

True Worshippers Must Worship in Spirit and Truth *John 4:19-24*

Theme: Worship

Aim: To explore what it actually means to worship in spirit and truth.

1. In our previous lessons on worship we have emphasized the object of our worship which is God. In our last lesson we look at several passages that gave us principles by which we are to worship.
2. In that lesson we introduced the principle given by Jesus in John 4:24 that we are to worship in spirit and truth.
3. Why these lessons? We are involved in an upheaval that has affected every religious group called “the Worship Wars.”
4. I want to return to that principle expressed by Jesus in John 4:21-24 and explore it in more depth in this lesson.

I. A closer look at what Jesus said in John 4:21-24.

A. Worship is not limited to a time and place.

1. While it is true that Christians gather to worship collectively, one can worship God individually anywhere and anytime.
2. In this way Christian worship is distinct from Jewish worship which centered around the sacrifices that were given at specific times and in a particular place.

B. Jesus uses the phrase “true worshippers.”

1. There is such a thing as true worship.
2. Is there such a thing as false worship? Worship that is unacceptable?
3. Jesus spoke of vain worship in Matthew 15:9. How many examples of the prophets condemning Israel’s perverted worship would be needed to establish the point.
4. But a very important concept to drive home, false worship is still worship!

C. From this and other passages we learn that worship is something we do.

1. Worship is a verb. Verbs denote action.
2. But Jesus says that true worship is more than just action. To that we now turn.

II. Let’s analyze what Jesus has to say about true worship.

A. Think of a circle. We will label that circle “true worship.”

1. According to Jesus, true worship is in spirit and truth.
2. We must have both to have true worship.
3. If you have truth but not spirit, you do not have true worship. You still have worship, but it is not true worship.
4. If you have spirit but not truth, you do not have true worship. You still have worship, but you do not have true worship.

B. What is truth and spirit?

1. Spirit is understood to be attitude or intent.
2. Truth is understood to be the action.
3. If you have the right action, but not the right attitude, it is not true worship.
4. If you have the right attitude or intent, but not the right action, it is not true worship.
5. Intent alone is not worship. Intent does not make an action worship or non-worship. It can make an action true or false worship.

C. This is easily illustrated by Paul's admonition to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

1. Remember you have to have both right attitude and right action (spirit and truth) to have true worship.
2. They had the right action.
3. The problem: they had the wrong attitude, they were doing it in an unworthy manner.
4. What exactly was the problem? Not discerning the body of Jesus.
5. Paul's solution, examine selves and do this in the right manner.

III. A couple of observations about this

A. If we are to worship God (Matthew 4:10), if our worship is "God centered" we will seek to please Him, not ourselves.

B. To have true worship, must do whatever action(s) God has instructed.

1. That is truth.
2. What I like to call the God ordained, God specified actions.
3. God determines what is worship, man does not.

C. We need to do it with the proper attitude.

1. Remember Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-4)?
2. Certainly we could say without a presumptive, but rather a humble submissive, obedient attitude.

1. In the next several lessons we will explore the God ordained, God specified actions which constitute worship.
2. All of this as we continue to consider how we respond to the awesome God who created us and whom we serve.