

Fundamental Christian Attitudes: Worship, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-133

We started this morning discussing the next in our list of spiritual attitudes as we discuss the anatomy of the church. We've gone inside to those attitudes which carry the life of the church, that convey its very life, that are the source of all that the church really is. We've talked about these spiritual attitudes now for a number of months and we have been so greatly blessed to look to the Word of God and be so instructed.

We started this morning with the next to the last of this list of spiritual attitudes and the attitude is worship. And I know when I was thinking about it I realized that some people might see worship as an activity, but worship is really an attitude that expresses itself in an activity, like so many other attitudes that we've been talking about. You cannot have faith without works. You cannot have love without giving. You cannot have obedience with it manifesting itself. And all of the heart attitudes that we've been talking about that make up those spiritual motivations in the life of a believer show up on the outside and certainly worship is one of those. But at its purest, worship is an attitude of the heart and it cannot exist in the church genuinely on a corporate level unless it exists in the church internally on an individual level. So we're talking about this very, very foundational attitude of worship...and we'll say some more about it tonight and then next Lord's day as well.

Let's go back to our passage of Scripture in John chapter 4, and we're looking at verses 20 to 24 in the main, Jesus having a conversation with a Samaritan woman and talking about the subject of worship. And, of course, what brought the subject up was that Jesus basically offered her eternal life and she wanted that life. She said, "Give me the water that I might drink," and I believe she was responding in the metaphoric parabolic language in which He was talking and I'm confident that she was asking for a spiritual reality not water. She wasn't assuming that He had found the fountain of youth or some magic potion that she could drink once and never need to drink again physically. I think she's simply responding to Him in the kind of terminology that He's expressing Himself in, just as Nicodemus did in a discussion about birth with Jesus in the third chapter of John. These are magnificent word pictures and she fits right into the picture and responds in kind to the way our Lord is speaking to her.

He is offering to her as a spiritual man, a religious man, which is obvious to her, eternal life. And she says, "I want it." And then He confronts her sin. She is an adulteress. She has been married five times. She has a sorted life and Jesus unmask that reality and wants to see the attitude or the response she has. And her response is right. Her response to Jesus confronting her sin comes in

verse 19, she says, "I perceive that You're a prophet," and immediately she launches into this statement in verse 20, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," and the passage goes from there.

And what she is saying is...I need to go before God and worship, I need to bow down, I need to prostrate myself and I need to ask His forgiveness and I need to submit to His authority." That's what's in her heart. She has recognized her sin, she is willing to recognize that. She believes now that God can offer her eternal life which is a soul-satisfying life which will cause her consistent spiritual thirst to end. She is looking for eternal life and she saw eternal life the way it is to be seen, she saw it as a kind of life, as a quality of life and not just a length of life. And she is saying I want that eternal life, I want that soul satisfaction, I want that other kind of life, I want to go before God and prostrate myself and acknowledge my sin and receive the gift of life that He offers. And she expresses it in terms of worship...I want to go and worship. And that's really what salvation is, it is initiating a right attitude of worship before God. It's when the sinner overwhelmed with sin falls prostrate before God, like the publican in Luke 16, beats on his breast and says, "God be merciful to me, a sinner, and save me." Never are you more a worshiper than at the moment of your salvation for you are acknowledging the sovereignty of God, you are acknowledging His holiness and His justice, you are acknowledging His...His mercy and His grace as being offered. And you are prostrating yourself as a sinner and pleading for that mercy and grace to be applied in your case even though you are utterly without worthiness. You are at its purest worshiping at the moment of your salvation. You prostrate yourself in homage to the Savior, pleading for His mercy and grace. That's her attitude. And she knows that she needs to initiate a true relationship to God as a worshiper before her sovereign.

But her question is...where. Where do I go to do this? Do I go to this mountain, Mount Gerizim where the Samaritans had established worship long before this? Do I go there or do I go to Jerusalem where you Jews say God is to be worshiped there in the temple in Mount Moriah? Where do I go? I need to go before God. I need to prostrate myself and acknowledge my sin with repentance and I want to receive this eternal life.

And she knows she's speaking to a prophet, one who spoke for God. And in response to that question Jesus answers and teaches us the foundational truth about worship. Verse 21, Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know, we worship that which we know for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Now the first thing that is obvious in Jesus' response is you don't go to a place to get right with God. Coming before God with an act of worship is not necessarily tied to any location. In fact, it won't be

long until worship will shut down on Mount Gerizim and on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. And certainly Jesus was very aware of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and along with it the destruction of the temple and following all of the desecration and the destruction that the Romans did, destroying as many as 985 villages in the land of Palestine, the whole of worship both on the Samaritan side and on the side of the Jews in Jerusalem was going to come down very soon. And Jesus is saying the issue is a spiritual one. The issue is a matter of the heart. It's not a matter of the place and the form.

And in this discussion of these three verses we get the foundations of worship laid out for us. Let's look, first of all, at point one, the source of worship...the source of worship. This is a very powerful point and it is found for us at the end of verse 23. It says this, "...the Father seeks to be His worshipers."

If anybody is to be a worshiper it is because God seeks him. Jesus Christ said, "The Son of Man is come into the world to seek and to save that which was lost." The source of worship is God. True worshipers are sought by God. In fact, we remember, don't we, the words of Scripture in Romans chapter 3, "No man seeks after God, they're all gone out of the way, they are all unprofitable." But it is God who seeks sinners. In fact, in John chapter 6 Jesus said, "No man comes to Me except the Father draws him." And no man comes to Christ unless God has sought him out, sought her out.

God sets out to redeem sinners as a part of His redemptive plan. And He seeks them out. They run from Him. According to Romans chapter 1, "That which is known of God is evident within them but they suppress the truth, that which is evident about God is all around them but they suppress that truth and they become without excuse for even though they knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks," they literally turned and went the other way and pursued idolatry. Man is lost and God is the seeker. And so initially we want to understand that the source of true worshipers is none other than God Himself, pursuing us that we might become true worshipers, that we might honor and exalt and glorify Him. The human race runs the other direction.

Now worship is absolutely at the heart of everything. The whole redemptive plan is to produce worshipers. I don't need to go into this in detail because we've covered it so many times, but to understand that eternally we will worship God is to understand the goal of salvation, to produce worshipers-starting at your salvation, progressing through your life and being fulfilled in perfection in eternity. Worship is the heart of the redemptive plan.

And as you study the sweep of redemption and you go through the whole of the Old Testament it becomes clear what this is. In my recent studies of the Old Testament I've come to the conclusion that you can produce a fairly simple outline and understand the whole Old Testament if you understand that outline. Five simple truths that the Old Testament is intended to reveal. And these five truths are cycled through again and again and again. The whole of the Old Testament hangs on these five truths. Number one, the Old Testament is designed to reveal the character of God. And

you see that everywhere. You see that in the Pentateuch, you see that through the holy writings, the record of Israel's history. You see it through the wisdom literature, the Psalms and the Proverbs. You see it, of course, all through the Psalms, the character of God revealed, His attributes extolled and His mighty works rehearsed. And you see it in the prophets as well, continually exalting the character and the nature of God in His holiness and His greatness and His majesty and the wonder of His person and His work.

And the second thing that the Old Testament does is pronounce blessing on people who worship and obey God. That's the second theme that goes on through the whole Old Testament. When you worship and obey God, you're blessed and you see that everywhere in the Old Testament, one story after another. It can be a story of an individual, it can be a story of a family, it can be a story of a nation, but it's the same thing...where there is the true worship of God and obedience to His Word there is blessing.

The third principle that continually rings true through the Old Testament is that where there is a failure to worship the true and living God and disobedience to Him, there is cursing. There is cursing, judgment, punishment, death. That's the third element of the Old Testament. And you see story after story after story indicating that great truth that where you will not worship the true and living God and Him alone and obey His word, you will be cursed, you will be killed, you will be sent into eternal punishment.

The fourth great truth of the Old Testament that we read again and again is that there must come a sacrifice for sin. There must come a Savior. There will come one in Genesis who will bruise the serpent's head. There will come one who will be a prophet like unto Moses in Exodus. There will come the ultimate, final, sacrificial lamb of whom all of the sacrifices of Leviticus are only a picture. There will come one who will enable us by His power to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength as we are enjoined to do in the book of Deuteronomy. And so it goes sweeping through the Old Testament, the desperate need that there come a final Savior to redeem those who believe from their sins. And that Redeemer is the theme of the Scriptures. Jesus said, remember, "Search the Scriptures...the Old Testament...for they are those which speak of Me." And you remember on the road to Emmaus Jesus opened up the Old Testament and taught them out of the law of the prophets and the holy writings all the things concerning Himself. He is the great theme through the Old Testament, the coming Savior.

And the fifth and final element of the Old Testament is that the...when the Messiah finally comes He will establish His kingdom on the earth. And in the glory of His kingdom He will reign in this world. Those are the great themes of the Old Testament.

And running through that whole redemptive unfolding purpose is this chord of worship. When you talk about the whole idea of the character of God, the whole idea of the nature of God in the Old

Testament and His attributes are revealed again and again and again and again, it all elicits worship. And when you talk about blessing and cursing, that second and third component, as you talk about those two things, the singular issue there is you either worship the true and the living God and are blessed in your obedience or you worship some other god and are cursed in your disobedience. And when you come to the great reality of the Messiah, the focal point of that is to call us to worship the God who so graciously will give us that Messiah, and when He comes join the angels and worship the Messiah as well. And in the end, when the Messiah sets up His Kingdom on the earth, the whole world will worship Him. And those who don't will be judged with a rod of iron...the Scripture says.

Worship then is this chord that runs all through Scripture because God is calling out a worshipping people. And in order to worship appropriately, we have to know who God is. And that's why the Scripture is so full of that. In order to worship appropriately we have to be obedient to His Word. In order to worship appropriately we have to acknowledge His Savior, His Messiah, His chosen King who is our Redeemer. And some day all of that worship will culminate in the wondrous worship of the glorious millennial kingdom. That's God's unfolding purpose in history. And the whole Old Testament hangs on those five great truths. And whatever you read in the Old Testament you can connect to those things. In fact, I think in the study Bible I will write an introduction to the Old Testament that sort of singles these things out so that you don't get lost in all that mass of material. If you have those five hooks, you can be reading anything and hang it on one of those or more.

The theme of the Old Testament, the theme of the New Testament is the worship of the true God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, which will be our occupation forever and ever and ever when we get to heaven. Adam and Eve worshiped God and all was well. They stopped worshiping God and everything went wrong. Really they started worshiping each other. Eve worshiped herself and bowed down to herself and said, "I want to be like God, I want to know good and evil," and exalted herself and in self-worship led the race into sin. And Adam worshiped her and followed her lead.

Cain killed Abel over a matter of worship. Abel worshiped according to God's revealed prescription. And Cain worshiped according to his own will. And God blessed Abel's offering and rejected Cain's form of worship and Cain was mad and he killed his brother over worship.

When the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, when the patriarchs worshiped God, they were blessed. And when they didn't, they were devastated. And Israel came into the promised land and when they worshiped God they were blessed, and when they didn't they were destroyed. Even Moses who worshiped God much of the time failed to honor God some of the time and forfeited the promised land. When God gave the law at Mount Sinai, the law began with very specific words...the law...the whole of the law began like this, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, you shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them for I the Lord your God am a jealous

God." That's how the law starts. You better worship Me.

The law was a call to worship and to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. That was the summary of the law. Remember what Paul said in Romans 13 that if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself, you've really fulfilled the whole law. And Jesus reiterated that in Matthew 22:37. The law is a call to worship.

And when God began to unfold His plans for His people in the book of Exodus, He told them how to build a place of worship, to build a tent of meeting or a tabernacle. And in the center of the tabernacle was the holy place and inside that was the Holy of Holies, a cubicle place where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. And when it was finished the Shekinah glory of God came down indicating God's presence in the camp of Israel. There were twelve tribes, three on each of the four sides, they camped on each of the four sides of the tabernacle in their encampment. It was in the middle and all the tribes looked at that and the focal point of life was the Holy of Holies because life was all about worship. And the Shekinah glory of God stayed inside the...the tent, inside the Holy of Holies until it was time to move. When it was time to move the Shekinah glory of God came out into the sky and as it began to move as a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day, the people were to follow, and when it stopped, they stopped and encamped and the glory came back and focus was always on God and His glory.

There are seven chapters and two hundred and forty-three verses used to describe the tabernacle. And the tabernacle had only one function, and that was worship...worship. And by the way, according to Numbers chapters 1 and 2, the priests were the closest in their encampment to the tabernacle because their task was to lead the whole nation in worship. I mean, can you imagine living in a theocracy where the King is God, where the President is God? And all of the officials are priests unto God who have two responsibilities, really, to remind people of the law of God and to carry the people before God as their intercessors.

You say, "Boy, if we had a society like that we'd remain faithful." Oh? Israel had a society like that and went apostate. Show you something of the depth of human sin.

But you had the tabernacle and right next to it you had the priests, and then out a little beyond them were the Levites, the Levites from the tribe of Levi were assistants to the priest. And then came the people. And life focused on worship.

In Leviticus chapter 1 when God ordained the ceremonial system, once the tabernacle was in place, of course, the form of worship was detailed by God and the first element was the offering called the burnt offering. You brought an animal, put it on the altar and it was 100 percent consumed, that's why it was called the burnt offering, it was burnt...the total animal was burnt. No part for the priest to eat.

No part for the worshiper to eat. Some of the other offerings, some was burnt, some was taken by the priest and some was eaten by the worshiper. But in the case of the initial burnt offering, it was entirely consumed by fire and that's how it got its name. In fact, the brazen altar became known as the altar of the burnt offering, according to Exodus 30 and Exodus 40. And that was to tell people that initially when you come to this place it is for the purpose of giving everything to God...everything. The priests don't participate in it, you don't participate in it, you don't hold anything back, no one gets anything but God. It is total devotion to God. Worship was the first priority and it was symbolized in the initial offering which was the burnt offering totally consumed on the altar.

Their life was a life of worship. And when someone violated the principles of worship, it was very serious. You remember when they were wandering in the wilderness, don't you, and Moses right at the beginning of their wanderings, right after they came out of Egypt they came to Mount Sinai and you remember that Moses went up to get the Law of God and while he was up there the people made a golden calf and dishonored God in blasphemous ways and there was a slaughter as the Levites strapped on their swords and massacred their own brothers and their own friends as God's executioners.

Whenever worship was violated, it had serious consequence. Remember I told you this morning in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus there was a formula given for a certain kind of incense and if anybody made that for personal use, they were executed as well. Worship was a very serious issue. When some people in Leviticus tried to offer God some strange fire, they were executed on the spot. When Saul in 1 Samuel 13 tried to invade the priestly office and act as if he were a priest, the consequences were terrible. His progeny, his line was cut off from every being king in Israel again. When Uzza, a simple guy, probably a Kohathite, the Kohathites were a group within the Levites who had the responsibility for the transporting of the ark and it was to be done with poles through rings and never touched. But they put it on a cart and they were conveying it on a cart and it started to fall off when it hit a bump and Uzza reached out his hand because he thought he ought to stop it from hitting the ground, he didn't want to defile it, and instantaneously God executed him because he violated principles of worship. And so it goes, you see that through the Old Testament.

Worship is a continual theme in the Scripture. And it is no different in the New Testament. As soon as Jesus Christ is born, the angels are worshiping, the shepherds are worshiping, the wise men come and they worship. And even Herod gets the picture and says, "Tell me where He is that I may go and...what?...and worship." That was the whole point, this was God, this was God incarnate, worthy of worship. Of course he lied, he had something else in mind. He wanted to kill the young kind and massacred all the baby boys in the vicinity of Bethlehem and Jerusalem in order to try to achieve that unsuccessfully.

When Jesus came, He came to be worshiped. He came to bring God to man. That's the whole redemption story. Worship, worship, worship, worship. And you can go to the end of the Bible and

climb up into heaven in Revelation 4 and 5 and what are they all doing? They're all worshipping. That's what it's all about, it's all about God, it's all about worship. It's all about adoring Him and praising Him. That's why I say, a man-centered theology and a man-centered church is at odds with the Word of God, serious odds.

In fact, it sometimes frightens me because God hasn't changed, has He? And distorted worship has always bothered Him greatly. We have to be very careful how we approach God with regard to worship.

You say, "Well is it as big a deal in the New Testament as it was in the Old?" It is. It is of great significance that we worship the Lord truly. I think of the leper who had the right attitude in Matthew 8. Jesus came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him and behold a leper came to Him and bowed down and said, "Lord." An outcast from society who approached Jesus in the appropriate manner. And in the ninth chapter of Matthew, "While Jesus was saying these things to them there came a synagogue official and bowed down before Him." That's the right attitude. He got the message, too.

In the fourteenth chapter of Matthew and verse 33, this of course is enough to make anybody worship. This is the little incident of Peter walking on the water. And Jesus saves him. You remember he starts walking on the water in verse 29 of Matthew 14, he's focused on Jesus and everything is great. He starts to see the wind, he becomes afraid and his lack of faith causes him to sink. He cried out, "Lord, save me." No time for long speeches. "And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' And when they got into the boat the winds stopped... the storm stopped and I love this...and those who were in the boat...what?...worshiped Him and they said, 'You're certainly God's Son.'" Worship.

In the fifteenth chapter of Matthew verse 25, the Canaanite woman begins to cry in verse 22, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David, my daughter's cruelly demon possessed." He didn't answer her a word, His disciples came to Him and kept asking Him, saying, "Send her away, she's shouting out after us." Get rid of that noisy woman. He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, My priority is to come to the Jew first." But she came and began to bow down before Him saying, "Lord..." that's the right attitude, again here is a Canaanite a non-Jew, she's got the right attitude, "Lord, help me." He answered and said, "It's not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." He's really in a sense trying to push her back but she's persistent. She said, "Yes, Lord, even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, your faith is great, be it done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once. Jesus always responds to a worshipping heart.

Come to chapter 18 of Matthew and I'm not going to do this through the whole New Testament, so relax, but are you getting the flow here? Matthew chapter 18, the slave therefore falling down

prostrated himself before Him saying, and here is a picture in a parable that Jesus tells of a right attitude toward Him, prostrating oneself before the King. Chapter 20 and verse 20, "Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, came to Him with her sons, bowing down." There it is again, worship, worship, worship.

In the twenty-eighth chapter, we'll go to the end of Matthew, verse 9, "And behold Jesus met them and greeted them and they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him." They came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. These were the women after the resurrection and they definitely had the right attitude.

You know, it started even before Jesus arrived. Luke 1, "It came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she cried out with a loud voice and said to Mary, 'Blessed among women are you and blessed is the fruit of your womb.'" Here is Elizabeth worshiping the yet unborn Messiah in the womb of her near relative, Mary.

Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was filled with the Holy Spirit in verse 67 and prophesied saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David." And who was the horn of salvation in the house of David? The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and there is Zechariah the worshiper.

And then the angel in chapter 2, "Bring you good news of great joy, a Savior is born, Christ the Lord," and that's how it goes. Worship, worship, worship. The only proper response to God's redemptive grace is worship...worship. That's just all over the Scripture. And, of course, with the detail that's exploding on my mind as I go through this, it just keeps coming through with such tremendous force.

Deuteronomy 26:10, "You shall set it down before the Lord your God and worship the Lord your God." Worship, over and over and over again.

In John's gospel, if you'll indulge me just another moment, chapter 9, one of the really beautiful stories in the life of our Lord, the story of His healing of a blind man. And in...I don't want to go through all of it because we don't have the time, but He heals this man. And, of course, it generates a dialogue with the wicked, unbelieving, religious hypocrites who are just exacerba...exasperated, I should say, and exacerbated for that matter, with Jesus. And they don't understand how He's getting away with this and they're very concerned that He's drawing the crowds and, of course, He's real and they're not. So they go to the blind man and they confront Him, it's sort of unbelief investigating a miracle and naturally coming up with the wrong conclusion. So the man answers them in verse 30 and says to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing," he's real sarcastic here, "that you do not know where He is from and yet He opened my eyes." How about that. And then in verse 31, out of the

mouths of these hypocrites comes the truth, "We know that God doesn't hear sinners but if anyone worships God and does His will He hears Him." They were dead right. True worshipers who obey His will have their prayers answered. They were right. True worshipers who obey His Word have their prayers answered. We've been saved to worship.

And as I said this morning, it should be the most spontaneous reaction that as a Christian you have. When truth is taught and preached, sung, read, when truth comes into your mind as you meditate on it or think about it, whether purposefully or whether it just sort of appears in your thoughts, your reaction should be worship...worship. That's why Philippians 3:3, as you know one of my favorite chapters and one of my favorite verses, defines Christians as, "The true circumcision who worship in the Spirit of God." We are worshipers.

How did it get to be this way? What's the source? The Father seeks true worshipers. It's God's purpose unfolding. He is collecting worshipers, that's what we are. And that's why I tell you so often when we come together we express that, that's the truest and purest expression of our identity and it is the truest and purest expression of God's intended purpose for us. We're going to spend forever and ever in heaven doing just that because we were saved to that...saved to worship. God is the source of that salvation and the One who has planned that purpose to be fulfilled. And again Revelation 4, 5, 11, 14, 15, 19, 22 all shows saints in heaven worshiping God. That's what we will do for all eternity.

So the goal of our life is worship. And God has saved us to that purpose. In Hebrews chapter 12 verse 28, and I know I'm going you a lot of Scriptures but I want to build this foundation strong here. In Hebrews 12:28 it says, "Therefore since we receive a Kingdom which cannot be shaken," boy, this is such a great truth. All the kingdoms of the earth can be shaken, is that not true? All the human kingdoms of the earth are shaken all the time and human history is the long litany of the cycling of nations coming into existence, rising, collapsing, falling and going out of existence, that's the cycle of human history. So the kingdoms of the world can be and are consistently shaken. And also, may I add, the kingdom of darkness is consistently being shaken and some day will be shaken out of existence. That's the kingdom of Satan and demons and the unregenerate. But we belong to a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, it is fixed, it is eternal.

And what is the appropriate response to that, verse 28, "Let us show gratitude." Now how do we do that? "By offering to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe." Worship...worship is the appropriate response to being called into God's unshakable Kingdom. We are the true worshipers. We worship the unshakable God in His unshakable Kingdom. In fact, in Hebrews 10:2 we're called worshipers. And here in 12:28 we worship by offering acceptable service, acceptable offerings with reverence and awe.

What does it tell us in Romans chapter 12? It tells us that because of the mercies of God we should present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice. That's worship terminology, that's borrowed right out of Judaism, right out of the sacrificial system. We don't bring a lamb or a ram or a goat, we bring ourselves as a holy sacrifice, acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship...worship. First Peter 2:5 says, "We are a royal priesthood, offering up to God spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God." Worship.

Back, one more passage I can't resist, it's in the last chapter of Hebrews verse 15 and 16. After you go through the book of Hebrews which is so powerful and it exalts Christ. I mean, from beginning to end it's about Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ who is greater than angels. Jesus Christ who is greater than the old priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood. Jesus Christ who is greater than the prophets. Jesus Christ who brought a New Covenant greater than the Old Covenant. Jesus Christ superior to everything all the way through Hebrews. You finally come to the end and it says in verse 16, "Do not neglect doing good and sharing for with such sacrifices God is pleased." God wants worship and that worship is not only what we say, it's what we do. In verse 15 he says, "Yes, offer a sacrifice of praise to God the fruit of your lips and give thanks to His name and then do not neglect doing good and sharing." So there is a real living act of worship as well. We worship not only with our lips, we worship with our actions by demonstrating love, tenderness and care toward others.

In fact, if we had time we could go through the Scriptures and find all kinds of specific applications of how our actions become a means of worship. The praise, the fruit of our lips, as it says in verse 15, we understand that. We know that to be worship. But our actions are worship as well. Every time you lead someone to Christ, in a sense that is an act of worship. Every time you present the gospel and someone believes and becomes a Christian, that's...that's worship. Romans 15:16, Paul says, "To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God that I might offer up the Gentiles. In other words, when I lead a Gentile to Christ, I offer that life up as a sacrifice of praise to God, and it is acceptable being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In Philippians 4:18 Paul said that the gifts the Philippians gave him to relieve his physical needs, to provide for him, were offerings of worship. And in Philippians chapter 1 verse 11, Paul says, "The fruit of righteousness in your life is to the praise and the glory of God." How you live, what you say, what you do, leading people to Christ, righteous deeds, righteous actions, all of those are a part of the expression. That's why Romans 12 says, "Present your bodies," it's not just your mind, it's your body as well.

When you live, for example, 1 Timothy 2 says, when you live a tranquil and quiet life that is godly and dignified, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. That's a...that's an acceptable sacrifice, a tranquil life, godliness, goodness, dignity, leading people to Christ, righteous deeds, praise from your lips, sharing, all of that forms of worship. We worship with what we say, we worship with what we are. Goodness, righteousness and truth, Ephesians 5 said, is a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord.

Well, I think you get the message at this point that we have been saved to worship. And the source of that salvation is God in His sovereign purpose. He has chosen us to be worshipers. He has elected us, He has put His hand upon us and brought us to redemption in order that we might be worshipers. That's the source of worship. Now maybe that's...that's enough for tonight. Next week I want to talk about the object of worship and I want to talk about the nature of worship. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we...we are so overwhelmed, so full of praise and thanks that You have called us to this glorious purpose. Forgive us for our grumbling, forgive us for our foolishness, our disobedience. Forgive us for trivializing the profound calling to worship. I'm afraid that if some of us were living under the Old Testament economy, we might have lost our lives for treating the sacred realities of worship with such indifference and disrespect. We thank You, Lord, that You've called us to worship. You saved us because You are the Father who seeks true worshipers. The world is full of false ones and You want the true. In order for us to be true worshipers, You had to change us, You had to redeem us, You had to transform us, You had to change our very nature so that we would turn from idols to serve the living and the true God. We thank You that You saved us to make us worshipers and may we be faithful to that calling, and not wait until eternity to pour out our praise but do it even now when we have so much for which to be thankful, even in our trials and our suffering as we heard quoted in baptism tonight, You are working all things together for good so that we can praise You in everything. And may we be on the brink of a doxology at all times, ready to burst into praise, to overflow, to boil over, to bubble up at the simplest thought of Your mercies to us. To this You have called us and for this You saved us and to this we wish to be obedient and we know that true worship means that we obey Your Word and we renew our devotion to You and our commitment to do that tonight in the name of Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us. Amen.

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