

Does It Really Matter How We Worship?

Introduction:

- I. Does it really matter. We have been asking that question the last couple of weeks because there many people in the religious world who are under the impression that nothing really matters except that one believes in Jesus with mental assent. As long as one believes in Jesus, they say, nothing else really matters. Well, we have tried to expose that as a false conclusion by looking at some things that do really matter. For example, we have seen that it does really matter what church you attend. Why? It matters because there are many man-made churches and yet there is salvation only in the church that Christ built. Solomon once said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (**Psa. 127:1**). Thus, it does really matter. Then on last week, we asked the question, does it really matter what we teach? The answer, of course, is yes it does really matter. Why? It matters because God demands that we abide in the doctrine of Christ (**2 Jn. 9**). If we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ, John says that we have not God. Thus, it does really matter what we teach.

- II. In this lesson, then, we want to look at something else that does really matter, and we will do so by once again asking the question, "does it really matter?" Well, "Does It Really How We Worship God?" Like in the previous lessons, our answer, yea, the scriptural answer, is yes it does really matter. Why does it matter? It matters because Jesus gave us instructions to follow with regard to worship. Listen to Him:

John 4:23-24

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

So then, let's look at the two things that our Lord mentions in ver. 24.

Lesson:

I. **It Matters Because We Must Worship God with the Right Spirit.**

By "spirit" I mean a proper attitude and mind-set. The word spirit is used in that capacity in the several passages in the New Testament and Strong says that when it is used in that way it refers to one's mental disposition. This is what Jesus is talking in Jn. 4:24. If our worship is to be acceptable to God, we must worship Him with the proper disposition. Did you notice in Jn. 4:23 that Jesus refers to true worshippers? If there is such a thing as true worshippers, then there is such a thing as false worshippers as well. And one way to be a false worshipper is to worship God with the wrong spirit. So then, let's look at three things that are involved with having a proper spirit.

A) It involves having a rapturous mind.

That is, we should all be overjoyed to be here. When it comes to worshipping God, don't leave home without it. We should all be here because this is exactly where we want to be. It should be a delightful occasion every time we get into our cars and begin that trip to the meeting house to worship God. **We should not be here just for appearance. We should not be here just to please someone else. We should not be here because we have been forced into it. We should not be here because we have been talked or tricked into it. We should be here because we want to be here.** We should be here with a willing mind. David had a willing mind when he went to worship God.

Ps 122:1

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

In the Old Testament the house of the Lord was the temple. It was a place of public worship where Israelites would go to serve God. And when someone said to David, "Let's go to the house of the Lord," David didn't say "Oh no not again." David didn't say, "Why do we always have to go to that place and worship God." **No, instead he met that invitation with gladness and glee and readiness of heart.** You see, when it came to worshipping God David did so with a willing mind.

Ps 42:4

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Ps 84:2

My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God.

Ps 84:10

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Is it not clear from these passages that David looked forward with great anticipation to the time when he could go to the house of God and worship his Creator? Should we feel anything less than David? And if so, please tell me why? Why should we not want to go to a place of worship and serve God every bit as much as David did? Is God not our Creator and Sustainer even as He was for David? Has God been less kind to us than He was to David? Has God demonstrated His love, His grace, and His mercy less to us than He did to David? I don't think so! **Listen to me: we can't worship God thinking that it is a burden instead of a**

blessing and expect God to accept our feeble attempt. He won't do it. So then, we should not only worship God, we should, no we must, do so with a rapturous mind.

B) It involves having a ready mind.

We ought to come to service ready to get something out of it. Listen to me: make up your mind that you are going to get something out of every service you attend. Some Christians make up their minds before they get to services that they aren't going to get anything out of it (**e.g. Wednesday night Bible study, singing, preaching, etc.**). It is a disgrace before God to bring that kind of mentality to any worship service. That kind of thinking needs to be left at home. It doesn't matter who the teacher is, who the preacher may be, or who is leading the singing, we should all be able to get something good out of every service. It's simply a matter of having a receptive and ready mind.

How can we not get something out of singing praises to God? How can we not get something out of approaching God's throne in prayer? How can we not get something out of studying God's Word? How can we not get something out of giving of our means to God with a cheerful heart on the Lord's day? How, pray tell, can we not get anything out of remembering and reflecting upon the sacrifice that our Savior made on our behalf? **Well, let me tell you how that is possible—it's by thinking that worship is something that is done to you instead of something that you do.** This is one reason why denominations have these big productions where the majority of people just sit back and enjoy the show and think that they have worshipped God. But if we are not careful, brethren, we can develop the same spirit. I have had some say to me before I preach, "preach good tonight because I've had a long day." Pay attention to me: I am not the entertainment for tonight. I'm worshipping God right now and you should be worshipping God too. **Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth. Worship is not passive; it's participatory. Worship is not simply a mood; it is an active response. Worship is not just a feeling; it's an open declaration of our love and respect for God.** And every time we come to a worship service it should be with the mindset that we are going to get something out of it because we are ready to participate (e.g., Alice Beard).

C) It involves having a reverent mind.

We sometimes allow our worship services to become too casual. Let's remember what worship is. The Greek word, according to Vine, means "*to kiss towards, denoting an act of homage.*" Strong says it means "*to prostrate oneself in homage; to do reverence to or to adore.*" What are we doing here right now? What do we do each and every time we come

to a worship service like this? Well I'll tell you what we are suppose to be doing. **We are supposing to be bowing down before God, figuratively speaking, and paying Him homage with reverent adoration.**

Now let me ask you, "how do you behave in a typical worship service like this? Do you show God respect? Do you prostrate yourself before the living God with godly fear and respect? There is not a few in our assemblies that don't do that. You would be surprised at what preachers see when they preach. So far as seeing what is going on and how people are behaving in services, I have, figuratively speaking, the best seat in the house, don't I? And what do I see? **I see some people talking. I see notes being passed around. I see people getting up and down, going in and out of the auditorium. I see people playing with babies. And yes, I see people sleeping.** Do you know why these things go on during worship service? It's because some of us left home without the proper spirit. Some of us have left home without a reverent mind. Listen to me: when you come to an assembly like this, you should plan, once the service begins, to stop talking, stop playing with the babies, stop passing notes and start worshipping God with the proper mental disposition.

And I have to say one more thing about worshipping God with reverence. A part of doing this is giving God our absolute best. Anything less than that is disrespectful (**Mal. 1:6-13**).

II. It Matters Because We Must Worship God in Truth.

Let it be noted that those who attempt to worship God in an unscriptural, unauthorized way are also false worshippers.

Cain was a false worshipper because he attempted to worship God in his own way instead of God's way. So the Bible says that God **"had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect..."** (**Gen. 4:4-5**).

Nadab and Abihu were false worshippers because they offered strange fire before the Lord. These two sons of Aaron attempted to worship God in an unauthorized way and the Bible says that **"...there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord"** (**Lev. 10:2**).

The Pharisees were false worshippers because they taught for doctrine the commandments of men. So Jesus said about them **"in vain they do worship me..."** (**Matt. 15:9**). All of these examples remind us that we can't just worship God any way that we want to. Our worship, Jesus said, must be according to truth, and that means that it must be in harmony with the Word of God.

Now, there are five avenues of worship that read about in the New Testament (Singing, Praying, Teaching, Giving, & the Lord's Supper). These have all been perverted by the majority of religious bodies today.

David Lipscomb once wrote the following regarding the difference between churches of Christ (sound local churches) and denominational thinking. Listen to him:

“Our worship to God is regulated by the laws of God. We have no knowledge of what is well-pleasing to God, in worship, save as God has revealed it to us. The New Testament is at once the rule and limit of our faith and worship to God. This is the distinctive difference between us and other religious bodies. **Others accept the New Testament as their rule of faith, but do not make it the limit of their faith.** They add other things as articles of faith and acts of worship than those contained in the Bible. We seek for things authorized, they for things not prohibited. Our rule is safe—theirs is loose. Ours confines us to God's appointments. Theirs opens the worship and service of God to whatever will please men. Our rule limits man's worship to the exercises approved of in the Bible.”

A. Singing – Listen to me: Singing doesn't mean playing, does it? Singing is a specific kind of music. Listen to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary:

- 1 a: *to produce musical tones by means of the voice* b: *to utter words in musical tones and with musical inflections and modulations.*
- 2 *to produce musical or harmonious sounds.*
- 3 *to utter with musical inflections; to interpret in musical tones produced by the voice.*

B. Giving – The Bible is clear with regard to how we are to give (**1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7**). Now, most churches today are commanded, not by God, but by their earthly leaders, to tithe. Where's the New Testament example of Christians tithing? Where is the New Testament command for the church to tithe? The fact of the matter is tithing was an O.T. commandment given to the people of God under the Old law (**Lev. 27:30-34**). That law has been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (**Col. 2:14**).

C. Lord's Supper - How often should we partake of the Lord's Supper? I'll tell you how often! Just as often as we are commanded to lay by in store (**Acts 20:7**). If we don't follow the Bible example, we are left up to our own speculations and desires as to what we think God might want. Why not take the guess work out of it? Why not remove human judgment and just follow the Bible example and pattern?

D. Teaching - Denominational churches follow creeds that have been written by man. Faithful Christians follow the Bible and the Bible only. Denominational churches follow men whom they ***think*** are inspired of God. Faithful Christians follow the apostles and prophets of the New

Testament who we **know** are inspired of God. Thus, we will not tolerate any additions or subtractions from the Word of God. You see, our worship must be, not only with the right spirit, but also in truth.

Conclusion:

Does it matter how we worship God? Yes it does! Because, as we said in the beginning, if you can have true worship, you can also have false worship. And false worship, worship that is not done in spirit and in truth, will not be accepted by God.