

Greater Worship

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[0 : 00] Good evening folks, my name is Aaron. There's something really amazing happening in the world at the moment. It's called the Cricket World Cup. It's just awesome.

And I know North Americans don't think much about cricket. But a lot of people in the world do. Do you know it's the second most popular sport in the world? True story, second most popular sport. India played Pakistan about a week ago. And this is not the quarter finals, semi-finals or anything like that. It's just the round robin at the start of the tournament. So they estimate 1.5 billion people track that game.

New Zealand played Australia a couple of days ago. New Zealand played England about a week ago. And anyway, all that to say, if you're here tonight visiting with us, newcomers and you're from Australia or England, I hope you find this service a place of comfort for you.

For your wee broken little hearts. And that segues lovely into our passage.

[1 : 10] So tonight we're looking at the second half of a conversation Jesus has with a woman by a well. And you remember she was an outcast from her community. Excuse me, but I'm a bit sick at the moment, so I'm a bit nasally, more nasally than normal.

So you remember this woman was an outcast from a community. Someone no self-respecting Jewish male would have anything to do with. And Jesus broke down all these barriers just to talk to her.

He sought her out to give her something. And the gift of life. And he talked about this life as living water. And he said, Your soul will never be thirsty again.

In so many words. Now, so tonight we have the second half of that conversation. And these three things I want to talk about, I think that jump out of this conversation. The first thing I want to talk about is the husband, no husband bit at the start, which is kind of interesting.

And then two, I want to talk about worship. And three, I want to talk about the truth. So the husband, no husband thing at the start. Worship. And then the truth. And then I'll finish by talking about worship a little bit more.

[2 : 09] All right. So, this week the conversation continues with this woman who has no name. And Jesus says, Hey, they've just talked about the living water stuff.

And then Jesus says, Hey, go get your husband. Now, in those days that wouldn't have been unusual because salvation came to households. So it's not a weird question to say, Get your husband here.

Let's all just talk it through as a big group. She says, I have no husband. Which technically was true. She had no husband. But in saying she has no husband, she's trying to mask something.

She's trying to hide something. There's a great pain in her life. And you'll see in verse 17, Jesus says, You're right. You don't have a husband at the moment, but you have had five. And you're not married to the guy you're sleeping with now, are you?

And then in verse 18, he goes, But, you know, what you said is true. You have no husband. Let me say two things about this. First, It doesn't say why she was married five times.

[3 : 10] We don't know whether it was death or abandonment, divorce. We don't know what happened. We don't know the reasons behind this. I mean, it's not good that she's kind of living with this guy now.

But I think what is exposed here is more a life of broken dreams, a life of disappointment, a life of desperation. I think that's more what's going on here than Jesus is trying to expose her is really, really dodgy.

I think the second thing I want to say is, do you see how gentle Jesus is with her? When he says, when she says, I have no husband, Jesus doesn't say, Don't you lie to me.

I can read you like a book. I think I channeled my mother just then. There's none of that. I mean, he starts off by saying, Oh, you're right. You don't have a husband.

And you currently don't have a husband. And then the truth comes out. He exposes her. And then he says, But, you're right. What you said was true. You don't have a husband. I'm just quite struck by how kind he is to her.

[4 : 23] And I hope you find that encouraging. Particularly if you're quite reticent to bring your whole self to God. Anticipating a, Don't you lie to me, kind of God.

Anyway, that's all I want to say about this stuff. Because I want to move on to what I think is the real guts of the passage. And that's, Worship. So if you sort of slid your eyes down the rest of the passage, what you'll see is, Ten times the word, Worship is used.

And that's what the rest of the conversation seems to be about. And I think she starts with her. She says, You know, In other words, Like, Us Samaritans, We worship at this mountain, Mount Gerizim is.

And you guys, Jewish people, You worship on Mount Zion. But where does that question come from? Because it's a, You know, They've just talked about this husband thing. And Jesus says, You don't have, You know, You've been married five times.

And all of a sudden, He's talking about theology. Why the sudden change of subject? Well, I think obviously her life has been exposed. And it's a past that she didn't want exposed. She wanted that past to be hidden.

[5 : 26] So her theology question is partly, Partly, Diversion. I think she wants to get off the husband conversation pretty quick.

I think she wants to get away from that. And perhaps you've, You've had this happen to you in a conversation about Jesus. Perhaps you've been talking to somebody about Jesus, Which I hope you do sometimes. And you've been chatting to somebody, And, And what you say sort of pricks something in their, In their heart or their conscience.

And, And they sort of kick the conversation into the long grass, By bringing up the crusades, Or the inquisition or something. I don't know if you've had that. I've had that. I remember years ago, Speaking to this young woman. And, And I thought we're having this great conversation, About faith in Jesus.

And all of a sudden, She's like, Yeah, But your people killed the witches of Salem. And I'm like, Yeah, Well, Did we? I don't know. I'm sorry. I don't know. I didn't know.

I was pretty, I was new Christian. I don't know where to go with it. But, It's probably good to have some response to that, I guess. Anyway, So I think, I think she's just trying to change the subject. I mean, This girl was definitely trying to change the subject, Because the conversation about Jesus was too hard for her.

[6 : 31] And I think that's what's happening here with this woman. This is painful for her. Her brokenness has been exposed. But, I also think she's intrigued. She says, Ah, I perceive you're a prophet.

She is intrigued as well. This man she's speaking to is clearly special. He knows stuff. So why not ask him about one of the big differences between their faiths?

She's a Samaritan. He's a Jew. And so one of the big differences was the location of worship services.

So she launches into this, We worship on this mountain around here. You can see it from where they are standing from. And you guys worship over there. Who's right? Jesus seems very happy to talk about worship.

So he does. Now, Given that, I think the major concern of this passage is worship, What I want to do right now is, I just want to speak for a couple of minutes, Generally, About worship. And then I'll come back into the passage.

[7 : 32] So, What am I going to do, right? I'm just going to speak about worship generally, And then come back into the passage. All right, First, First, Only real main point of this little general thing here is, Is, Worship Is not just singing to God.

I think many people think that's what it is. It includes that. But, It's, It's a small part of it.

It's not the big thing. And it's certainly not the only thing. No, Worship, It's your whole life. It's how you live your life. That is worship.

Let me read Romans 12, One to you. Therefore, I urge you, In view of God's mercy, To offer your bodies, As living sacrifices, Holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Worship's your whole life. The Greek word is proskuneo. It's where we get the word prostrate from. So, It means to bow down. It's sort of like bowing down and kissing the ground before someone. [8 : 36] So, If you did that before someone, Bow down, Kiss the ground. You're doing two things there. One, You're recognizing the worth of that person. You're saying, That person is worthy for me to do something.

So, It's recognizing of the worth, And an action, A bowing down, A submission. So, Worship is something that happens in here, And in here, And it's something we do. Let me nuance that a little bit more.

Jonathan Edwards, Who is a very well-known theologian of days gone by. So, He spoke about affections. Affections.

What he meant by it was this. He said that the affections of our heart was like our will, Our mind, Our emotions, The core of who we are. And he talked about how those affections of our heart should be directed towards God.

And he talked about how, You know, Idolatry is this idea of our affections gravitating towards something else. Power or sensuality or certain relationship, Whatever. And trusting in those things more than we trust in God is like idolatry.

[9 : 41] And so, Worship is pulling the affections of our heart off our idols and placing them on God. But worship is not just affections. It's not just heart and mind and will.

It's, It's, It's what we do as well. Tim Keller says this. He says, Worship is obedient action motivated by the beauty of God is, Of who God is in himself.

Obedient action motivated by the beauty of who God is in himself. So, Worship doesn't end by how we think or feel, But it includes what we do.

Now, I'm laboring the point, I know. So, Worship is not just singing, On Sundays, Although that is worship. Worship is a heart orientation in how we live our life all week. So, Worship is how you do business.

Worship is, Is working hard and not being lazy. Worship is sacrificial love. Worship is being, You're worshipping God if you're a really good parent or spouse, Or a wonderful friend.

[10 : 46] Worship is, Is you being generous with your money and your time, All your resources. It's all worship. God has forgiven us and changed us, And we treasure him. We treasure him because of that, And so we live to please him.

It's a whole life response to who God is. That's worship. That's worship. It's the tenor of our whole life. Okay, That's general thoughts. Now, If we look at the passage, How does the passage help us understand that?

You look at verse 21, Jesus said to her, Woman, Believe me, The hour is coming, When neither on this mountain, Nor in Jerusalem, Will you worship the Father.

So he's saying, So she goes, You know, Where do we go to worship? Where do we go to get right with God? And he's going, The hour's coming when, You know, All that stuff's going to go out the door.

Samaritans used to go to their place. The Jews would go to their place. Jesus is saying, That process is going to end. It will end when the hour comes. You remember, The hour in John's gospel is the cross.

[11 : 48] He's saying, There will be no special place. There will be no special thing you have to do. And why is that? Because of what Jesus has done.

And because of who God is. Verse 24, God is spirit. What does that mean? Goodness, I don't know, But at least, At least it's got to mean That he's not material.

And so we can't be pinned down to a particular place. You can't lock him into a particular building. That means we connect with God anywhere. A trip to the Holy Land Does not make you closer to God.

God is not more especially present In Westminster Abbey Than he is in my garden shed. You can meet God on the bus, In the kitchen. I can meet God As I'm taking my kids around For a walk around the block.

Because worship takes place in here. It's not confined to a holy place. All moments are holy. God is always with you. It's a big problem When we think of Sundays As the day we encounter God.

[12:52] It's easy to think that. It's great music And nice people. We've got liturgy. And it feels holy. It feels wonderful. And it's helpful. Of course it's helpful. It's brilliant.

But true worship takes place everywhere. True worship takes place everywhere. And this doesn't mean being weirdos. It doesn't mean you're going to start muttering Monastic chances.

You're doing your data entry Or whatever you do for a job. It's acknowledging the supremacy of God In everything you do. Home, school.

How you treat the unusual person at your work. That's worshipping God. For the woman by the well, What would worship be for her? Worship is going to involve A radical realignment of her desires.

Where she's placing your trust. It would mean getting out of that relationship. That's what worship will mean for her. Worship's all time. It's all time. It's everywhere. Okay.

[13:50] We've talked about the husband stuff at the start. It's a bit of stuff on worship. We'll come back to that right at the end. Now I want to talk about truth. I want to talk about truth Because I think truth in the passage Seems to be really important.

Why do I say that? It seems to really matter. Look. It was important that the truth came out About this woman's past. Verse 22. Jesus says to her, You worship what you don't know.

You're basically saying to her, You Samaritan people have got a way of doing stuff. It's wrong.

You're barking up the wrong tree. Like you've actually got it wrong.

You need to get on board With whom God has spoken to That's through the Jewish people. Verse 23, 24. It says we're to worship God in spirit and truth. It says that twice.

Verse 23. It talks about being a true worshipper. Verse 25 and 26. The Messiah is coming. And she says the Messiah is coming. He's going to tell us everything we need to know. They're looking for a teacher.

[14:52] Tell them the truth. And Jesus reveals the best truth of all. The biggest truth. I am he. I am the Messiah that you've been waiting for. Truth seems to really matter in this passage. Now why does truth matter so much?

I think from the passage, I think there are three main reasons. One, There's no true worship unless we are truthful with God. You can't be a true worshipper unless you're truthful with God.

Telling the truth with God, One of the ways you do that is confession. That's why Jesus started this whole conversation with exposing this woman's past.

It was important that that came out. It's important that what was in the dark was brought into the light. That's why we begin our services with confession. There's no true worship unless we deal with our sin.

Second, There's no true worship unless we understand the object of our worship. Verse 22 again. You worship what you do not know. He's talking to the Samaritans. We worship what we know.

[15:55] For salvation is from the Jews. Jesus is saying to her, It's not good enough that you believe something and you're really sincere about it. I mean, that would be kind of like a West Coast kind of thing. As long as you're sincere, That's the main thing.

No, it's not. What matters is that it's truthful. What matters is that it's right. And Jesus said to her, Salvation is coming from the Jews. God is, in his wisdom, Has chosen this small nation to speak truth to So they can be a light to the rest of the world.

The Hebrew Scriptures. This is our truth. It's not up for grabs. It's not our choice to pick what's true or not. And lastly, we can't have true worship without the truth.

That is Jesus. He's truth embodied. So when the passage talks about worshipping in spirit and truth, It's saying true worship only takes place because of Jesus.

The New Testament, Jesus is described as the true light, The true food, The true vine, The way, And the truth. Now, Let me finish up here.

[17:08] It's been a short sermon, I know, But let me finish up here by coming back to worship, Which I think is the main thing the passage is about. Because of Jesus, And because of who God is, There is no special place where God is more present than others.

Not anymore. There's no super holy place we go to meet him. There's no particular place we have to go to get right with God to worship him. The Bible says that we should meet together.

That's corporate worship. We're supposed to meet together And sing praises to God and hear his word. But that's not where worship starts and finishes.

No, true worship is 24-7. True worship is your heart and your mind and your action. True worship is treasuring God. And that's spilling out into action. And that means all your conversations this week Are acts of worship Or acts of rebellion.

How honestly you fill in your tax forms. That's going to be an act of worship Or it's going to be an act of rebellion. How you use your gifts and your talents and your money and your time Acts of worship or acts of rebellion.

[18:18] True worship is a Christian's whole life. And it's so important to understand this. Because otherwise you'll compartmentalize your life. And you'll live this fragmented life of like, Here's Jesus bit and here's the other stuff that I just kind of look after.

So you can have these fragments of Christianity And the rest of the time it's, you know, You're a practical atheist the rest of the time. It's very tempting to live like that.

Because then you can sort of attempt to have your cake and eat it too, So to speak. I can have Jesus as my saviour but not my lord. But he is both. We are called to live differently.

We're empowered to live differently by the spirit of God. So, Worship. Do it With your whole life. Amen.