

Tea Tree Gully Community Church

The Truth about Worship

Introduction: Worship includes thanksgiving, ([Psalm 50:23](#)) and praise, ([Hebrews 13:15](#)) and worship, which is heartfelt expressions of love and adoration ([Psalm 51:17](#)). And we notice from the references given that each element requires sacrifice and they should be given to God as a mark of respect and honour. ([Malachi 1:6-7](#)) God is never happy with contaminated or polluted or defiled sacrifice. He desires sacrifice, but it must be sacrifice out of a right heart. Sacrifice will cost you something. It may be that you have to come out of your comfort zone, or that you will offer thanks, praise and worship to God when you are tired, don't feel like it, or just don't want to make the effort and choose to leave it to someone else. That's when you need to make a sacrifice that will cost you something. Note too that the rebuke is given to the priests, and we as New Testament believers are recognized as priests. ([1 Peter 2:5, 9](#)) Now singing songs is good, but it may only be singing and never become worship. An old hymn puts it this way:

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
Bow down before Him, His glory proclaim,
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore Him, the Lord is His name.

King David's approach, revealed in [Psalm 25:1 NKJV](#) is, **"To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul."** This means that we will yield our wills to God, fix our minds on God and release our emotions towards God in expressing our thanks, praise and worship to Him. We are to be involved and not remain detached and disinterested when the leader exhorts us to participate.

Scripture: See [John 4:1-26](#) with the emphasis on [verses 20-24 NIV](#) which reads, **"Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."**

Pre-eminent in the life of a disciple of Christ is **worship**, which can be:

- A popular buzz word in Christian circles (we have worship conferences and seminars)
- A distant concept for many believers
- Foundational to everything else in the Christian life

I'm afraid too many people come to church because it's Sunday, rather than coming on Sunday to worship. Too many come for social reasons, or habit or entertainment or because they have a sense of duty, rather than to give praise and **worship** to God, and exalt His holy name. And far too many

of God's kids come to be blessed rather than be a blessing. And what's more we can all fall into those categories from time to time!

One big reason for this is that many Christians don't know how to worship the rest of the week, so they're not prepared for Sunday worship; when we come together to celebrate. Worship needs to be a lifestyle, rather than just an event when we meet together.

It's an issue that we need to tackle with a goal to be a better worshipper of God. Why? Because what the church needs, and what God wants today is purer worship, more focused worship, more biblical worship and acceptable worship. (Dr A. W. Tozer, a great prophetic teacher of the last century, wrote books titled "**Worship; the Missing Jewel in the Evangelical Church**" and "**Whatever Happened to Worship**").

Sometimes worship gets lost in the pile of other things and the result can be tragic.

Illustration:

The true story is told of a mother who gave a party after her baby had been christened at a church. She invited friends and family over after church to celebrate the big event. The baby was laid on the bed sound asleep in the parent's bedroom. As the guests arrived they took off their coats and placed them in the bedroom.

Later one of the people asked, "Where is the baby?" The mother realized she had forgotten about the baby amid the festivities. When she went into the bedroom she discovered that the guests coats had been placed over the baby's head and the baby had suffocated.

I can't imagine anything more tragic for a family. And I can't imagine anything more tragic for the family of God than to smother true worship by burying it under all the other stuff we do.

When we smother worship, we at the same time smother our development as Christ's disciples. There's heaps of truth about worship in [John 4:20-24](#) that can help us grasp the centrality of worship.

The priority of worship:

Here, in this passage of Scripture, we have a real-life setting in which God is going to teach us about worship. This wasn't a temple service; it is a watering well outside of town. This woman, the disciples and the rest of the Samaritans were real people – as human as they come.

Worship has to do with real people. There were real needs and problems here. Jesus was hungry and thirsty. The woman needed salvation. Jesus' disciples were standing there stunned. The woman raised the age-old question of hostility between Jews and Samaritans. So there was racial conflict.

In the midst of this real life scenario Jesus talked about worship. Why? Because if we ever get worship right the other stuff we spend so much time trying to fix will get fixed a whole lot quicker.

The Samaritan woman got the real deal on worship so she stopped prostituting herself. And because Jesus gave his disciples the right view of God, they were able to fellowship with their former enemies, the Samaritans.

Later ([verse 35](#)) Jesus told his disciples to **“I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”** Guess what they saw when they looked up – Samaritans coming out to meet Jesus. Then Jesus stayed two days in the town and he and his disciples ministered to them. And the Samaritans themselves laid aside old prejudices to receive Christ.

Note that if we get worship right a lot of other things that “white ant “ our lives will take care of themselves. And instead of powerless religion, we can have Holy Spirit empowered living.

One thing is for sure though, we won't be able to worship God acceptably if we are holding on to attitudes, offences or unforgiveness in our lives, or we are secretly lusting after the things of the flesh. (See [1 John 2:15-16 NIV](#))

The spheres of worship:

The spheres of worship are both **public** and **private**.

Worship is not connected first and foremost to a place. It's a state of heart and mind. Worship is not so much where you are; rather it begins with who you are, and with whom you are connected.

If you haven't learned to worship as a way of life then showing up in a building won't change anything. **Public** and **private** worship are meant to complement each other.

Many believers remain static because the only time they are worshipping is when they are in church on a Sunday.

Obviously worship is supposed to take place in the house of God. The church has pastors and musicians and singers and all of that which is necessary to lead God's people in worship. The church gathered is one sphere of worship. But when the other sphere of worship is there also; when worship is part of who you are, and not just something you do, you come alive. People who have difficulty with public, corporate worship are usually revealing the fact that no authentic (real) private worship is happening in their lives.

Public worship: is crucial for a number of reasons:

1. Worship reminds us that God is **“Our Father who art in heaven”**, rather than just **“my father”**. I am a child. There is a family. To ignore and neglect public worship is to insult God as the head of a family of which you and I are only part.
2. There are things God will do for you in public worship that aren't necessarily available to you in private worship. It was in the context of public worship that the early church experienced certain miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit.

3. Public worship is designed to benefit others as well as yourself – to encourage and bless and build up others.

4. God expects us to worship and he awaits his people in the place of public worship.

Exodus 20:24-25 “Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you. If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it.”

Genesis 22:5 “He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

Private worship:

If the only time God hears your songs of praise is on Sunday; if the only time you interact with his Word is on Sunday, and if the only time you fellowship with believers is on Sunday then your spiritual life is going to be anaemic.

God deserves our praise. He wants our worship – privately and corporately with the body of believers. These are the spheres of worship and they are interconnected. Anyone who is worshipping privately will have no problem worshipping publicly with other believers and becoming the disciples Christ saved him/her to be.

The value of worship:

God is not just seeking worship but authentic worshippers; these are hard to find. (See **Psalm 148** where we are given insight into the extent of the worship afforded God by the whole of creation.) Why? Because God is deserving of it! God is seeking worshippers; people who will praise and adore his name. We thank Him for what He has done. We praise Him for his works, His attributes, his nature and his ways. And we worship him for who He is.

A Choice to Worship:

For the rest of creation worship is automatic. For us human beings worship must be a conscious choice. God created you to be his worshipper. See **Revelation 4:11 KJV** “**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**” See also **Philippians 2:10-11, 3:3**. You can exist without worship but you cannot live without worship because that’s the reason we are here.

Like the heart in the body, worship is the internal pump that keeps our spirits alive; or energized if you like. That’s why one of Satan’s great tricks is to keep us from worshipping God as a way of life. So worship is valuable because God is looking for it and because it is why you were made. If you don’t worship you lose. God does not lose. Our lack of worship does not diminish him. He is going to get his glory. The question is, “Do you and I want to get in on the action? I do.

In worship we recognize God for who he is and honour him with our expressions of praise and adoration; of sacrifice and service – we bless him and give him the glory. We ascribe to him the greatness due to him. See [1 Chronicles 29:9-13](#)

God – the object of our worship – Psalm 24:1-5

He is Father [Ephesians 1:3](#). We need to discover just what it means to call God our Father.

He is Spirit (first of all). This means that you cannot worship God with your body alone because God in his essence is not corporeal, meaning he is without a body. He is invisible, yet he is a person who possesses intellect, will and emotions, etc.

If you are going to worship God then your worship must arise from within the invisible part of you which is your spirit.

It is very possible for your body to show up at church while your spirit is off somewhere else. You can have the body of a worshipper but not the heart of a worshipper.

Because God is Spirit, he deals primarily with the invisible realm, not the visible realm. You may go to church having the look of worship and the smell of worship. You may have the hairdo of worship or the makeup of worship. Most of us fix ourselves up physically for worship. Some wipe away the tears of worship. But if all God gets from our worship is our bodies, we are not worshipping him. For God is not body. **“God is Spirit and those.....”** See also [Philippians 3:3](#)

This means that true worship is not conjured up by what happens physically. Some people don't think they have worshipped unless their bodies are moved. But the real deal is, unless your spirit is moved it doesn't matter what your body does.

Don't get me wrong. God does not ignore the body, but he does not start with the body. God always starts with the spirit because God is Spirit.

Your spirit is engaged in worship when you deal with sin, yield to the Holy Spirit and praise God.

These are the raw material that the Holy Spirit needs to connect your human spirit with God in authentic worship. This is the attitude or emotion of worship.

He is the audience – our focus. He is glorious.

The essence of worship:

It is to be in Spirit and truth. It is to be authentic (real) and accurate (true). It is to be with a right attitude and with right information.

True worship engages the emotions and the mind. It must include both heart and head. See [Psalm 25:1](#) where we read of the psalmist lifting up his soul to the LORD, and explain just what that means.

We must avoid two extremes:

- Spirit without truth – tends towards mysticism
- Truth without spirit – deadness

If you have not been worshipping all week long, a heart for worship is not going to suddenly swoop down from out of nowhere and fall on you on Sundays. Some people get all excited in church, then when the benediction is announced they return to what for them is normal at other times.

Did anything happen to them? Did they worship God the way he wants to be worshipped?

The fuel of worship is the truth of God and the truth about God.

The furnace of worship is the spirit of man.

The fire of worship is the Holy Spirit.

When these three come together you have worship. You can fool the crowd. I can fool the crowd. But the Bible says God looks at the heart ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). You can make people think you are worshipping, when in your spirit you know that God doesn't have your undivided attention and the focused devotion of your heart.

Sure, Satan tries to divert us from worship, but deep down he cannot rob you of your passion for God. Deep down you know whether you have a passion for God or not.

You say, "I know I need to worship God from my heart as a way of life. But I'm not there yet". Then the issue is, "Do you want to get there? Are you on the way?"

If you really want to worship God, nothing can stop you. No one can keep you from this releasing, fulfilling and empowering experience available to any disciple of Christ.