



Sunday June 11, 2017
The Worship Series
Part 2: Personal & Corporate Worship

Last Sunday's Recap:

Everybody worships - the object of worship could differ.

As human beings, we are all created to worship.

The dictionary defines worship as the act of expressing - love, adoration, respect and honor for someone or something.

- 1) **What is worship?** Biblical worship – **Recognition** of who God is, **Reverence** for God, **Communion** with God & our **Response** to an encounter with Him. *Worship defies all definition*
- 2) In *John 4:23, 24* the Lord Jesus gave us some insights on worship- that the Father is seeking true worshippers who will worship in *spirit* and *truth*. Our expression of worship might vary but, those who worship *must* worship in spirit and in truth.
In *spirit* – out of our innermost being, whole heartedly (as led by the Holy Spirit)
In *truth* – sincerely, without pretense & according to the Word of God since His Word is truth.
- 3) We also looked at what happens when we worship – We don't add anything to God but we experience change - *transformation*, experience of *God's presence*, *empowerment* to rule and reign as kings and priests.
- 4) Worshipping God in difficult times – Abraham, David, Paul & Silas. Horatio Spafford – Hymn writer of '*It is well*'

Today's message:

Today we will take a look at *personal worship* (i.e., worshipping God individually... on our own) and *corporate worship* (worshipping the Lord as a congregation of believers)

We see in God's Word that in addition to worship being our *recognition* of God, *reverence* of God, *communion* with God and *our response* to an encounter with God,
Worship is also offering up of our sacrifice to God.

We read about the sacrifice aspect of worship in the tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build in *Exodus Ch 25-27, 30, 40* and instructions about the sacrificial offerings in *Leviticus*.

The Tabernacle

The tabernacle is a picture of a *journey of repentance, consecration, prayer and worship* leading to the very presence of God!

There were 3 sections to the tabernacle that Moses built:

- 1) The outer court, 2) the inner court also called the holy place and 3) the Holy of Holies called the Most Holy Place



1) **The Outer Court** had *the altar of sacrifice* and *a bronze laver of water*

The priest would wash his hands and feet with water from *the bronze laver* before entering the tabernacle of meeting or nearing *the altar of sacrifice*. The *altar of sacrifice* was the place where different kinds of sacrifices were offered – there were *burnt offerings* for atonement for sin, *grain offerings* as memorials to the Lord, *peace offerings* for thanksgiving, *sin offerings* and *trespass offerings*. The blood of the sacrifice would be sprinkled around the altar. From here, the priest would then move to the inner court.

2) **The Inner Court** (the Holy Place) had

a) the *table of showbread* which represents God meeting our natural needs by divine provision, the meeting of our spiritual needs through the Word – our daily bread, and also healing and deliverance (Matt 6:11, 4:4, 15:25-28)

b) the *lampstand* with the oil and the flame producing light represents the illumination and revelation that the Holy Spirit brings into our lives (Eph 1:17)

c) the *altar of incense* represents prayer and intercession (Psa 141:2, Rev 8:3,4)

Only the High priest could move from here to enter the Holy of holies... once a year!

3) **The Holy of Holies** (the most Holy Place) was separated from the inner court by a curtain and had the *ark of the covenant* with *the mercy seat* place on top of it. This was the place where God would meet with the high priest and speak to him. There was nothing more for the priest to do. It was all of God. It was the place to be still and know Him and abide in His presence (Ps. 46:10)

Jesus Christ - the perfect sacrifice

1) *The sacrifice at the tabernacle was symbolic of the perfect sacrifice – the Lord Jesus- that takes away the sins of the world.*

HEBREWS 9:9, 11-12

⁹ *It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience*

¹¹ *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

HEBREWS 10:11-12

¹¹ *And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,*

2) *As the royal priesthood because of the sacrifice and blood of Jesus, we have unlimited access to the holy of holies – the very presence of God*

HEBREWS 10:19-22

¹⁹ *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*



- 3) We, as believers are *washed, redeemed* and made *righteous* by the blood of the Lord Jesus, to have access to enter the Holy of holies, anytime, all the time - to meet and fellowship with God. *However*, it is up to us to ***individually draw near to Him*** in worship ***Just like the priests of the tabernacle drew near to the most holy place, we, as worshippers and priests in the new covenant have to draw near to Him in worship.***

So, when we draw near individually and worship God, we call it ***personal worship***.

Some practical guidelines for personal worship.

- 1) *Draw near to God intentionally* | Heb 10:22 encourages us to draw near
 - With a true heart – in sincerity, whole heartedly
 - In faith
 - With a clear conscience (ask God for forgiveness, repent)
 - Washed with pure water (the water of the Word)
 - With boldness (recognizing that we are the righteousness of God through the cross)
- 2) *Express thanksgiving and praise in spoken words, in song*
- 3) *Worship with the Word* – use scripture passages to express adoration to God
Rev 4:8,11; Ps 36:5-7; Ps 63:1,2; Ps 104:1,2
- 4) *Praying and singing in tongues*

- 4) With our identity as priests, each of us have a responsibility to offer up ***spiritual sacrifices***

1 PETER 2:5

⁵ *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Just like the priests of the tabernacle offered up sacrifices, we, as worshippers and priests in the new covenant have a responsibility to offer up spiritual sacrifices

- 5) One of the spiritual sacrifices that we are called to offer as we draw near to Him is ***Praise.***

HEBREWS 13:15

¹⁵ *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

PSALM 100:4

⁴ *Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.*

What Is Praise?

To commend, applaud, to express approval or admiration (*Dictionary meaning*)

Praise is the verbal declaration of adoration and thanksgiving for *what God has done* and for *what He has promised to do*. It focuses on *His character* and *His wondrous acts*.

Praise is the spiritual sacrifice that we offer to God.

Sacrifice involves

- 1) ***giving up*** something that we have a right to ***or taking on*** something that we don't necessarily have to.
- 2) *Death* - death to *comfort, self-pity, fleshly desires, pride.*



Some Hebrew words on Praise

- *Yadah* – to give thanks and praise with extended hands (Ps. 52:9)
- *Today* – to extend hands in adoration and thanks for things not yet received as well (Ps. 95:2)
- *Halal* – to rave about, to be loud and foolish, to celebrate, to boast (Ps. 22:22,23)
- *Shabach*— a loud adoration, or a shout of praise, to triumph Also to calm things within one's heart like calming the sea (Ps. 63:3)
- *Tehillah* – songs of praise (*Psalms ref. tehillim or book of praises*) (Ps. 106:2)
- *Barak* – to kneel or bow down in adoration (Ps. 145:2)
- *Zamar* – to make music, to sing songs accompanied by musical instruments (Ps. 68:4)

1) Praise is very extroverted in nature. It is being very vocal. Praise is not praise unless it is declared or displayed. So, praise has to be verbalized or manifested.

PSALM 66:8

⁸ *Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard,
Meditation or contemplation is not praise.*

2) Praise is not based on our feelings but on who God is. We make a choice to do so.

PSALM 42:5

⁵ *Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.*

PSALM 34:1

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

We can praise God at all times and in all places (home, church, all nations)

How should we praise God?

(This applies to us in personal worship and collectively in congregational worship)

We praise God *directly* (by expressing our admiration to him) and *indirectly* by praising about Him to others.

Here are some biblical expressions of praise.

1) *Proclamation* (spoken words) – Use the scriptures to do this.

PSALM 26:7

That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works.

2) *Singing* – Ps. 47:6, Ps. 100:2, Eph 5:19

PSALM 47:6

Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

3) *Clapping* – Ps. 47:1 (we clap to applaud, appreciate, cheer | not just clapping in time to the tempo of the music/song)

PSALM 47:1

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!



- 4) *Shouting* – Ps. 47:1, Ps. 66:1 (victorious shout, joyful shout)
There is power in praise. Joshua 6:16, 20 (the wall of Jericho)
PSALM 66:1
Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!

- 5) *Lifting of hands* – Ps. 134:2, 1 Tim 2:8
We lift our hands as 1) a sign of surrender, 2) a sign of reaching out to God,
3) Symbolically receiving from God.
PSALM 134:2
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, And bless the LORD.

- 6) *Playing of musical instruments* – 2 Chron 5:13, 14; Ps 33:2,3; Ps 150:5
PSALM 33:2-3
*² Praise the LORD with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
³ Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.*
We should not however become overly dependent on music and instruments. We should be able to praise God even without these.

- 7) *Singing/Speaking in tongues (in the Spirit)* - Acts 2:11, Acts 10:45,46
ACTS 10:45-46
⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

- 8) *Standing* – (a sign of respect, being alert) – 2 Chron 7:6, Ps 135:1,2
2 CHRONICLES 7:6
⁶ And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD, saying, “For His mercy endures forever,”^[a] whenever David offered praise by their ministry. The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.

- 9) *Dancing* – Ps. 149:2,3; 2 Samuel 6:14
PSALM 149:2-3
² Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.³ Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.
It is a celebration of God. Dance to express our heart to God.
It breaks down our inhibitions.
Some choreographed moves also inspire us to worship but if focus is too much on the beauty and ability of the dance ministers, it becomes a distraction.

- 10) *Kneeling, bowing, prostrating* - Ps 95:6

All these expressions are meaningful only if we have praise and worship originating from our hearts. If not, they become empty exercises. (Matthew 15:8 – heart far away)



What happens when we praise God?

- 1) God the King inhabits our praise. His presence, His power, His Kingdom (rule and reign) invades our circumstances and situations. Ps 22:3
PSALM 22:3
³ *But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.*

- 2) Praise causes divine deliverance. 2 Chron 20:22
2 CHRONICLES 20:22
²² *Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.*

- 3) Praise stops the enemy. Ps. 8:2 (*the Lord quoted this verse in Matt 21:16*)
PSALM 8:2
² *Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.*

- 4) Praise prepares our heart to receive from God (*Judah<praise> shall plow Hosea 10:11*)

*Praise is loud, vocal, exuberant, a celebration - outer court (entering in)
Worship is intimate, reverential, contemplative - inner court
So in our praise and worship, we progress from the outer court to the most holy place.*

Corporate (Congregational) Worship

(Source :: APC Publication :: Foundations – Track 1 – Pg 68-69)

1) In congregational worship, we minister to God

As a congregation, we minister to the Lord not with the ulterior motive of receiving a blessing but rather with the motive of blessing Him, whether He blesses us or not.
In ministering to Him, *we experience His presence* – which is the very atmosphere for the *expression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit* in the church.

2) Corporate worship brings about a sense of unity within the church.

Though we are all from different cultures, backgrounds, tastes and languages, but the one thing that we have in common is that we are saved by His grace and so we love and worship Him.
When we do so the sense of unity grows and becomes stronger

3) The songs we sing as a congregation enable us to learn, teach and reinforce spiritual truth

Ephesians 5:19

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.



4) Corporate worship prepares our hearts and provides the atmosphere for the preaching of the Word

Hosea 10:11

Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh grain; but I harnessed her fair neck, I will make Ephraim pull a plow. Judah shall plow; Jacob shall break his clods.

5) Facilitates us to express the feelings of our heart in uninhibited worship

Hindering Attitudes in Praise and Worship

(Source :: APC Publication :: Foundations – Track 1 – Pg 69-70)

1) Pride

Pride is the greatest hindrance in worship. Sometimes we are more concerned about the opinions of others. Never do anything because others are looking at you, and never refrain from anything because others are looking at you.

2) Irreverence

Irreverence is when we do not revere God's nature but expect His blessings to be showered on us, without any sacrifice, investment of prayer or humble repentance on our part.

3) 'Spectator-ism'

Sometimes we tend to 'watch' the worship team than to be 'participants' in worship themselves. We are all commanded to worship.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

4) 'Sentimentalism'

Sentimentalism is when the music and emotion or nostalgia means more to the worshipper than the message of the song. Here, we become more connected to the music but not necessarily with God and hence the purpose of 'worshipping' is lost.

5) Paying 'mere lip service'

Merely singing the song but not worshipping from the heart is paying 'lip service' to God. God would prefer that we keep our mouths shut rather than singing without meaning.

Amos 5:21-23

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

6) Resisting change

"We have never done it this way before". Sometimes, there is the fear of change. Our God is a creative God and can work in so many different ways.

SUMMARY



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday June 11, 2017

The Worship Series

Part 2: Personal & Corporate Worship

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their lives on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) at apcwo.org. You can also review the Sunday Sermon PDF notes. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passage(s): Hebrews 10:11-25, Psalms 95 & 96

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Discuss these together, giving time for people to share their insights:

- 1) In what new scriptural ways do you think you can engage in personal worship?
- 2) What inhibits your public expression of worship to God in a congregational setting? How do you think you can overcome them?

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two main learnings from the Scriptures read today and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few minutes (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another



Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and close by thanking God together.