

True, Real, Genuine Worship

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Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to Matthew's Gospel. Matthew chapter 21.

If you're visiting with us and need a Bible in the chair in front of you, you'll find a black Bible. Go to Matthew chapter 21. In that black Bible, go to the back because they renumber the New Testament and go to page 17.

Of that black Bible. Matthew chapter 21, page 17 in that black Bible. Matthew chapter 21. I'll start reading verse 12.

This morning we'll do chapter 21, verses 12 through 22. 21, 12 through 22. This will be our passage this morning.

I'll read and then we'll jump in. And Jesus entered the temple and he cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves.

[1:12] And he said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a robber's den. And blind and lame came to him in the temple and he healed them.

But the chief priests and scribes seeing the wonderful things that he had done and the children were crying out in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, became angry. And they said to him, Do you hear what these are saying?

And Jesus said to them, Yes. Have you never read, And out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes, thou hast prepared praise for thyself. And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and he lodged there.

Now early in the morning, verse 18, Returning to the city, he became hungry. And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, he came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only. And he said to it, No longer shall there ever be fruit from you.

And at once, immediately, the tree withered. And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying, How did the fig tree withered immediately? Jesus answering them said, Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, Arise and be cast into the sea, it shall happen.

[2:33] And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. Halloween is a holiday celebrated each year on October 31st.

And some of you probably know the tradition, how it got started. It originated with the ancient Celtic or Celtic festival called Samhain, and it's spelled S-A-M-H-A-I-N, but it's pronounced as Samhain.

When people would light bonfires and they would wear costumes to ward off ghosts. In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1st as a time to honor all saints.

Soon, All Saints Day, November 1st, incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows' Eve, or later, Halloween.

It's how it morphed over time. It's amazing to see how these rituals and traditions, they develop over time to the point where we forget why we're even doing it.

[3:44] It was something that they talked about. They were doing something in reference to apples at that time, and that's where you got the whole tradition of bobbing for apples during the Halloween time.

Interesting. As Christians, we're tempted to do the same thing. With our different rituals, traditions, they end up becoming just that.

rituals. Rituals. Important things.

These are forms that we have to remind ourselves as ways for us to worship, to worship God.

When it ends up happening, we focus on the forms, and we lose sight of the function. The forms are just ways by which we do the function.

[4:51] What's the function? Worship God. Worship Christ. True worship. Worship is a heartfelt response as we understand something about who God is.

That's worship. That's the definition of worship. But we lose sight of that. And in Matthew's gospel here, the driving theme of his gospel, bow down, worship Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel, here in our text, in 21 verses 12 through 22, we will see true, real, genuine worship. That's the kind of worship we worship Jesus. True, real, genuine worship. I'll put it in a statement for you.

Worshipping Jesus should be true, real, and genuine. We must be careful not to lose sight of why we do the things we do. We give honor, praise, glory, and thanks to Jesus, our merciful Savior.

Who came to serve us? Remember early in chapter 20, verse 28, he didn't come to be served, but to serve. He came to serve us, to die, to be our ransom.

[6:12] God serving humans. God serves his creation. There's nothing like that to show us mercy. So we worship this Jesus, this eternal Son.

We give him our honor, our praise, glory, we give him thanks. Put it in a negative way. You can say all the right words.

You can sing all the right songs. You can pray all the right prayers. You can take all the right notes for the sermon. And you should be taking notes for my sermons, by the way, I'm just kidding.

But you should, no. You can say all the right words, sing all the right songs, pray all the right prayers, take all the right notes, but if your life doesn't show true worship, then all you do this morning is nothing but a sham.

You're a hypocrite. And so would I be. Now we must be careful. We will fail in our worship.

[7:22] We will never be perfect in our worship, which is why Jesus had to die, right? Because we're not perfect in our worship. Because we fail in those things. That's why we need a savior.

Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. So we hang on to the saving person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who calls us to true worship.

So on the one hand, yes, there's true worship, but on the other hand, we realize that we will fail it, and yet we must trust Christ. We do both.

Here you see Jesus entering Jerusalem and his first action is a cleansing, a purifying of worship. And then the second act, he healed the blind and the lame. He's welcoming. Two more clues that vividly displayed his true identity, that he is the Messiah.

[8:26] And because their worship was only a sham and it was just a ritual, he cleaned house. God wants heartfelt devotion.

God doesn't want your ritual. God doesn't want your words. God wants your hearts. He wants this, which should show it in this and in this.

It should show it theoretically. But it starts here. And he's confronted by the religious leaders when he does this.

He cites Psalm 82. We'll see that. Which also shows his identity. And you see how the Old Testament, we read that in Jeremiah. The Old Testament spoke against these financial robberies and attested to the cries of infants.

This opposition to Jesus, you'll begin to see his climaxing and getting stronger and stronger. But it's obvious, it's obvious these four actions, and we'll look at those in a second, these four actions display the very heart of God himself, true, pure worship, and reaching out to others.

[9:46] Even to outcasts. Welcoming. That's a part of worship. We'll see that in a moment. Even though these kids were speaking better than they knew, the fact that they were speaking, it was putting these leaders to shame.

Again, clear, vivid, bright signs of his identity. But look, unless God moves in the heart of a person, a person simply will not see the true Jesus.

You need a heart change. That's how God begins the process of worship. He changes your heart. It starts here. God wants real, true, genuine worshipers who worship Jesus Christ.

And he calls us to that as his people. So, true, real, genuine worship. What does that look like? Four aspects, or four actions, we will see.

There's the first action, number one, a first action, first aspect of worship, remove your hypocrisy. Remove it. Cut it out.

[10:57] Notice, he says here, this historical account, here Jesus, the second cleansing, which I believe is the second cleansing of the temple. Verse 12, he entered the temple and he cast out all

those who were buying and selling in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves.

Notice how Jesus completely disrupted the crooked financial trades. This was Herod's temple, Herod the Great.

He really built up this place. He enlarged the entire walled complex, which they say was about the size of 35 football fields in lieu of the Super Bowl today.

Merchants probably were in the outer court of the Gentiles. that's probably where they were. Most likely even where Jesus healed the blind and the lame because that was as far as they could go. Probably even the place where the kids were singing Hosanna to the Son of David. And notice it says here in verse 12 they were buying and selling. Well why?

[12:08] What's happening? This is happening because of the sacrifices to be done for Israel's different feasts and festivals. Specifically here Passover.

So you have Jews who come from all over the Roman Empire everywhere from the outskirts coming to celebrate.

And they'd have these foreign coins. The dollar was weak in those days so they have these foreign coins. Did you get that? Nobody got that. Thank you. That one person who's laughing.

It needed to be exchanged. I mean you didn't want to have any of these pagan inscriptions on them. I mean you don't want Benjamin Franklin on that. You're not supposed to have that. You can't have these pagan inscriptions that's supposed to be funny too.

But so people everywhere. You see all these people everywhere. There's all these things happening. There's noise. There's animals. Sheep.

[13:08] All over the place. There's no place to pray. Many who were poor who couldn't afford these lambs they would purchase these doves it says here at the end of verse 12.

But it seems that the problem was not just where these exchanges took place which the other gospel writers bring that out because it was in the court of the Gentiles.

but for Matthew's gospel it was the merchants being dishonest. The exchange rate was ginormous. They were charging them an exorbitantly amount of money which is why Jesus says here in verse 13 look at it and he said to them it is written he quotes from the Old Testament my house shall be called a house of prayer but you are making a robber's den Jeremiah chapter 7 which we read from this morning no no instead of being a place of prayer worship praise it was a robber's den with merchants taking advantage of the situation and no doubt the religious leaders were making a little bit of a profit too when the temple is supposed to be a place of prayer it had to become a trading post because the people were focused on what oh I gotta get that lamb I gotta get that dove and that's not necessarily bad but it ends up becoming just about the tradition they've lost sight of what's really true and in his action of cleansing the temple

Christ set the record straight when it came to worshiping God they professed to be God's people but their lives proved otherwise which we'll see that later their commercial quote unquote of being God's people was false advertising that's what one writer put it it was just an outward show it was not real specifying the religious leaders here by the way true worship true worship removes hypocrisy which is saying one thing and doing another it's exactly why we read from Jeremiah chapter 7 the nays of Israel they were doing all these things and then they would come to the Lord and say we're delivered we're delivered we're delivered oh good we don't have to worry about how we live but what matters is oh we're just doing all these rituals and I believe it's in the book of

[15:55] Micah the prophet where the Lord says I hate your festivals no as even in Isaiah I hate your festivals I hate your new moons I can't stand it because you make it all about your ritual friends this is our temptation as well Paul told us this in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 it was written to us to warn us it's a warning to us we don't end up making the ritual of even partaking of the Lord's supper a simple ritual and we lose sight of what it's pointing us to which is the Lord Jesus Christ forgiveness of sins and it's that grace that changes my life we lose sight of that remove the hypocrisy the temple which should have been a place of prayer and worship it became the very opposite question friends have we become so caught up in the church thing that we're not truly worshiping the Lord

Jesus is it all just a show I can't read your heart I'll never be able to read your heart you can't read mine but let this be a challenge for us God you have my heart I want to give you my heart my heart is yours my heart is yours remove the hypocrisy from me second be welcoming be welcoming this is where you get verse 14 15 and 16 blind and lame came to him in the temple and he healed them

this is the last recorded healing in Matthew gospel and the blind can only come to the core Gentiles I said there earlier they were cured there and here's the irony in this here's the irony removing hypocrisy but then Jesus is also being welcoming here's the irony you have Jesus clearing the temple it was casting out the insiders the fakers where his healing displayed welcoming others the outsiders those genuinely in need we get those things backwards we do all the right rituals and all that stuff and then we push out each other that's not supposed to be like that remove the hypocrisy true worship and then we're welcoming to each other even to outsiders and notice how the priests and the scribes responded here in verse 15 seeing the wonderful things he had done what wonderful he's healing blind and lame people that's that's horrible isn't it isn't that horrible that Jesus was healing blind people lame people

I mean how could he do that you're not supposed to do that in the temple come on Jesus get your head on straight I'm being sarcastic of course you're supposed to do this that's worship you're welcoming people and then they see the children are actually quoting from the Old Testament Hosanna to the son of David they became angry actually no surprise they would get angry Jesus is doing something to their lucrative business he's threatening their lucrative business the money coming in they hated the fact that Jesus questioned them he's uprooting our control and look at what they say here in verse 16 do you hear what these are saying these kids are calling you Messiah aren't you going to do anything about it they shouldn't be calling you that you should know that and notice the children are the easiest targets to attack nice there you go religious leaders what about the unholy traitors how come there's no mention of that from the religious leaders what about people praying how come they don't bring that up you see unfortunately they had forgotten God God desires mercy and grace not sacrifice it wasn't about following a ritual it was true heartfelt worship of God their worship was a sham worshipping God as being real before God and welcoming each other to outsiders I'll tell you just so that you know there were people who knew Christ and people who didn't know Christ who were expressing to me over the past two three weeks they were saying wow I can't believe you guys as a church were doing this for this for Lady Judy Carlson that's a testimony you understand that church you're doing that you did that that was a testimony not just to other Christians but non-Christians they were saying this to me wow what you guys are doing as a church that's just amazing I don't think I've ever seen a church do something like that actually one person tell me that exactly welcoming they should see that in us right the religious leaders had forgotten let today be a reminder to you oh Christian friends members

Christians let this be a reminder to you when we partake of the Lord's supper don't let this just be a ritual you're saying Lord you have my heart I want to remove my hypocrisy I want to be welcoming that's worship verse 17 Jesus response and Jesus said to them yep of course I do have you never read and he quotes here Psalm Psalm 8 verse 2 these little ones called Jesus Messiah and actually here Jesus is calling himself God because Psalm chapter 8 the Psalm is a Psalm to God he's actually calling himself God you see that you guys should have been listening to the kids okay they're just kids who don't know any better they're actually speaking better than what they knew these kids they really didn't understand what they were saying they were just following after their parents yet they were speaking better than what you should know religious leaders have you never read you see what he's doing here signs of his messiahship they should have seen it here the cleansing the healing they should have seen him riding on the donkey they were blind

[23:11] Jesus confronted the religious establishment and their false fake leadership he was against hypocrisy and called them to reach out and welcome the broken welcome your own people these are your own people and you're stiff arming them and you're you're you're showing a hard hearted attitude against me healing your own people how does it make any sense it's like it's crazy unfortunately Israel's worship was corrupt they did not realize they were so focused on the ritual they didn't realize that something greater than the ritual was here see don't just focus on the ritual the ritual the ordinance is directing you to focus on something that's greater than the ordinance it's

Jesus this is the means of grace is the gospel not the elements they do nothing for you unless you're like really hungry and you like grape juice they don't turn into anything but they direct you to what Christ has done by turning you into something that you used to not be you used to be someone who was not a worshiper of God now you are that's what this does it points you to that don't lose sight of this but Jesus is not only calling for the repentance of abuses that in their lives in their worship it was a warning of the judgment to come if they would not repent this is a warning of judgment a very typical Israelite prophetic message repent of your corrupt ways else future

judgment awaits you but hope is always granted with repentance when you come to God you say God I repent my worship has been hypocritical I have not been welcoming I repent of that God God welcomes that he welcomes when we humble ourselves before him hope is granted when there's repentance he God excuse me Jesus was calling God's people to live true genuine fruitful lives we'll look at that in just a moment he was purifying their worship in readiness for the day of the Lord as one writer said they were saying one thing but they did another it's not about the ritual but being kind welcoming gracious towards each other gentle forbearing showing forbearance to one another in love Ephesians chapter 4 our whole lives change that's what the gospel is all about when there's repentance God changes your life that's why if you're here you're not a Christian you need to trust Christ because you need a heart change heart changes so that you can worship God so you can be a worshiper of Jesus trust Christ and you'll become one remove hypocrisy be welcoming three leads us to the next one live a fruitful life this is where we come to verses 17 18 and 19 leaving them he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there early in the morning returning to the city he became hungry came back saw this fig tree with leaves why is that a big deal if a fig tree is in leaf it would bear figs maybe not necessarily the best time for the figs they weren't necessarily totally ripe but still fruit and still able to be edible nonetheless but he found nothing on it except leaves only so it gave the outward sign of having fruit but in reality it bore none it was giving out a false advertisement if you look deeper nada and notice what Jesus does here at the end of verse 19 no longer shall there ever be fruit from you and immediately the tree withered he cursed it

Matthew doesn't give us all the details the other gospel writers do Matthew tells us a story but the point he's trying to make here is the leaves gave the appearance and the promise of fruit but it was a sham in the Old Testament fruitless fig trees symbolized judgment Isaiah chapter 34 Jeremiah chapter 8 the book of Hosea so this whole historical scene depicted God's judgment upon Jerusalem specifically her religious or temple leaders they were not living fruitful lives it was a sham the positive end of remove hypocrisy live a fruitful life fruit meaning the life that's changed a life that's changed that's showing growth that's showing true worship that kind of fruitful life it wasn't there and these leaders were leading the people astray but they and the people would be judged eventually the promise of fruit but offering nothing in reality as a picture of their empty lives where their hearts were far from the

[29:04] Lord it's not the first time Jesus mentioned this I have that there chapter 15 verses 7 through 9 their heart is far from me Christian God wants your heart today don't just go through the ritual of just singing praying and all those things and even pray God help my heart to be there help me have a real heart of worship today right now not the ritual but living a life of praise and thanks to you and how I treat others may our mouths not just sing the gospel today but our lives live the gospel today not just here in the service which is it's not necessarily it's bad I mean it's good we should sing it's good for us to sing it's good for us to pray but if your heart's not there why are you doing it why do you come and if there's no change of the gospel in our hearts and lives there's no change why do you do this ritual remove hypocrisy be welcoming live a fruitful life and last one number four pray in faith look at verse 20 and seeing this the disciples marveled saying how did the victory wither at once or immediately so here the disciples they missed the whole point of the action they didn't miss the whole thing focusing instead upon the how rather than the why or the what yet

Jesus patiently and graciously uses as an opportunity to teach or even to train them about an aspect of true worship trustful believing prayer praying in faith notice what he does he teaches them verse 21 and answering he said to them truly I say to you if you have faith do not doubt you should not only do what was done to the fig tree but even if you say to this mountain arise and be cast into the sea it shall happen he's using this we've seen Jesus use this before as a hyperbole he's using a drastic illustration to try and prove and teach a point to them as they prayed in faith with God's kingdom and God's will at the forefront of their minds they would see even greater things happen than a tree withering we pray in faith trusting in

God's will true worshipful prayer is wholeheartedly trusting God without doubting and with his will and his coming kingdom in mind that's prayer and faith Jesus uses this hyperbole to try and make a point we should trust God in his will praying in his will praying for his kingdom to come and when we pray in that way he says there at the end of verse 22 all things you ask in prayer believing you shall receive and for the disciples this would truly be the case for them they were the pillars of the church God will reveal everything we need for life and godliness through them they were the foundation

true good worshipful prayer is done trusting God with his will and his kingdom to be established in whatever he will do it's not just a ritual it's an aspect of true worship which is why prayer involves praise thanks petitioning supplications crying out to God yes when you're singing that can be an aspect of prayer you realize that right you can sing and be praying if we pray in this way as God's people we're sure to receive what we asked as we look to God in dependence he will answer Jesus brought this up in Matthew chapter 6 let your kingdom come let your will be done he brought this up in chapter 7 verse 7 through 11 ask you shall receive seek you will find knock when you have God's will and God's kingdom in view you pray trusting God and his sovereign rule he's in charge and you know that and you trust that part of true worship is praying with faith trusting God to move mountains how he sees fit when he sees fit and where he sees fit is prayer that trusts God it trusts his character it trusts his sovereign will that's worshipful prayer that's an action of true real genuine worship and this fruitless fig tree portrayed fruitless

Israel their leaders their sham worship was just reformed it was cleaned by Jesus their prayers was all just a big show but true prayer with faith will even move mountains says Jesus worshiping Jesus worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ should be true real and genuine we must be careful not to lose sight of why we do the things we do we give honor praise glory and thanks to Jesus our merciful savior who's redeemed us he's ransomed us he loves us he gave himself up for us he's the atonement of all our sins we have forgiveness of all our sins even of the sin of our sham worship because you can say all the right words you can sing all the right songs you can pray all the right prayers you can take all the right notes but if your life doesn't show true worship then all you do this morning is nothing but a sham and yet

[35 : 50] God's good that's why we need a savior here because in your sham worship if you are just doing the words going through the motions this morning hope is given when there's repentance I want to encourage you repent even now God you know my heart wasn't even there I was just going through the motions help me to worship you give me a heart of worship that trusts you Christ and not just we're going to partake of the elements celebrate the Lord's Supper together as you say I don't want this to just be a ritual that I do I want this to truly be focusing me and directing me to worshiping and giving praise and thanks to you Lord Jesus for who you are and what you've done and these elements for anyone if you're here you're not a member hey I'm not a member of this church look if you come from a church of like faith and practice and since we're Baptist we would prefer that you're baptized by immersion partake of the elements with us you don't have to be a member here we definitely don't think you should partake of the elements if you don't know Jesus that shouldn't be for you and we definitely would advise that you not partake of the elements if you have something against someone not to say you've gone to reconcile you can't reconcile but someone you've not gone to reconcile and you've not gone to reconcile with them you've not reconciled with them we encourage you you should first go reconcile with that person and then come and partake of the elements with us since God is reconciled with us again true worship is we're reconciled with each other as Christians so if you would please take a few moments this will be a time for us to focus to think to let our hearts ponder what we've seen through God's word we'll have some times of silence and you can examine your heart and proclaim the gospel to yourself

I'm going to encourage you to do that proclaim the forgiveness of sins that comes in Jesus and by his death and resurrection speak that to yourself you're reconciled with God speak to yourself there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus speak the gospel word to yourself talk to yourself don't listen to yourself speak truth and after a few moments of silence for you to examine your heart and direct your heart to the gospel word I'll ask the men to come to hand out the bread to us take these few moments let your mind fill up with gospel truth to bring about true worship from your heart tone spilled and do you know you and you and yes