

Worship that God Desires

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Date: 04 August 2019

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[0 : 00] Well, please turn in your Bible to the Gospel of Mark. And this morning we are continuing our extended sermon series in the Gospel of Mark.

! And we come to chapter 7. Last week, Brother Lyndon concluded chapter 6 with a message on a caring shepherd. And this morning our attention will be focused on verses 1 through 13 of Mark chapter 7.

Mark 7, beginning in verse 1. Now when the Pharisees gathered to him with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly. Holding to the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash.

And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.

[1 : 17] And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?

And he said to them, Well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites? As it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.

And he said to them, You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your own tradition. For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother, And whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.

But you say, If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is corban, that is, given to God, then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother.

[2 : 32] Thus, making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity that we have this morning to gather. And now to hear your word preached.

And Father, I pray that you would help us all in this moment to ultimately realize that we are hearing from you. God, I pray that your voice would echo long and strong above my own.

And God, I pray that we would all hear you in the preaching of the word. Would you convict our hearts where we need to be convicted? Encourage us where we need to be encouraged.

And Father, once again, we pray that you would use your word for the glory of your great name. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

[3 : 39] Amen. I want to ask you a question. And it is this. What comes to your mind when you hear the word worship?

What do you think about when you hear the word worship? If you're like a lot of people, you probably think of singing.

Or maybe like some other people, you may think of the church gathering. A church gathering like this where we do many things and all of it would be considered worship.

Or should be considered as worship. Or maybe you think about it more broadly. You think that all of life is to be lived as worship before the Lord.

And maybe other thoughts are in your mind. But whatever you think about when you hear the word worship, here is what we know to be true about worship from this passage that we just read.

[4 : 46] It is this. True worship is from the heart and based on God's word. Whatever we think about worship, whatever comes to mind, this is what is undeniable.

And it's undeniable because it's what we see in God's word. True worship is from the heart and based on God's word. True worship is from the heart and based on God's word.

And that's a short and succinct summary of what I believe Jesus addresses in this particular passage that we have just read in Mark's gospel.

And so what I want to do in our remaining time is I want to consider two aspects of true worship that we find in this particular passage.

And I would venture to say that they're not just two aspects of worship, but they are two critical aspects of worship. And we should settle the issue right up front that worship is not like somebody giving you a blank sheet of paper and say, go and draw something, and each one of us comes up with whatever we want to draw.

[6 : 06] True worship comes from the heart and it's based on God's word. And there are two truths from this passage I want us to see this morning.

And the first is this, pretty obvious from the statement I just made. True worship flows from a heart. True worship flows from a heart.

And another way that we can say it is true worship is heartfelt. A heart must be in it. If a heart is not in it, it really is not true worship.

Now, I don't want to assume that we all are having the same definition of worship, so let me try to define it. And actually, you'll find from the definition I'm going to give in a short while that it's not an exact definition.

Here's a definition I came up with. It's taken from the New Dictionary of Biblical Theology. And worship in that book is defined this way.

[7 : 07] Nowhere in Scripture is worship actually defined. But when key biblical terms for worship are examined in a variety of contexts, it is clear that the central concepts are homage, service, and reverence.

So if you want to think of worship like this, it seems like rather than us being able to find a definition of worship in the Bible, it seems like what the Lord wants us to do is to explore His Word, to understand what worship really is.

And what we can say is that there's some central concepts. One is homage, which means to publicly show honor and respect.

Service, which speaks about our lives being given to God in service. Serving God with our time, serving God with our treasures, serving God with our talents.

And then reverence, which means to have regard or deep respect. And I think when we think about reverence, what are the things in our lives that we really reverence?

[8 : 25] And I think if we are thinking about this properly, we should really say only God we reverence. Only God we reverence. And that God is distinctly, uniquely, above all else, in terms of our reverence, the awe that we have for God, that He is uniquely in a class by Himself.

So when we think about worship this morning, again, we don't find an exact definition, but we find these pictures, we find these examples, we find these concepts that are central to what worship actually is.

Now this passage begins with something that we have seen already in Mark's gospel so far, and that is that the Pharisees and the scribes are going after Jesus, intentionally trying to trap Him, intentionally trying to find fault with Him, because Jesus was somewhat of a phenomenon for them.

Jesus was one who was not a trained rabbi, but they couldn't deny His miracles, they couldn't deny the crowds following Him, and so they were trying to upset all of that, and so these Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus.

But what is interesting is now we see they come from Jerusalem. We see that in verse 1. So it seems like some intentional effort now is afoot to find fault with Jesus and to trap Him.

[9 : 57] And certainly as the gospel of Mark unfolds, we will see that this increases. If you are alive in the day of Jesus, and someone were to ask you, who are the people who most represented what it means to be dedicated to God, you would have picked a Pharisee.

You'd have pointed to a Pharisee or to a scribe, because these individuals outwardly were those who concerned themselves with the law of God, and they showed themselves to be so zealous, the Pharisees that is, they developed a system of 613 other laws, in addition to the laws of Moses, that they added and tried to live by.

In addition, they also developed certain traditions. For example, we see here that they had a tradition concerning washing.

And when you read in the law of Moses, the only washing that was required was washing by priests, and they were to wash when they were offering sacrifices. But the Pharisees and the scribes, they added all of these other washings.

And historians who have studied this tell us the reason they did it is because they felt that they were better than others. And a lot of the washing they did had to do with trying to keep themselves clean from Gentiles.

[11 : 26] So they would think if they went into the marketplace, they could be defiled by Gentiles, and so they'd wash their hands, and even they would wash their whole bodies. And so, as they are with Jesus, we see in verse 2, Mark tells us that they saw that some of his disciples, and I thought this was interesting because what it means is that others of the disciples followed the washings.

It doesn't say that all of the disciples didn't wash. It says some of the disciples ate with hands that were defiled. So obviously, not all these disciples followed the traditions of the elders concerning washing.

So some of them didn't wash, and we're told that the Pharisees objected to it. How many of you are going to be taking, I shouldn't say it that way, how many students are going to be taking BJC in the next year or two?

Who's going to be taking BJCs in the next year or two? Or three? Come on, I know some of you are. I guess most of them are out. That's true. Anyway, I saw Sarah.

She's going to be doing it. One of the things that they will tell you is that as you study for your religious knowledge exam, they'll tell you the Gospel of Mark was written for Gentiles.

[12 : 51] And one of the ways that we know that is from sections of Mark's Gospel like this one, verses 3 through 5, that's in parentheses, where Mark explains this practice of washing.

So he says in verse 3, for the Pharisees and all the Jews, obviously not all the Jews because some of the disciples didn't wash, but he's making a general statement.

They didn't wash unless they washed their hands. They didn't eat unless they washed their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash.

And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches. And the reason that this is here is Mark is writing to a Gentile audience who would not understand this, and that's why he explains it.

If it were a Jewish audience, he would not have to explain it because they would understand this. So that's one of the internal evidences that Mark was writing to a non-Jewish audience because he had to explain things like this.

[14 : 02] Some historians tell us that these scribes and Pharisees were so prejudiced towards Gentiles that even if the shadow of a Gentile were to cast over some utensils they were using, they would say it's unclean, they would have to wash it.

That's how they were. And so, they found fault with the fact that some of the disciples did not wash before they ate.

So in verse 5, they asked Jesus, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?

It's interesting that Jesus never answers them. They asked him a question, but he doesn't answer their question. He doesn't explain it to them. He doesn't say, oh, that's just a bunch of myth.

He doesn't explain it. He doesn't even address their question. Jesus goes deeper because Jesus understood that what the Pharisees and the scribes were doing was their issue was not so much that the disciples were eating with unwashed hands.

[15 : 16] their issue was that they felt that because they did, it made them better. It was some value of worship before God.

That was the issue. And that is why Jesus answered them in the way that they did, that he did. Jesus recognized that the Pharisees in asking the question were elevating themselves and putting a value on the fact that they did wash their hands before they ate.

And so he answers them in a particular way in verse 6. He says to them, well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites? Now notice, Jesus actually interprets Isaiah's prophecy by saying Isaiah's prophecy was a prophecy to the Pharisees who he calls hypocrites.

It's important to see that. Jesus doesn't just kind of take the verse and kind of like apply it as such. He says, Isaiah prophesied about you, you hypocrites, when he said, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching us doctrines, the commandments of men. Jesus gets to the heart of the issue for them by saying to them, Isaiah was prophesying of you, you hypocrites.

[16 : 51] Now when we hear the word hypocrite, we tend not to hear it in the same way that the disciples and others would have heard it.

In the day of Jesus, a hypocrite wasn't really initially a bad word. It was actually a common word that was used for the players or the actors in a Greek drama.

What they would do is when they acted in the drama, we typically would have the person's face shown and so, for example, if we had a play or something and Keisha was in the play, we typically wouldn't disguise her face.

We would know that's Keisha playing another role. But what they did in the Greek dramas was the person wore a mask so you did not know who the person was. You couldn't tell because the person was behind the mask and everybody knew that the hypocrite, that person in the drama was playing a role that really wasn't them.

They were acting, they were pretending. And eventually that role in a drama began to be used to describe people who said one thing but lived another.

[18 : 09] People who were duplicitous, people who pretended to be what they really were not. And Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, he says, you're just like those in the Greek dramas.

You are pretending to be who you're not. You're acting a role but that role is really not who you are. So notice what Jesus says to them.

He says to them in verse 6, this people, this is what Isaiah says about you, you honor me with your lips but your heart is far from me.

And in this first part of Isaiah's prophecy, we get to see what true worship really is. by the correction. The correction is that your heart is not in your worship.

Your lips are here and your heart is far away and there's no correlation between what your lips are saying and what your heart is truly focused upon.

[19 : 14] And so we see right away that Jesus by bringing that to them is correcting this whole issue of heart and lips that are not aligned in worship to him.

I think the reason that Jesus is bringing this to them and why Isaiah prophesies about people's lips honoring the Lord is that our lips are really used first and foremost more than any other part of our bodies in worship.

We use our lips to sing, we use our lips to pray, we use our lips otherwise to express our love and our gratitude to God. And Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, lip worship or worship from the lips is not enough.

He says what is on our lips needs to be reflective of our hearts. God condemns lips that express nearness to him in worship when our hearts are far from him.

And the reason for this is that our hearts are the very center of our being. Our hearts are who we really are. When we refer to the heart, especially as we see it in scripture, it's referring to the very core or center of that person.

[20 : 34] And that's what the Lord seeks. He seeks our hearts. He's not just interested in all the duties that we perform, the things that we do, because if that were the issue, Jesus would never get to the heart of the Pharisees.

Because as I said, not only were they outwardly keeping Moses' law, they added 613 other ones that they were keeping. And so outward conformity is not enough.

God is interested in our hearts, first and foremost, when it comes down to worship. And you'll see this in particular as you read through the Psalms, you'll see that there's this incredible focus on our hearts and worship.

One example of that is in Psalm 24 verses 3 and 4, where the psalmist writes, who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully.

[21 : 47] So we see this, we can think of clean hands as lips as well, and a pure heart, and they need to be aligned. He's talking about having this consistency in our lives that are not just our outward appearance, but also our heart is rightly aligned with what it is we are engaged in, which is to be worshiping the Lord.

And here the point is not that our hands are perfectly clean, that our hearts are perfectly pure, in and of ourselves, none of us can have perfectly clean hands.

None of us can have perfectly clean hearts. It is only the Lord who mediates our worship to God, who is able to cause our worship to be perfect in his sight. But that's not the point that the psalmist is getting at.

The point the psalmist is getting at has more to do with us in terms of knowingly offering hands that we know are not clean.

In other words, we are harboring sin. There's known sin that we have not repented from. In our hearts, there's known sin that we have not repented from. And I say it this way because even after we in and of ourselves have repented, left to ourselves, by ourselves, that's still not perfection in God's sight.

[23 : 21] But what God wants of us, what we are being called to and what you can think of like a division of labor, is that we are to come before God and as best we know, we've turned away from sin.

As best we know, we are bringing a whole life worship to God that is consistent outwardly and inwardly and worthy of the God who we come before.

But we're not dependent upon that. Ultimately, we're dependent upon the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness alone is acceptable to God.

God wants our hearts, and the enemy wants our hearts, and the enemy wants our hearts.

God wants our hearts, and the enemy wants our hearts.

[24 : 32] Because scripture teaches us that wherever our heart is, their treasure is going to be also. So that's where the battle really is.

So, like the scribes and the Pharisees, we would be hypocrites if our worship is such that our lips are saying one thing, or be given outward show of unreality from the perspective of our hearts.

hearts. You know, one of the reasons that we do this, one of the reasons that our hearts can be far away from our lips, and we can sometimes not be careful with our own hearts, is because we are more aware of one another, and the fact that we can only see the outward appearance.

And so sometimes we don't do what the writer in the proverb says, we don't guard our hearts diligently, or vigilantly, because our hearts are not seen by others, but when we think about worship, because worship is under God, and because worship is from the heart, we need to be concerned about our hearts before the Lord.

We cannot neglect our hearts before the Lord, and only be concerned with the outward show of the outward conformity. And so when you think about us this morning, here we are, we're all gathered, we've sung, we've prayed, now we're here in God's word, we've brought ourselves to this place of corporate worship, but the reality is that there could be a misalignment between all that we see and what's going on in our hearts.

[26 : 21] There could be a misalignment between the two. And this was the truth with the Pharisees. The Pharisees had this vast gap between the worship they were offering to God outwardly and what was going on in their hearts.

And so the first point I want us to see from this passage this morning is that we can offer worship to God without our hearts, and when we do, God is not pleased.

when we do, he calls us hypocrites, and he calls our worship vain, empty, worthless. And so this morning I encourage all of us as we think about this passage, it is easy just to think about this in terms of the Pharisees, but we need to think about this in terms of ourselves, and we need to ask ourselves, is my heart truly in my worship to God, or am I just going through the motions outwardly?

Is my heart truly in my worship to God, am I bringing my heart to him, knowingly bringing it to him? And see, even that in and of itself, when we are thinking in those terms, we're going to prepare our hearts to bring our hearts to the Lord, because we're mindful that our heart is his throne, where he truly would reign.

Sometimes when we know the words of the songs, we can sing them right here, and many times are not being offered to God from our hearts as an act of worship.

[28 : 12] When we give, and we give tithes, we give offerings, we can give it for all kinds of reasons, and our heart is not in it as an act of worship to God.

And we should see from this passage that the Lord is not impressed. He is not impressed by the many things that we can do for him if indeed our hearts are not in it.

We can serve the Lord. We can serve the Lord doing many things that get done when we gather on a Sunday morning, for example. And we can do those things as mere chores and mere duties.

But our heart is not in it. We're not mindful that we are serving in this way as an act of worship unto the Lord. As I was thinking about this, and again, please hear me this morning, we'll never do this perfectly.

Our worship to God, if you want to get a picture of it, kind of think like if you've ever gone in someone's office with a young child, and I've experienced this many times, I've gone into people's office and they have a young child and the child drew something, an art, a stick man or anything, and it's prominently on their wall.

[29 : 38] It's not because it's a classic, it's not because it's of worth, it is because it was done by their child, and it is because it's probably their child's best effort and they appreciate it and they put it on the wall prominently.

Our righteousness, our acts in and of themselves is something like that. Of course, the Bible uses even stronger language, depreciating our acts of righteousness.

So I don't want you to hear this morning that I'm advocating that there's some value in and of itself in our act of worship separate and apart from the Lord's mediating work of those things.

But I was thinking this morning, what would our church look like if we all grew, wherever we are, we all grew in an increasing way in being aware that we have to worship God with our whole hearts and whatever we do, whether we sing, whether we give, whether we serve, whatever we do, on our jobs, whatever we do, that it is worship lived out before the Lord and that our hearts are to be in it.

And I think this morning, if we're honest, we would all acknowledge that there have been times where if our hearts were seen compared to what we were doing, we'd all be ashamed.

[31 : 06] We'd all be ashamed because there was a distance between what our hearts were saying and what we were doing in an outward way.

And again, so if our hearts are not in it, it's vain, and we are hypocrites. But there's a second critical part to true worship. In addition to it being from our heart, true worship is based on God's word.

To put it another way, true worship is word based. Notice! Notice a lot of part of the quote from Isaiah that Jesus speaks to the Pharisees in verse seven.

verse eight. He says, in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

And then Jesus goes on to fully explain what he's talking about. In verse eight, he says, you leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. I mean, this is a picture that we should see.

[32 : 22] We leave the commandment of God. he's saying to the Pharisees, you leave the commandment of God and you hold to the tradition of men. And he goes on to give an example of what he is referring to.

And what he does is he cites two commandments, one positive and one negative, that called children to care for their parents or to honor their father and mother and not to revile their father and mother.

And evidently there was a practice in this day where the elders and the scribes and the Pharisees, they had this practice where though a child was responsible to take care of his parents, if that child took the same resources that he was supposed to take care of his parents with and say, this is offered to God, this is Corban, this is dedicated to God, they would release him from caring for his parents.

And what they in essence ended up doing was putting aside the command that God gave to children to honor their mother and father, not to revile them.

And it's interesting when you think about it that to not care for parents is to not honor them, is to revile them.

[33 : 54] And the clear point that he is making is that what the Pharisees did was they came up with their own law to say, but if you take that same money and you dedicate it to God, and obviously they probably, the Pharisees and scribes were benefiting in some direct or indirect way, he says, then you have no obligation towards them.

And Jesus says in verse 13, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And then he says, and there are many other things that you do like this.

So he doesn't go and give them a whole list of things that they're doing, but he says you do many other things like this. It seems like the Pharisees and the scribes had an unusual way of looking at God's word, and it led them to consistently lay aside many commands of God in favor of their own traditions.

Now there's no doubt that when you think about this passage, this is primarily written to leaders. I think leaders are primarily the ones who should hear this passage and hear it right away, and should be considering this responsibility and asking, have I laid aside God's word and adopted traditions instead, traditions of men, laying aside the word of God for the traditions of men.

That is a very sober reflection and self evaluation that needs to be done by leaders. And I think the Pharisees, not just in one or two places, but a widespread practice of doing this should really call us to humility to say, you know, could I be doing this in a consistent and in an ongoing way?

[36 : 04] God's word and not only is this written to leaders, this really is written to all of us because all of us are called to worship God and all of us are called to worship God not the way we want to worship God but the way he says he is to be worshipped.

And the way God has revealed to us how he is to be worshipped is in his word. The word of God is the primary and central place where God has revealed himself and laid down who he is and how we are to worship him.

And it's only when we read God's word that we can see what is appropriate in terms of how we are to worship God. Remember, there is no definition of worship that we are going to find in the Bible.

So it requires that we explore it. It requires that we read it. It requires that we understand it. Because God's word reveals to us the one whom we worship and our worship should be in accordance with the one who we worship.

worship. Can I say something and I trust you don't hear this as I put down because it's not intended to be.

[37 : 35] there is a correlation between our understanding of God as he is revealed in the Bible and how we desire to worship him.

there is a correlation between our understanding of God as he has revealed himself in the pages of scripture and how we set about to worship him.

And the reason that so much can be pointed to as deficient in how we worship God whether it is singing whether it is giving whether it is serving whether it is living all of life it is deficient because our knowledge of God is deficient.

Yes I thought about this fact that we cannot find a definition for worship and it requires that we study God's word and we look at how God is revealed in scripture I marvel that if we spend time doing that our understanding of God will change and indeed grow and as a result of that how we approach God will be very very different.

You know if we think for a moment just in the area of singing you know one of the big differences between those who wrote songs for the church years centuries ago decades ago many decades ago and today and the biggest difference is those who when before knew more about God as he revealed himself in his word than many who do it today.

[39 : 35] Much of what we would see being promoted on a Sunday morning like this morning around this island and around the world has more to do with ourselves and our experiences than God and his great acts that we read about in the pages of scripture.

And so our worship needs to be word based it needs to be based on the Bible and one other thing I just want to say on this point before I move on and conclude while worship is something we do and we bring to God and we sometimes may enjoy it worship really is not for our enjoyment.

I read something recently and I don't remember who the pastor was but someone in the church said to him I didn't enjoy worship this morning and the pastor responded well that's fine it wasn't to you that was supposed to be funny yeah it was supposed to be funny because truly worship is not to us when we gather and we don't feel something about the worship ultimately it's not to us it's not to us it is to God and the concern for us when we gather the concern for us as it relates to worship need not be how do I feel about it what do I think about it it needs to be what does God think about this how does God feel about this is this pleasing to God or is this just pleasing to me and how sad it is when we would think about worship and talk about worship and all we have in mind is ourselves that is how we can set aside the commandments of God and we can create our own traditions because it's what we like and it's because it's what we want and it is foreign to the God of scripture and so this is an area that though leaders have to take a primary responsibility to do the reflection to see if we are like the

Pharisees laying aside the commandments taking up traditions we all need to think about this we all need to consider is my understanding of worship my approach to worship is it for God or is it for me when I gather do I want to talk about my experiences or I want to celebrate the great acts of God in creation and in the new creation and God as he has revealed himself in holy scripture God's word is to be the basis for our worship to him not our feelings and not our preferences it can't be on what we think would draw a big crowd or build a big church see because you could do those things and not worship

God I'm going to tell you that as I prepared for this message I began to be really convicted in my own soul about how we've robbed God because it seems like he is saying to us go into my word and I'm not going to give you some neat little definition but go explore my word and as you explore my word worship me in accordance with what you see in my word and what we have done is we've robbed God because we basically say that's maybe too much work how would we describe it and we don't do that and we just skim the surface and then we offer something to God but no brothers and sisters we need to worship God in accordance with this word and it's fine if at the end of the day our worship to

[44 : 17] God is like that stick man like the coloring that's out of the lines but let it be because that's our best effort in trying to see this God in scripture and then offering worship to him as opposed to just doing it from what we like and what we don't like and what our preferences are this is a textbook on worship to our great great God I'm going to take some time and I I only really decided this just this morning not like right now but earlier this morning as I contemplated this the preaching schedule is already set through to the end of the year but I'm going to take a couple of weeks and take some time to slow down and we're going to be looking at worship as a church so that we don't find ourselves like the

Pharisees laying aside the commandments of God laying aside what God has clearly revealed in his word and taking up traditions taking up our preferences taking up what we feel like taking up to offer as worship to the Lord so next week Sunday I'm going to announce this we're going to be having a service for our students primarily those who are heading off to school for the first time but we'll be doing it for all of our students together so that next week Sunday the service will be geared towards our students and we're doing it because some are leaving early we would normally focus on them as they return to school but we'll be doing it for the students who are going to be here early we'll be doing it in September so we'll do that next week and then the following week after that I'm going to take maybe about three weeks and just teach on different aspects of worship I think one of the questions I want us to leave here today asking ourselves is this where's my heart in my worship to

God where's my heart and see I want us to think broadly I don't want us to think about worship when we walk through those doors all of life is to be lived as worship to God Romans 12 1 Paul says I urge you brothers in view of the mercies of God present your bodies as living sacrifices that's worship under the old covenant they were able to take an animal and bring it to the priest and the priest would sacrifice the animal and that was their sacrifice to God under the new covenant we are the sacrifice we bring ourselves and it isn't somebody else to kill the sacrifice so to speak we die to ourselves we come and we live for God under the new covenant and Paul says that this worship is logical he said it is your logical response to the great mercy that

God has shown to you and so we need to be asking ourselves about our worship to God and yes it is as we parent it is as we live as a husband to our wives and wives to our husbands and as we work in the workplace as we live all of life it is to be lived in worship to God God isn't just deserving of this piece we carve out on a Sunday morning it is deserving of all of our life and it is not to say that every single part of our life is to look the same we are not to turn every aspect of life into a Bible study or into a time of singing life has its variations but all of life with all of its variation can be lived as worship unto God!

And this is what the Lord calls us to this morning when we read God's word sometimes we see in God's word why Jesus had to come why he needed to come and we see that right in this passage why Jesus needed to come the Pharisees thought that they could serve God without Jesus and so they rejected him they were finding fault with him they were fighting with him and they did not realize that Jesus was the one they desperately needed in order to be able to worship God and the reason they needed Jesus is Jesus is the only one who enables us to have a heart that is transformed and changed to be able to worship God that is why we're born again that is why we need the new birth without the new birth our hearts are untransformed and we end up like the

[49 : 43] Pharisees just doing religious things from a heart that is not transformed and this is why they could be saying oh we are God's men on the earth and they're fighting with God finding fault with God God in the flesh the Lord Jesus Christ because their hearts were unconverted and so brothers and sisters we need the power of the cross that we sang about this morning we need our hearts to be broken we need our hearts to be transformed we need our hearts to be realigned so that we can truly offer worship unto God unconverted hearts can never draw near to God they can appear to but they can never draw near to God you know one of the wonderful things about what we see in scripture

Jesus would say to the Pharisees he says listen he says the tax! the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going ahead of you into the kingdom of God and that would have been almost scandalous to say because when you looked at the Pharisees and you looked at the scribes and their diligence and their effort that they were putting into serving God and you looked at the prostitutes and the tax collectors or we should say the former prostitutes because that's what he was referring to those who were tax collectors or those who were prostitutes even though they had come to Christ that label doesn't leave them that label stays on them and he says they're going into the kingdom ahead of you and they will sit with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob when you are shut out from the kingdom of God and the difference is their hearts have been transformed and their hearts are made right with God even though outwardly they may not have all the trappings of keeping all the laws and all the rules the way the

Pharisees did and so I end this morning by saying to us let us not leave here this morning believing that if we just try harder if we just do more our worship will be accepted to God our worship is only acceptable to God through Jesus Christ and our worship is only acceptable to God because he transforms our hearts he takes hearts of rock stone and turns them into hearts of flesh he takes hearts that can be indifferent to God and the things of God and he makes them soft and pliable people that they can be broken by the things that breaks God's heart and so let us remember that this one that we need the Lord we need this transforming work in our hearts and I suspect this morning as we think about this and we would acknowledge that our hearts are not where they should be in our worship to

God I think there are two particular reasons largely one is that could have been drifting we've drifted in our affections for God we've grown cold in our affections for God and that happens we see the Lord speaking to the church at Ephesus and saying to them you've gone lukewarm and you need to return you need to do your first works again you need to redo those works but maybe the reason is not drifting the reason may be that you've just never been converted the reason may be that you have never experienced the new birth and I said to you this morning while we're able to do many of these outward things that the Pharisees did we can do many things in church we can serve we can sing we can give we can't give ourselves new birth we cannot give ourselves the new birth any more than any one of us could give ourselves natural birth none of us could bring ourselves into this world there's no human being who's able to do that and same is true with the new birth it means to be begotten from above it means that

God begets us from above in a very similar way that a father begot us from below in the earth it's a work that God does and so that's you this morning I urge you look to Jesus this morning recognize that you need that work that unique work that only he can do and that is to give you life that your heart can be aflamed for God and so as we close this morning I want to pray for you if you're in that situation you would acknowledge that you have not been converted and certainly we'll pray after our gathering if you would want me to do that so let's pray together