

Worship – A Gift From God

Text : **Deut. 10:12-11:1 ; Phil. 2:9-11**

S#1.

INTRODUCTION :

A. Many people even Christians have asked, “Why do we have to go to church?”

S#2.

1. Those who ask this question reflect a fundamental spiritual problem.

2. People who love God look forward to going to Church.

S#3.

Psa. 122:1 – I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

a. It’s a family gathering.

b. It’s an opportunity to please God.

c. It’s an opportunity to tell God that you love Him and encourage others to do the same.

Heb. 10: 23-25 **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to motivate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day**

S#4.

B. Those who respond when this question is posed don’t always give a good answer.

S#5.

1. The first response is most often that we’re commanded to attend the assemblies.

a. Though true, that answer doesn’t address the real problem reflected by the question.

b. Those who come only to fulfill a command do not worship.

2. Worship is more than just going through a set of rituals .. even if called “*acts of worship*.”

3. It’s an outpouring of one’s heart to God. The assembly is a mutual outpouring of love.

This morning we will look at the biblical concept of worship and see that it is a gift of God to all those who are believers.

S#6.

I. The concept of worship predates history.

S#7.

A. Archeologists have never unearthed a culture that did not worship something.

S#8.

1. There are pictures on the walls of caves of people offering sacrifices.

2. All organized societies have had organized religions.

a. Altars, temples, idols, artifacts, etc.

b. A priesthood

B. Many ancient societies were organized around their religion.**S#9.**

1. Temples were centrally located and the largest buildings unearthed.
2. It was common for priests to advise kings about all important decisions.
3. Priests could bring down powerful kings. (*as recently as a few centuries*)

C. Many surviving treasures from antiquity are religious relics.**S#10.**

1. Sphinx and pyramids were built because of religion.
2. Pyramids in Central America were altars. (*Some for human sacrifice*)
3. Temples in Rome, Greece, China, India, etc. (*Gold articles*)

D. Organized religion predates Israel.**S#11.**

1. **Gen. 14:18** – And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine;
now he was a priest of God Most High. (*“a” priest, not “thee” priest*)
2. Melchizedek being a priest necessitates an organized priesthood.
 - a. This was during the patriarchal era.
 - b. As a priest, he would have offered sacrifices at an altar.
 - c. The place he offered sacrifices would have been Jerusalem where he reigned.
3. A priesthood necessitates an organized religion not just the heads of families.
 - a. The patriarchal system was part of a broader organization. (*Abraham submitted to it*)
 - b. Melchizedek was higher in rank than the heads of families, even Abraham.
 - c. Comparatively, each family was like a congregation in the universal church.
4. The silence of the scriptures does not imply that only Abram worshipped God.

E. In fact, organized religion dates back to the very first family on earth.**S#12.**

1. **Gen. 4:3-5** ... Cain and Abel worshipped by offering sacrifices. (*same time*)
2. The first recorded worship caused division in the family & murder.
3. This very clearly indicates that there was some revelation about how to worship.
 - a. Both sons wanted to please God, **but** only one sacrifice was accepted.
 - b. Cain offered the best that he had, **but** was rejected for not following instructions.
 - c. *God takes worship much more seriously than does man.* (cf – **Matt. 7: 21-23**)

S#13.**Lev. 10: 1-4****S#14.**

* **Thus, those who want to accept God, or Jesus without the church or organized religion defy God and all of human history.**

S#15.

II. Why have all cultures throughout history worshipped something ?**S#16.****A. It's obvious that it's within the nature of man to worship.****S#17.**

1. Man is born with the instinct to worship.
 - a. It's like breathing or eating.
 - b. It doesn't have to be taught.
2. WHAT a person worships is a learned behavior.
 - a. Some learn from the surrounding culture – environment
 - b. Some receive formal training.
 - c. All make a decision what to worship. (*God, the earth, things, self, a team, etc.*)

B. Man longs for a relationship with his creator, his Father.**S#18.**

1. It is a matter of "Natural Affection" ... **II Tim. 3:3**
2. By nature, every child wants to be accepted by his father. (*God is Heavenly Father.*)

C. Those who do not worship something are not normal.**S#19.**

1. They have an internal struggle ... frustrated ... unhappy.
2. Very often they feel empty and unfulfilled, but don't understand why.
 - a. *It's an itch they cannot scratch.*
 - ** b. It's like when a person craves a certain food, but doesn't know what it is; So he keeps eating many different things, but isn't satisfied.**
3. Likewise, people who don't worship have a deep-seated need that can cause them to try to fulfill it in unhealthy ways.
 - a. Drugs , alcohol, etc.
 - b. Sex , relationship hopping , identifying with movies
 - c. Food, Athletic teams, technology ...
 - d. Various obsessive behaviors, even good ones – family, charities,

D. Research has established that religious people live longer and are more healthy.**S#20.**

1. At peace within ... feeling of satisfaction ... contentment
2. Avoid vices.
3. Assembling for worship gives a contentment that can be found nowhere else.
4. Those who have a healthy relationship with the church can find emotional support wherever they assemble with the brethren. (*commonness abroad*)

III. Worship is more than performing rituals ... called acts of worship.**S#21.****A. Regardless of religion there are specified acts involved in public worship.****S#22.**

1. Performing rituals help men feel as though they have worshipped.
2. The more primitive religions have more visual stimuli.
 - a. Symbolic articles, candles, smoke, smells, instruments for sound.
 - b. Men with special attire performing activities. (*often elaborate*)
3. God understands the needs for some external and visual stimuli.
 - a. The tabernacle was designed by God and was the most elaborate tent ever sown.
 - b. The temple was the most costly structure every built. (*Reflected God's glory.*)
4. The church must recognize this need .. & .. fulfill it.
 - a. Our church building must project the proper atmosphere.
 - b. Our assembly must project a sense of occasion ... *approaching God.*

B. God understands man's need for sensual experience.**S#23.**

1. Pre-Moses = Sacrifices (sights, sounds, smells) (WHY ? *Never take away sins.*)
2. Moses = Sacrifices, tabernacle, priestly garments, showbread
3. Christians = Baptism, Communion, Oil, Laying hands elders

C. We perform acts of worship, but true worship is an exercise of the heart.**S#24.**

1. **Definition : Worship : expressions of reverence and / or devotion, especially toward a deity.**
2. **Isaiah 1:10-15 (Read)** ... Sinful Israel's sacrifices were unacceptable
3. **Matthew 15:8-9** ... Lips service and will worship is not accepted

S#25.**D. Jesus disassociated true worship from the fulfilling of specific acts at specific places.**

1. **John 4:20-24** "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." **21** Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. **22** "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. **24** "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
(**Main thrust is HEART ... not correct doctrine**)
2. He taught that true worship originates from the heart.
3. **Vs. – 23** ... God seeks men's who will give Him their heart.

IV. The very words used for worship show it to be an expression of the heart. S#28.

A. Kneel : Gonu : Fall on one's knees, to bow, prostrate self before – humble. S#29.

1. **Phil. 2:10** – so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, S#30.
2. **Eph. 3: 14** – For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every ...
- ** *The one who worships, must acknowledge the superiority and the authority of the one being worshipped. How do you show it ?* S#31.

B. Worship : Proskunein : Closest to English “to worship”, bow down to S#32.

1. Originates from the word “to kiss.”
 - a. Ancient Greek custom of honoring the deities of the earth by kissing the ground.
 - b. This act necessitated that one bend, kneel or prostrate himself all of the way down.
 - c. **Thus**, to worship by prostrating one's self in an act of reverence.
2. When giving the Law of Moses, this act was forbidden to do for idols. S#33.
Exod. 20:5 – You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God,
3. This is what God seeks ... **true worship**
John 4: 24 – God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
- ** *Worship flows from the heart and motivates the surrender of one's will.* S#34.

C. Serve : Latreuo : Serve (acts done) with no thought of reward. S#35.

1. One who surrenders to a deity worships him and also serves that deity.
 - a. To worship and to serve are two different things ... worship is part of service.
 - b. People who serve are called servants.
 - c. Servants do things which benefit another ... not just worship, i.e., just express devotion.
2. People who serve God cannot serve the things of this world. S#36.
Exod 20:5 – You shall not worship or serve them for I the Lord your God am a jealous
3. **Deut. 10:12-13** - Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to **fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?** S#37.
3. **Josh. 24: 14-15** ... Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; **#38.** and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. **15** If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether **S#39.** the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites .. but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

4. The prophetess Anna worshipped **and** served. S#40.
Luke 2: 37 – She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers”

**** The actions one takes BECAUSE of his surrendered (loving and worshipful) heart is his service to God. It is done to please and glorify God.** S#42.

D. When we worship or serve God, He is looking at our hearts. S#43.

1. **Matt. 15: 8 – This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.**

2. The world pulls us down, but assembly restores the joy to our worship and service.

Psa. 122: 1 – I was glad when they said to me, S#44.
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

CONCLUSION :

A. The assembly of the church is a gift from God. S#45.

1. It gives one an opportunity to express his love for God.
2. It gives one the positive reinforcement of doing acts with others.
3. It fulfills the instinctive need of the worshipper.

B. The assembly builds one’s spiritual relationships. S#46.

1. It reinforces the bond between the worshipper and his Heavenly Father.
2. It strengthens the bonds with his fellow worshipers.
3. **All relationships require maintenance (assembly facilitates maintenance)**

C. Yes ... God commands you to be here, but you NEED to be here. S#47.

1. Worship makes you healthier and happier.
2. It gives you life both now and in eternity.

INVITATION :

Anyone is welcome in the assembly and all can in some measure benefit from it. S#48.

But one must be in Christ to truly worship Him. (fully benefit from worship)

Does God have your heart ? S#49.

Lesson Texts :**Deuteronomy 10: 12-11: 1**

12 “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **13** *and* to keep the LORD’S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? **14** Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. **15** Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, *even* you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. **16** So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. **17** For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. **18** He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. **19** So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. **20** You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. **21** He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen. **22** Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons *in all*, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.

11:1 You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.”

Philippians 2: 9-11

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.