

Worship

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[0:00] We're going to go to the Word of God now to John chapter 4. Just some thoughts around the theme of worship. John chapter 4 and John 4 verse 19 it says, The woman saith unto him, The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ.

When he has come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. Worship.

Worship. What is it? Worship. It can mean to adore, to respect, to praise, to honour, obey or follow a person. For some, they might do so to an image, some false god.

Or for we that trust our Lord, to God himself. Someone has said of worship, Worship isn't listening to a sermon, enjoying the lovely voices of the choir and joining in with the singing.

It isn't even prayer. For prayer can be a selfish expression of an unbroken spirit. Worship goes deeper. Since God is spirit, we fellowship with him with our spirit.

[1:53] Our spirit is the immortal and invisible part of us that meets with God, who is immortal and invisible. It's something spiritual, isn't it?

It's something special. Supernatural happens when we communicate with God, who is spirit. It's been said that wonder is the basis of worship. We come before the Almighty.

Worship is not just coming to a meeting, but it's rather meeting with God. Truly worship is meeting with God. We might have a meeting and God's not in it. That would be to miss the whole point, wouldn't it?

To just have a meeting, you say we have the six o'clock meeting, but we don't actually have a meeting with God. That's what matters. Not so much what we do or the mechanics or the methodology, but whether we commune with our Saviour and Maker and Lord, our Master.

It's meeting with God. That's what we want. When we have a time of worship, when we set time aside for worship, we want to have that meeting with our Holy God and give him glory, the glory that he is due.

[2:56] It says in Psalm 29 verse 2, Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, like the opening prayer there.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. That's what we want, isn't it? To have that special time. And there's different terms that are used in the Bible about worship. We see terms such as magnifying, as John the Baptist said, of our Lord.

He said, He must increase, I must decrease. He wanted to put the spotlight, the magnifying glass on the Lord Jesus. He wanted the focus to be on the Lord Jesus, to magnify, as it says, to magnify the Lord.

Lifting up is another expression of worship. To lift up the name of Jesus, to lift up his person, to honour him, to honour the Lord, is a kind of worship, isn't it?

To praise, to sing, to adore. So we could put all those terms together and think how big a subject it is, truly, worship, isn't it?

[4:02] It's such an all-encompassing thing to think how we can wrap that all together and worship our God. So tonight, I'd like us to look at this theme of worship using this little passage, this extract of scripture that we've read, to look at really four things about worship today.

We're going to look at the where, the who, the how, and the why of worship. So firstly, the where of worship. Verse 20, it starts there where our Lord is speaking to the Samaritan woman and he says to her about worship and she says, Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.

You say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Where should we worship? Here in this context, we see the woman starting an argument, really, about worship. She wanted to get in some kind of argy-bargy about worship. Some people are like that today. They want to make worship an issue to argue about, to make a division over. The woman wanted to debate with the Lord the value of Jerusalem versus Mount Gerizim. Worship is not just a church thing. You know, we don't have to reserve our worship to just these four walls. It's not a matter of going into some special ornate building and getting into some special pious state.

[5:28] I mean, it does help to have a place to get together. It does help to get in that state of reverence, of awe of God. But the where that God really is interested in, as far as our worship, the where that matters is where are we coming from.

Is our worship coming from the heart? Is our worship coming from that spirit man inside of us? Where are we truly coming from? Where are we at, as it were?

You know, we can worship without our heart being in the worship. And are we just having an outward kind of religion? Some might go through some ritual, some pattern, some liturgy, where it's all by rote or by repetition or by tradition.

Are we just having some outward form of worship, of religion, without the worship that is from the heart? And that's the where that really matters. That is the where that counts. Not so much the place, not so much a place or a church building as such, but that our heart is in that state.

That where our heart is, is in the right standing before him. Are we just having that outward religion or is it worship from the heart? If not, it's vain worship.

[6:43] The Bible talks about vain worship. It says how our Lord hates certain worship where it is not of the spirit but it is of the flesh. And it's been said that the capital of heaven is the human heart where the Lord Jesus lives.

In each one of us, you are a temple that trusts Christ. You are his temple, the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives within you. You are the temple of God.

In Matthew 15 verses 8 through 9, the Lord talks about those who've got the vain kind of worship. And he says this in Matthew 15 verses 8 through 9, he says, This people draweth nigh to me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. You know, they say blah, blah, they mouth the words, they honour with their lips, they might say, Lord, Lord, but their heart is far from him.

And that's what our Lord wants us to be, right in that place, that place of our heart. These ones in Matthew 15 verses 8 through 9, they prayed, they called upon the name of God, they claimed to be God's people, but as much as they did what God told them in part, their hearts were far away from God.

[8:09] And friends, that's what matters. When we come before our Lord, that our heart is set aright, that our heart is cleansed, that our heart is made a new heart by faith in Christ, that we made that new, born again, that our heart is right with God, we're saved.

God is a spirit. And for these ones, their worship was vain. God was displeased with their worship. Friends, God is a spirit. He is everywhere present.

And he does not need cathedral or candles. He doesn't need men in robes and chants and some dark, cold structure where people sit in ghostly silence on uncomfortable pews.

It says of the place of worship, Stephen says in Acts 7, from verses 47, Acts 7, verse 47 through 48, it says Solomon built him a house.

Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. You know, God doesn't need a building. He doesn't need a building. Worship is a life. We can worship him, as we know, some of our brothers and sisters in other lands might be worshipping him even right now in a prison cell, in confinement, in persecution, in torture and suffering.

[9:26] People can worship God in their home, out walking, taking their dog for a walk in the park. You can worship God. Of course, but there is that sense where there's something special about when we get together to worship.

There's something that makes that a special thing. But worship is the life. It's the life. It's the heart. It's you and the Lord. God has made us. He wants to live inside of our hearts and God wants to fill us with himself so we don't have to wait till church.

You don't have to say, you know, when we clock off in half an hour or so, you don't have to say, okay, I'll clock on again at 10 o'clock next Sunday morning when it's church again.

You know, we don't have to wait till church to worship. Amen? You can worship God all the time and in fact, you ought to as we'll talk about. You know, our worship is not something that is restricted to a church building.

So, it's good to have that thought, the wear of worship. And we don't need to have a set formula or fancy words. We don't need some ritual or special atmosphere.

[10:32] We don't need the band to strike up some emotional atmospheric music to enter into worship. We just need to get our hearts right with God. An old time reformer of old said this, to believe God is to worship God.

You know, it's faith, isn't it? The faith that we have to trust Him is to worship Him. To believe God is to worship God. And He wants our heart and our love.

So, where is your worship? Is it coming from the heart? That's what really matters, people, tonight. That our worship is coming from the heart. It says in Ephesians 5, verse 19, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

So, just to underline, that's the where of worship is making melody in your heart to the Lord. It's getting that heart right so that it's not vain worship, but it's real worship.

It's true worship. That's the where of worship. So, as much as the woman sought to argue about Jerusalem, Mount Gerizim, as if it was some place on the planet, had to be that special place that was reserved for worship, we worship with our life.

[11:47] We worship from the heart. That's the where of worship. Secondly, consider the who. The who of worship. We see there in John 4, verses 22, 23, 24, it says in part, you worship, you know not what.

Some people who worship, they don't actually know the Saviour. They worship what they do not know. Verse 23, the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Worship the Father. That's the who. And it says, verse 24, God is a spirit. So, we want to make sure we get the who right. Who are we worshipping? You know, the Bible actually talks about a time to come and friends, it may not be that far away where it says some people will worship the beast, the actual, the man of sin, the Antichrist.

The Bible says of a time when people will actually worship a man, 666 is his mark, his name, and the number of his name, they will worship the beast and the image of the beast.

So, we want to make sure we don't worship such a person, that's for sure. You want to make sure your worship is the right as far as who you are worshipping. We direct our worship right to, not at things or statues, but unto the living God.

[13:09] As he says, our Lord says, true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. So, the person who we worship is the Father. It's God the Father, not just some airy-fairy, fuzzy-wuzzy kind of God, as some would reckon.

And I know when we go and witnessing at times on Saturdays, I know I struck some lady and she said she was a spiritualist and she had in pride of place there a little statue of Buddha in her front porch there in Elizabeth South and she says, yeah, I believe in Jesus, you know, I believe in Jesus and Buddha and all manner of things she believed in, yeah.

But of course we know that's not a saving faith because it must be Jesus and Jesus Christ alone that we have our faith in him as saviour, as master, as Lord.

Only he can save and it is unto him we should direct our worship. The one who is the Father, the Son and the Spirit. And the Lord says that we should worship the Father.

He is the Father. Think of that. That relationship is a part of the worship. That we are sons and daughters of the living God, the Father, our Father God.

[14:22] Some do not know what they worship. When you think about it, really, let's get it down to the Browstacks here. Everybody is worshipping something.

Aren't they? Everybody's worshipping something, whether they realise it or not, even if it's the one they look at in the mirror in the morning. People worship. The people worship themselves. They worship their possessions, their status, their house, their family, their sport, their religion. They do not truly know what they worship.

They do not worship. They do not know God. What is it that we worship? Friends, it's an important question. Who do we worship? What is it that we praise, that we honour, that we adore? Is it our favourite sport? Some people are just absolutely fanatical worshippers of a sport. They just go over the top, really. Let's be honest.

[15:20] They treat it like a God. What about our recreation, our hobbies, that which consumes us, our job, our career, our wife, our husband, whatever it be, we might get so overtaken with something that it almost becomes a substitute for God.

That's a trap. That's a risk, isn't it? Whatever it be, people are worshipping all kinds of things. Someone has said of idolatry, they've defined it like this. Idolatry is trusting people, possessions, or positions to do for me what only God can do.

Friends, only God can save. Only God can give us that real, true meaning, a purpose for living. That one who gives us a hope beyond the grave.

It's been said, again, and this is obviously an unsaved person as far as I know, George Orwell, people might know that name, he said this, that when men stop worshipping God, they promptly start worshipping man with disastrous results.

Of course, George Orwell wrote 1984 where we see the big brother was virtually the worst. We see that in North Korea, don't we, at the moment where they do actually bow down and revere the statues of the North Korean dictator and virtually worship him as a living God.

[16:44] Of course, we know he's not and he will finish his life and end up in heaven or hell. Friends, some people live their lives in vain worship, in hero worship.

They'll worship the film stars, the sports stars. They'll have their rooms plastered with posters of such things. And so, the who that we worship is really important.

We can make the mistake of not worshipping the Father, not worshipping the true God, not to know him as our Father, not to be born again as children of God.

One author has said, worship is seeing what God is worth and giving him what he is worth. You know, the English word worship is based on worth.

It's based on value. That's where you get the word worship in the English language. It's the sense that there's something worth here. There's something that is worthwhile here. There's something that has worth, that has value. And worship is seeing what God is worth.

[17:45] Think of how worthy he is. That's worship, isn't it? Worthy is the Lamb. He is truly worthy of our worship. So do we see him for who he is? High and lifted up.

The one, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Do we see him? Do we behold him? Do we adore him and lift him to that highest place that he is worthy of our worship?

So the who to worship in John 4 was standing right in front of the woman from Samaria. The who to worship was standing right in front of her.

The Lord Jesus himself. God manifest in the flesh. God become flesh that he was clothed with human flesh that he was truly man and truly God. The son of God.

God the son. So the who to worship was right there. It's been said that atheists miss out on true worship. And here's a little quote here. It's a terrible thing to be grateful and have no one to thank.

[18:46] To be awed and to have no one to worship. If you have something that you're thankful for if you're an atheist who do you thank? You don't have that sense that actually that's a gift and I'm thankful for it.

And I see the beautiful things of nature of the planet and I stand in awe of the complexity the microcosm and the macrocosm of the little cells that form beautiful creatures and the awesome starry universe I have no one to worship.

What a sad thing to have no one to worship. We see in Matthew 4 verses 8 through 10 that the devil taketh him the Lord Jesus up to an exceeding high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and saith unto him all these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall

down and worship me.

The devil says I'm going to give you all of this if you just fall down and worship me and then it says that Jesus said unto him get thee hence Satan for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.

The Lord Jesus is saying here that only God is due worship and it's interesting as some would try to deny the deity of Christ the fact that he himself is God they would say that well that means we just worship the Lord thy God we don't worship Jesus but it's actually interesting in the book of Matthew the gospel of Matthew the Lord Jesus is due worship he is due worship it was given unto him and he received that worship there's many references Matthew 8 verse 1 a leper came and worshipped him Matthew 9 verse 18 a certain ruler worshipped him Matthew 14 verse 33 the disciples in the ship worshipped him Matthew 15 verse 25 a Samaritan woman worshipped him Matthew 20 verse 20 the mother of Zebedee's children worshipped him and then Matthew 28 verse 9 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary they worshipped him so here we see Matthew 4 verse 10 the Lord Jesus says it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve telling the devil that he himself received worship so it would be clear shouldn't it that the Lord Jesus is the Lord our God in that that revelation in that reception of worship he is truly worthy of our worship the Father and the Son and the Spirit so where we've seen so far we've seen where where should we worship worship the where matters that matters is our heart the heart right with God that is the where that we worship and our hearts can be cleansed by faith as we trust Christ as our Saviour and Lord our heart gets transformed he gives us a new heart he takes the old stony heart he gives us his heart a fresh saved heart and we worship him where from that heart the heart that renders him worship we see the who worship the Father in spirit and in truth so thirdly we go to the how of worship the how of worship verse 23 of John 4 the hour cometh our Lord says and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth he says when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth friends it says the how of worship here we worship the Father and he is seeking it says true worshippers so that would obviously show to us there's true worshippers and there's false worshippers you're one or the other are you a true worshipper if there are true worshippers it follows there are false worshippers worship God that's the call to each one of us and worship him truly he's looking for true worshippers so be fair dinkum about your worship worship him in truth worship him truthfully come before him honestly with sincerity come before him seeking and wanting

[23:03] Bible truth to worship him biblically truthfully with biblical truth in your worship can we truly open our hearts unto our Lord open our hearts up to him can we take off the masks that we might try to wear so to speak can we open ourselves to him friends worship him worship the Father in spirit and in truth the Lord is looking for true worshippers so real worship that's the point here tonight to focus the heart and mind on God not an entertaining thing it's not a conjured up kind of atmosphere a feeling that is drummed up and made to have by some manipulation of the sounds and the sights of the time it's an encounter with God that's what we really need an encounter with God and Psalm 37 verse 4 it says delight yourself in the Lord do we delight in him friends do we delight in the Lord do we give him the glory that's due unto his name do we lift him up that's what we need to do isn't it that's what we want to do don't we to hunger after that to worship

God in spirit think of that to actually worship in spirit I know all these gadgets and things can disrupt what he wants for us is the worshipping him in spirit isn't it to have that truly spiritual encounter with God and put aside all the things that would disrupt that worshipping him in spirit and also in truth to worship him in truth that we're worshipping him understanding who he is in awe of him appreciating the wonder of Calvary appreciating the liberating truth that we have in Christ the life that he gives us in Christ to worship God in spirit and in truth it means that we worship the true God the true saviour and our worship is based on honesty and integrity so our worship it should be spiritual it should be loving and truly supernatural in nature and worship really people of God here tonight our worship should be like a lifestyle a way of living and that you know we can do our best as we might try as we do try to think about our church service and worship that the singers and musicians have rehearsed and they're ready the preacher is prepared and the sermon is ready and everyone is dressed and

more so they're ready to worship they're in place but then if we just stop right here and freeze this point in time what about the previous six days did they pray did they read their bible have they let God's word rule their hearts and actions their words if the answer is yes then they are on the brink of a true worship experience but if it's all just about coming to a meeting and having a time that's kind of manufactured then we're missing the point aren't we that we're missing what is true worship true worship and so let us worship our Lord with that true heart of worship that we come even with a sacrifice of praise even when we don't feel like it there's a sacrifice of praise isn't it we just want to love you Lord we just want to love you and praise you and be with you and honour you and lift you up and even when we may not feel like it even when humanly speaking we might feel very far from worshipping him that it's not about our convenience or our feelings or our emotions that's all put aside it's put on the shelf it's about you and your saviour isn't it you and your father as a child of God that you want to worship the father so praise him and praise him no matter what praise him when it's costly it talks about the sacrifice of our praise there's a cost isn't there we had to put time aside some of you might have been able to earn some time and a half or whatever it is Sunday money when it's going to be a cost to sacrifice the sacrifice of our praise when there's a sacrifice there it's all the more a blessing to render it to him in Psalm 34 Psalm of David we hear David say I will bless the Lord at all times his praise shall continually be in my mouth now that's saying something isn't it even when we're feeling low and downhearted and we're feeling frustrated and things are hard I know there's trouble here there and everywhere and we could find many reasons to grumble instead of praise couldn't we and yet we can thank God another testimony I heard earlier of God's touching someone who had cancer and how the Lord's delivered and we could think of all the blessings of God can't we and God's given us another day to live to be his to praise him to serve him to honour him and things could be much harder for us yet we see David says I will bless the Lord at all times you know whatever that time is on the clock on your wrist or on your phone at all times I will praise the Lord at all times his praise shall continually be in my mouth no matter how I might feel or what's going on for me his praise shall continually be in my mouth no matter what's happening we can praise the Lord can't we we ought to he tells us to Habakkuk 3:17 course one popularised in a chorus as we read the words of Habakkuk 3:17 through 18 although the fig tree shall not blossom neither shall there be fruit in the vines the labour of the olive shall fail and the field shall yield no meat the flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will joy in the God of my salvation here's Habakkuk he's saying the fruit of the trees is failing the fruit of the vines the fields!

[29:11] no meat and yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will joy in the God of my salvation that's Habakkuk 3:17 through 18 so we've seen the where worship from your heart we've seen the who worship the father we've seen the how worship at all times worship continually from your mouth worship no matter what you feel like worship as a sacrifice of praise and fourthly we see the why of worship let's consider the why of worship verse 23 of John 4 it says for the father seeketh such to worship him the reason we ought to worship is because the father is looking for worshipers the father is looking for such as we he wants to worship the reason we worship is to please the father our father he's seeking worshipers he's searching for worshipers he's looking he's wanting people to worship he's wanting people whose heart is to commune with him some churches can gear their worship around a spectacle or an event we can maybe have a guest speaker or some reason to draw extra people to come there can be place for that but the problem can be where everything is geared or manufactured to generate an atmosphere where it's a man made kind of thing where it's just man doing their fleshly you know manufactured thing to create some artificial emotional experience and that can miss the mark it can miss the point our worship should not be a man made thing we know there's times when for example

Uzzah touched the ark he tried to steady the ark it shouldn't have even been on a cart you know there's just that reference to that occasion where there was a manufactured a man made kind of attempt to do something religious to do something that was worshipful that was actually not scriptural it was a man made thing and it failed and God struck the man dead for manufactured

worship we don't want our worship to be a man made thing that it's just something that we make of our own manufacturing but we want it to be not some staged performance not some engineered thing but real worship worship unto the Father a worship that is in spirit and in truth a worship that will be honoring to him not a vain worship but true worship to be true worshipers sometimes sometimes our motive to worship can be skew whiffed there was a visiting minister scheduled to speak at a church and a large audience gathered to hear this worldwide renowned preacher this famed and popular pastor

Henry Ward Beecher and the appointed hour came and another preacher entered the pulpit and the people that had all come to hear this particular big name preacher they thought oh who's this one he's not the one that we come to hear and when they learnt that the big name preacher was not going to preach some people started to move towards the doors and they thought oh no I don't want to hear just the average kind of preacher I just wanted to come and hear the big name preacher and this visiting preacher stood and he called out all you who have come here today to worship Henry Ward Beecher may now withdraw from the church all who have come to worship God keep your seats and no one left we can come to a church when we might hear some special preacher or some special meeting and the motive's wrong isn't it we're not there for that so our worship is about our relationship with the Lord to desire to adore and love our

Lord Jesus and friends our Lord wants that for you wants your heart that you would long to worship to awaken to his call that you would be saved primarily that that you are a saved man a saved woman that you know the saviour that you know for sure I'm a child of God because I've trusted Jesus as my Lord and saviour I've trusted Jesus I believe Jesus died for my sin and then as saved people what he wants is that our hearts would be moved to worship that we would consider that undeserved love that grace that he's granted us that calling that his desire for his worship that you would be prompted to that and our worship is prompted by the father's love it's been truly said that man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever it's really the primary purpose of living isn't it to glorify

God to enjoy him forever that's a wonderful thing worship satisfies God and it fulfills man it's twofold God gets the glory and you get the benefit as well an old Puritan writer described it well as he defined worship this is William Temple an old time Puritan!

[34:34] preacher many years ago he said this and it's still true today let me read the quote he says to worship is to quicken the conscience in other words make the conscience alive to awaken the conscience by the holiness of God to feed the mind with the truth of God to purge the imagination by the beauty of God to open the heart to the love of God to devote the will to the purpose of God that's worship to to the purpose of God friends worship is so all encompassing of all those dimensions isn't it and it's true that when we recognise Jesus as kingship we will give him our worship when we realise the Lord Jesus is our king we realise his majesty will give him the worship that he is due so to wrap up friends tonight will you worship him will you worship him worship him worship brings us into his presence and you can worship him without you know without putting on some kind of show or some kind of spectacle that your worship is that spiritual connection is that it's you and God it's you and him it's bringing you into his presence and praise and worship is the path that leads to him it says enter his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise so worship it kind of whets our appetite really because when you think of it our worship this side of heaven is kind of a foretaste of heaven to come isn't it that one day we'll be around his throne we'll see the wonder of the spectacle of the lamb of God seated on his throne we'll see the creatures the angels bowing casting their crowns before him we'll see the spectacle of heaven and all the wonder of it and surely it will move us to worship and so worship is as we connect with that mighty loving saviour to know his power and presence it says of the people of

Israel that one of the things that turned the battle for them in 2 chronicles 20 verse 22 is when they began to sing and praise then God turned the battle for them think of that you know there's a there's

a power to praise there's a power to worship that Jehoshaphat had these dedicated singers singers and musicians that went ahead of the soldiers and God brought a great victory there it's as they began to sing and to praise so when we worship we see God gets glorified and we get blessed so friends draw nigh to God and he'll draw nigh unto you let us pray Lord we thank you that we can come and worship in this simple way tonight to sing your praises to to think of your wonders and to magnify and adore you Lord we pray that each one here tonight might know that saving knowledge of that saving grace of God that you took our sin and penalty and made heaven possible for those that place their trust in your finished work at the cross

Lord help us to live in the light of that to be true worshippers and worship you in spirit and in truth Lord encourage our hearts and help us Lord not to switch off the worship as it were but that our praise would continually be in our mouth unto you that we'll have a continual praising heart Lord that we'll have the sacrifice of praise that we'll be true worshippers and Lord help us to be such a people in Jesus name we pray Amen