth, without leaving out either one.

I. Worship in spirit

A. God is spirit

1. This is a primary reason that Jesus gives for worshiping God in spirit
2. God is spirit, He does not have a body.
 - a. Lu 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."
 - b. When Adam & Eve were made in the image of God it did not mean His physical but rather His spiritual image.
 - c. God breathed into his nostrils and man became a living soul.

B. It is our spirit that connects with the spirit of God in worship.

1. But we have more control over our body than we do over our flesh.
2. It takes effort to direct our worship in a spiritual manner.
3. We can physically go through the motions without engaging our spiritual

part.

4. We know the hymns so well that we can sing them without thinking about what we are singing.
5. We know the order of service so well that we can practically set our watches by it.
6. That is why one preacher was heard praying, O Lord give us something that is not in the bulletin.
7. Physical worship is easy, all you need to do is show up and go through the motions.

C. Spiritual worship takes special effort.

1. Almost anything can interfere with it.
 - a. Maybe a fight with our spouse or the kids.
 - b. Maybe something that goes wrong and puts us in a foul mood.
 - c. It could be some great problem in our life that weighs heavy on our heart.
2. Our minds and hearts are so easily led astray.
 - a. By a distraction across the building.
 - b. By a noise from outside.
 - c. By a fly or a spider we notice in the corner of the building.
3. You have to do more than just show up.
 - a. Because God wants the attention of our mind, our heart and our very soul.
 - b. For us to focus all that toward God for 60 some minutes is a very difficult task.
 - c. And most people do not even try, they have never considered it.

D. Spiritual worship takes place in the mind, the soul, the heart.

1. Mat 15:7 "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.
2. Mat 6:7 "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.
3. Mal. 1:11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts. 12 "But you profane it, In that you say,

‘The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.’
13 You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts.

4. Psa 27:

- a. 1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?
- b. 4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: 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 in His temple. 5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. 6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.
- c. 7 ¶ Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. 8 When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." 9 Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. 10 When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me. 11 Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. 12 Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence. 13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. 14 Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

E. The example of the church of Ephesus

- 1. 1 ¶ "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that **you have left your first love.** 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6 "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from

the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

II. Worship in truth

A. We have a tendency to stray from the truth.

1. Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.
2. It was just a piece of bronze.

B. We need to be uncompromising.

1. Dan. 6:7 "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 "Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. 10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

C. Ignorant worship is not acceptable.

1. Acts 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 "for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

D. Incorrect worship is vain.

1. Matt 15:9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

E. The case of Nadab and Abihu

1. Lev 10:1 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

III. Must worship

A. There are three musts in John

1. Must be born again

2. The Son Must rise from the dead

3. You must worship God in spirit and truth.

IV. The Father is seeking such to worship Him

A. Are you seeking Him?