

TRUE WORSHIP

John 4:24; 14:6 Mark 7:6-7

Introduction: "Why don't you come worship with us?" "Worship is at 11:00." We are familiar with the word "worship" but do we really do what the word means? Do we even know what the word means to God? There are all kinds of services that are called "worship" services. Who can worship, where are we supposed to worship? What is involved in worship? What is "true" worship?

I. TRUE WORSHIP DOES NOT INCLUDE EVERYONE

1. ***"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him MUST worship Him in spirit and in truth."***
 - There is no choice here, there is but ONE way to worship God.
 - ***"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again..."***
 - ***"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."***
 - Only those who have been born again (Christians) and who are resting upon the atoning work of Jesus Christ can worship God, the Father.
2. ***"This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me."***
 - A person can be sincere, generous, zealous, devout, a regular attender, yet be no more capable of worshipping God than a person without a tongue singing in the choir.
3. In order to worship God, God must be known and he cannot be known apart from Christ.
 - ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me..."***
 - An unbeliever knows not Jesus Christ nor does He know God the Father and thus cannot worship Him.
 - A believer who is out of God's will cannot worship God for his/her heart is far away from God.

II. WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

1. ***"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."***
 - To worship "in spirit" is not fleshly rites and ceremonies and programs.
 - To worship "in truth" is not superstitions and idols.
 - To worship in spirit and in truth means giving to God from an enlightened and regenerated heart.
2. To worship in "spirit and truth" rules out the external and spectacular. It bars out using the senses.
 - You cannot worship God by looking at stained glass images.
 - You cannot worship God by listening to the sounds of costly sound equipment.
 - You cannot worship God by burning incense.
 - You cannot worship God by fingering beads.
 - We cannot worship God with our eyes, ears, nose, or hands for these are of the flesh and not of the spirit.

3. To worship "in spirit and in truth" rules out social worship or the emotions.
 - Words from the preacher sounding eloquent, touching, etc., is not worship.
 - Beautiful anthems sung by a well trained choir, moving the soul, is not worship.
 - These things are of the soul, but not of the spirit and truth required by God.

4. TRUE WORSHIP is the ADORATION from the heart of a redeemed people, occupied with God, Himself and none other.
 - The unsaved know nothing of being redeemed and cannot worship in "spirit and in truth."
 - Israel learned how to worship God when they found themselves on the far shores of the Red Sea.

5. TRUE WORSHIP is the new nature in the believer stirred into activity, turning to it's giver, God.
 - It is turning to the One who gave eternal life.
 - It is the new heart crying out "*thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.*"
 - It is sinners, cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, exclaiming thanksgiving, deliberately, consciously and with purpose.

6. TRUE WORSHIP is illustrated in *John 12:2-3* when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive ointment, then wiped His feet with her hair.
 - She didn't come to hear a sermon, nor to sit at His feet, nor to meet all Jesus' disciples, nor to relax and rest after a weeks work - NO!
 - Mary came to pour out upon Jesus that which she had long kept treasured up, the most valuable of all her possessions.
 - She did not think about Simon, the one once with leprosy, nor her sister, Martha, or Lazarus, NO!
 - Jesus filled the thoughts of Mary and adoration and honor were her only thoughts, to pour out her heart's devotion before him. **THAT IS TRUE WORSHIP!**

7. The SUBJECT of worship is most important.
 - The wise men brought rich gifts to Jesus.
 - **That is what worship is! Not coming to receive from Jesus, but to GIVE to Him!**

8. THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP IS GOD
 - Why is it that in most of our "worship" services there is very little overflowing of the heart, spontaneous exclamations of adoration so hard to find?
 - Because people are there for the wrong reason!

III. HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP

1. Many "worshippers" lack assurance.
 - Assurance of salvation, assurance of forgiveness, etc.

2. Many fail to judge themselves by God's Word and come to worship still stained with sin.
 - Aaron and the priests were required to cleanse themselves before entering into the Holy Place.

3. Many worshippers come to worship services stained and filled with worldliness.
 - Minds and hearts are preoccupied with things of the world rather than God and worship of Him.
 - *"This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me..."*

CONCLUSION:

1. Now ask yourself again, "why am I here? Have I really worshipped?"
2. *"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."*
 - *"I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*
 - *"This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me..."*
3. Only those who are of God's Family, His Children, those born again, can truly worship God. Everyone else can attend a service but cannot worship God.
4. Think about what you have been calling "worship." Is it what God requires? Do you need to make some changes? Remember, it is in "spirit and truth" what God will accept.