The Kind of Worship God Desires, Part 4
Selected Scriptures
90-357

Well thank you so much, young people, and thank you for not only representing our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the year in all your concerts and throughout the last couple of weeks in your travels, but thank you for representing the Master's College as well. We have no finer representatives than you have been. I have kind of followed your schedule a little bit and I know that wherever you've gone you have left an impact, not only for the college but for our Lord as well. So thank you, you all have a great summer and I know that many of your parents are here to pick you up now to take you home and I just trust that you'll have a great, great time as you reminisce about all the experiences that you've enjoyed in the way the Lord has used you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I love music and music is this amazing, stunning gift from the Lord to us. There is no music more wondrous than that which is attributed to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have tonight been exposed to that which causes us to worship, causes us to celebrate the greatness and the grace of our God. And it's a fitting thing for us because we are at this moment in a brief series on the subject of true acceptable worship.

Our text is in John 4 and I would invite you to turn to that text again. We are moving in and around and through this text. It is in this fourth chapter of John a conversation that our Lord Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. And at the heart of this conversation was her desire to be right with God, to be reconciled to God, to be a worshiper of God. She's not sure how to do that. She wonders if it doesn't really relate to a place. Is it in Jerusalem that you become a worshiper? Or is it in Mount Gerizim where the Samaritans have their place of worship?

Where do we worship? And she surely wonders how do we worship? And she needs to wonder whom do we worship? It is those kinds of questions that are on her mind and should be on our minds when we think about worship. Jesus responds to her queries both stated and unstated in verse 21 and says, "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."

It's not about a place. It's not about an idol, not about an image. It's about a God who is spirit and He is to be worshiped in spirit and truth anywhere any time. Those of us who are Christians in this generation of Christianity, so much more than in earlier years, at least in my experience as a young man, are concerned about worship. Growing up I heard very little about worship really, very little. We had what was called a worship service, at least that's what it said in the bulletin, but I never really remember hearing much about worship or identifying the things that were going on, particularly as

worship.

All that has changed. There certainly is a new revival of worship going all the way back, I think, to the seventies and the Jesus Movement there has come an interest in worship. That has gone on now for a long time. We have worship bands and worship music and worship emphases just about every time evangelical Christians get together. Sometimes, however, in our market- driven approach to the church, somehow in our massive decision to turn the service into something that entertains non-believers, worship has become superficial while still bearing the label worship. It is superficial, shallow and man-centered and pop culture tweaked.

There is in response to this a longing for something deeper, something more transcendent, something more mystical. And so there is a trend today to try to recover the transcendent and the mysterious, to go back even to the Medieval period in the Middle Ages, to Roman Catholicism and bring up again the old, the ancient forms of liturgy that if by reviving those old forms which appear on the surface to be mysterious and transcendent we could deepen or elevate our worship.

This is especially true of the emerging church. They're very interested in throwing off the market-driven approach of the contemporary seeker church movement and recapturing something more mystical, more transcendent and deeper. And so, they turn the lights out and light candles as if that had anything to do with worship. And maybe they even talk a little more mystically. And maybe they even encourage people rather than submitting themselves to the Word of God where speaks and tells us how to worship, to listen to the mysterious voice of God and find your own way, as it were, into the labyrinth of worship.

It is true that people have been cheated by the superficiality of worship, but it is not remedied by some ancient form being recovered, as if it could be recovered. There are some people who go further than that. They have reentered the past, they have joined the Roman Catholic Church. Some have joined orthodox churches. Another attempt at something more profound than what they're getting and experiencing in their contemporary evangelical churches. But this is an illusion with no spiritual reality whatsoever.

A.P. Gibbs many years ago wrote this, "Much of the so-called worship in Christendom is merely a form of Christianized Judaism and in some cases thinly veiled paganism." He says, "In Judaism there was a separate priestly caste who alone could conduct the worship of Israel, the priests. In Christendom a manmade priesthood called the clergy is essential to its worship in spite of the plain teaching of the New Testament that all believers are priests. These priests of Judaism wore a distinctive dress, as also does the clergy in these sacramental sacerdotal forms of Christianity. Judaism emphasized an earthly sanctuary or building. In like manner, Christendom makes much of its consecrated places of worship and miscalls the edifice the House of God. Jewish priests had an altar on which were offered sacrifices to God. Christendom has erected altars in these ornate church buildings and cathedrals before which candles burned and incenses offered, and even in many cases in which a wafer is kept which is looked upon as it if were the body of Christ. It is hardly necessary...says Gibbs...to say that all this copying of Judaism is absolutely foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. Thus...he says...Christendom has initiated its own especially educated and ordained priesthood whose presence is indispensable to administer the sacraments. These men robed in gorgeous vestments from within a roped off sanctuary stand before a bloodless altar with a background of burning candles, crosses and smoking incense and conduct the worship for the laity. With the use of an elaborate prepared ritual, stereo-typed prayers and responses from the audience,

the whole service proceeds smoothly and with mechanical precision. It is a marvel of human invention and ingenuity with an undoubted appeal to the esthetic. But a tragic and sorry substitute for the spiritual worship which our Lord declared that His Father sought," end quote.

Shallow unacceptable worship does come in a seeker environment, but it also comes in a sacramental environment. Changing the lighting, adding candles, burning incense, putting fancy clothes on clergy has nothing to do with worship. This is an illusion. This is a deception. I admit that it does have more esthetic appeal to me than cheesy pop-culture kind of worship, but it is no more the worship that the Father seeks than any other kind of contemplous(??) worship.

True, acceptable spiritual worship is a heart experience of which any believer is capable at any moment in any place. And that is what Jesus is getting at here. It's not about Jerusalem and it's not about Gerizim. And it's no longer going to be about an altar and a sanctuary and priests because that is all going to pass away. An hour is coming when none of that will exist anymore. That was merely a shadow and now the substance has come.

If we are going to worship, then we must worship the way Jesus identifies worship. We must worship in spirit and in truth, not tied to a place, and certainly not tied to an image. Kissing the feet of a statue is anything but worship.

If you were to go through the New Testament, you would find there are particularly two words that are used to explain worship in a simple sense. One is proskuneo, it is a common word for worship and it's the one used in John 4 eight times. It means to bow down, it means to prostrate oneself. There's a second word that is not used here but it is used many times in the New Testament, latreuo, it means to render due honor, homage, and service. These are the two words that mean worship that are used throughout the New Testament. In both cases it is used simply to acknowledge somebody as superior, to acknowledge someone as worthy of reverence, worthy of esteem, worthy of honor, worthy of homage and thus to bow before that person. It is giving to God the respect He deserves...that's worship...giving to God the respect He deserves.

And the only way that you could come close to giving God the respect that He deserves, is to understand what He deserves. And thus, your worship is a product of your theology, not of your environment. It is not a product of how the lights are designed or how the trappings are determined and featured. Worship is a direct result of your understanding of God. And the more you know the glory of God and the more you understand the revelation of God in which His glory is on display, the more you worship in the sense that you give Him the respect He's due because you know now what He deserves. To understand what God deserves, one must understand what God has done and who God is.

So, simply said, worship is honoring God for who He is and what He has done and being thankful for both. That's the sum of it. It is giving honor to God for who He is and what He has done and being thankful for both. This is the end result of knowing Scripture that you might give God the honor He is due. When you go to the Old Testament and read the Psalms which is a book of worship, there's a kind of format. It goes a little bit like this. The Psalms either tell us the nature of God or the works of God and the appropriate response. You can worship God by going over the things that God has done. God, You're the God who one day stepped out on the edge of nothing and created everything. You're the God who by a word created the universe, set the earth spinning in space, surrounded it with the infinite solar system.

You’re the God who in a day made land and sea. You’re the God who in a day created life. You’re the God who in a day created man. You’re the God who placed him in a garden. You’re the God...and on and on you go and you just recite all that God has done and thank Him for it.

You’re the God who parted the Red Sea and delivered Your people from Egypt. You’re the God who preserved Israel and the Messianic line all the way to the arrival of the Messiah. You’re the God who sent Your Son virgin born who lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death, rose, a literal resurrection from the grave, ascended to glory, intercedes for us and one day will come back. This is Your plan. This is Your purpose.

It’s all worship. Or you can say, “You are almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, knowing everything, immutable, unchanging, perfect, holy, loving, gracious, merciful and just recite the attributes of God. That’s what worship does. And thank God for all that He is.

So worship is not about where you are or what the accouterments around you are. Worship is about what you know to be true about God, who He is, what He has done. It is a crippled kind of worship, I think, that so many people experience because they go to a meeting, they have only a superficial understanding of divine things. Maybe a simple understanding that Jesus died for them and little else. The great deep profound realities of the nature of God are withheld from them because they might be offended by some of His attributes. The great history of what God has done both in mercy and in judgment is withheld as seemingly ancient and irrelevant. And so, worship no matter how loud the music is and no matter how rhythmical it is and no matter how seductive it is to our emotions is thin and superficial and rather empty because it’s uninformed. An uninformed person who knows only a very little bit about God could sit in the middle of the most magnificent music and it cannot lift him above his knowledge. And a believer whose mind and soul is flooded with the true knowledge of God, who He is and what He has done, can sit alone in the middle of a busy intersection and worship God, hearing only the cacophony of cars and buses and trucks.

Worship is an internal experience, that’s what our Lord is saying. And worship is the priority. We’ve been trying to get you to understand that. We talk a lot about ministry. We talk a lot about service and it is important. But ministry or service is that which comes down to us from the Father through the Son by the Spirit in the believer. Worship is that which goes up from the believer by the Spirit through the Son to the Father. Ministry descends, worship ascends, and both are critical. But worship prevails. Worship is first and ministry follows.

So we’ve been looking at this whole matter of worship and I’m trying to say to you as much as I can that’s foundational so you’ll understand it. Simply summing up what I’ve just said, worship is giving to God honor and praise for who He is and what He’s done and saying thanks for both, that’s it, from the heart. It is aided by what we hear musically. It is aided by the corporate singing of God’s people. It is aided by prayers that are filled with praise and gratitude and thanksgiving to God.

As I sat tonight and listened to one of my favorite hymns, “The King of Love, my Shepherd is,” I understand Psalm 23, I know that Psalm very well, it has gripped my heart for years and years. I know that hymn very well and my mind races down the track of every phrase in that hymn as it informs my worship and as it moves my emotions in response. Psalm 45:1 says, “My heart is overflowing with a good matter.” That’s really what worship is, it’s an overflowing, literally a bubbling

over or a boiling over. I can't contain it. It's coming out everywhere. My praise, that's worship.

As you think about worship from the big picture a little bit with me tonight and what we just have a few minutes for this, I just want to call to your attention the book of Psalms. Turn to the book of Psalms, if you will. I don't know if you've ever stopped to notice this but as you read through Psalms you note that there are five books of Psalms...five...it's as if there were five different hymn books of Psalms.

Book one starts with Psalm 1 and it ends with Psalm 41. So let's go to Psalm 41. Psalm 42 begins book two of the Psalms. But what is going on in the first 41 Psalms? The attributes of God are being extolled. The works of God are being extolled. And thanks is being offered to God. Book one ends appropriately with a hymn of worship for all that has gone before. Look at verse 13, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen." That's worship. That's a doxology...doxology, meaning a word of doxa, meaning a word of glory to God.

Book two goes through Psalm 72. Turn to Psalm 72, see how book two ends. Verse 18, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel who alone works wonders and blessed be His glorious name forever. And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and amen." Same thing. Having gone through everything from Psalm 42 to Psalm 72, it's all gathered up, all of that discussion of the attributes of God and the history of His works is gathered up in the doxology of verses 18 and 19.

Book two ends at Psalm 89. And Psalm 89 ends this way, verse 52, "Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen and amen."

Book three ends at Psalm 106, so let's look at Psalm 106 and verse 48. Verse 47 we'll pick it up, "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations to give thanks to Thy holy name and glory in Thy praise." And then the doxology. "Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel from everlasting, even to everlasting and let all the people say Amen, praise the Lord." That's worship.

And book five ends with an accumulated crescendo. Book five ends with Psalm 150. Psalm 150 is the end of book five. "Praise the Lord, praise God in His sanctuary. Praise Him in His mighty expanse. Praise Him for His mighty deeds. Praise Him according to His excellent greatness." You see those two things, don't you? Praise Him in verse 2 for His mighty deeds, the things He's done. Praise Him according to His excellent greatness, who He is. Praise Him every way possible, with the trumpet sound, with the harp and lyre, timbrel and dancing, stringed instruments and pipe, loud cymbals, resounding cymbals." And then it all ends with this, "let everything that has breath...do what?...praise the Lord...praise the Lord." That's worship.

And that worship is informed by all that has gone before. You come to the New Testament and the New Testament is full of the same kinds of doxologies. Look at Romans chapter 11...Romans chapter 11. I know these are familiar to many of you but so important for us. Paul coming to the end of chapter 11 is coming to the end of the greatest doctrinal treatise ever written. Twelve to sixteen is practical implications and practical applications of what is doctrinal in one through eleven. In fact, chapter 12, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," and that's all that he's described under the general title of salvation in the opening eleven chapters, based on that, "Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice." And, of course, that launches into the practical application. But the doctrinal section ends in verse 11 and it has extolled the character of God. It has extolled the mighty

work of God in salvation. And it ends with a doxology. “Oh the depth of the riches...verse 33...both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways.”

Listen, folks, it is good for us to go so deep into the understanding of God that we cannot comprehend Him. People say, “You don’t want to tell people about that, they’ll never understand that. Don’t tell them about election, they’ll never understand that. Don’t tell them about divine sovereignty, sovereign grace and salvation, that’s just going to be very hard for people to understand. Keep it simple where they can get it.”

No, no, the opposite is true. Take them down where they can’t get it.

Take them so far down that they are way beyond their depth and let them begin to feel the unfathomable character of God, incomprehensible, unsearchable. That’s where you want to go. If you really want to be able to praise God, you need to go beyond the point of your comfort, beyond the point of your ability to reason it all out comfortably and easily. It is a blight on the evangelical movement today that its people are nowhere near that point. They have such a simplistic understanding of the things of God, how cheated are they. Like the hymn writer, we need to be lost in wonder. We need to be overwhelmed with God. He needs to be to us unsearchable, unfathomable. We need to be baffled by His judgments. We need to find His ways incomprehensible. We need to go through our lives and say, “I don’t understand God, why, how?”

It has to be this way for who has known the mind of the Lord? And that answer to that rhetorical question is no one. Do you think that God is pleased when you have arrived at a point where you think you can completely understand Him? You think that pleases Him? So now you know the mind of the Lord. That is a freshman folly.

You know, we always say at school, nobody knows more than a freshman because freshman don’t know what they don’t know. Nobody knows more than a first-year seminary student because first-year seminary students haven’t discovered what they don’t know. And the best kind of biblical education is the kind of education that takes you where you don’t know and where you know you don’t know and you know you can’t know and you arrive at Deuteronomy 29:29 and you say, “The secret things belong to God.” Who has known the mind of the Lord?

People come to me constantly and ask me questions I can’t answer. All the questions I can answer, I answer. No matter how many questions I answer in a question and answer session, they will always press me to the question that I can’t answer. And I will say to them, “I’m happy to tell you that I don’t know the answer to that, which means God is far beyond me and that ought to make you very comfortable because God is not like me.”

Here is the beloved Apostle Paul breaking into doxology over what he can’t understand. Who became his counselor? God is inscrutable and independent of us. He doesn’t need us to figure everything out so that we can explain it to him. That’s what this verse is saying. Are you kidding? When you get God to the place where you can explain to God God, you’re indeed a fool, far away from where you need to be.

Or, verse 35, “Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again?” This is another

illusion. Do you think that God owes you something? That's what most people think. "I'm a good person, God wouldn't send me to hell." You give God no debt. He incurs no obligation to any person. And He owes then nothing to anyone. He's free to do what He wills for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Him be the glory forever. Amen.

This is like the Psalm. This is how each book of the Psalm ends and this is how the great section on theology, the theology of salvation, ends. It ends in doxology. That's worship.

I grieve in my heart about this because there's so many people who have never gotten to the point where God is incomprehensible, His ways unsearchable, His thoughts beyond them, and where they cannot any longer probe Him. That's where you need to be. You go to the depths of Scripture, you keep going and you keep going and you dig deeper and deeper and deeper and finally you enter the black hole, as it were, and it all becomes incomprehensible and God is so far beyond you, so much more than you ever thought. This is where worship becomes what it should be.

At the end of Romans, verse 25, Paul makes a point here that is very important. Verse 25 is a benediction, "To him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery that's been kept secret for long ages past but now is manifested, Christ in the New Testament gospel, by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God has been known to all the nations leading to an obedience of faith." And then comes the doxology, "To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen."

Now we're introduced to something new in the doxologies that we've looked at. We give glory to God, the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ.

In Paul's marvelous letter to the Ephesians, we read this in verse 3 of chapter 1. This is worship, pure worship. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." Ah, now New Testament doxologies and New Testament benedictions begin to take on this form every time related to Jesus Christ. Galatians begins in verse 3, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever. Amen." And now, all of a sudden, when you go to God to give God glory, it involves the Lord Jesus Christ. This becomes the consistent pattern in the New Testament.

Philippians 4:19, "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

In 1 Timothy 1 Paul says, "It's a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance...verse 15...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy in order that in me is the foremost Jesus Christ, might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." Why? Because of what Christ has accomplished.

Doxology, praise to God always involves Christ. There is no other way to God. There is no other true

worship. “Now the God of peace...Hebrews 13:20...who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

There is now, since Christ has come, no possibility of worshiping God apart from Jesus Christ. It’s not possible. It is not possible. First Peter 5:10, “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you...here’s the doxology...to Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

The New Testament just keeps repeating these hymns of praise to God through Christ. Grow in grace, 2 Peter 3:18, and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” We glorify God through Christ. And now all of a sudden we glorify Christ as God.

When you come to the book of Revelation, the same pattern follows. And we don’t have time to go through all of it, but look at chapter 4. There is worship going on around the throne, chapter 4 takes you into heaven, the throne of God. Verse 10, the four living creatures are there and they are worshiping God unceasingly, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the almighty who was and who is and who is to come.” And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, “To Him who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders will fall down before Him, representing the saints, believers, joining the angels, who sits on the throne will worship Him who lives forever and ever and will cast their crowns before the throne saying, ‘Worthy art Thou, our Lord, and our God, to receive glory and honor and power for Thou didst create all things and because of Thy will they existed and were created.’”

But the worship doesn’t stop there. Go down in to verse 9 of chapter 5. “They sang a new song, Worthy art Thou to take the book and break its seals for Thou was slain and it purchased for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priest to our God and they will reign upon the earth.” And the praise goes in to verse 12, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing and every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea and all things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.’ And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen.’ And the elders fell down and worshiped.”

In the Old Testament they worshiped God. In the New Testament they worshiped God through Christ. And they worshiped God and Christ as God and in heaven we worship God and Christ forever and ever and ever. That’s true worship. And we will eternally recite the attributes of our God and His mighty works, including the nature of Christ which is the same as God, and the mighty work of Christ in providing redemption.

Now, all of that takes you back to John 4. We have looked at this text, talked about the importance of worship. We’ve talked about the source of worship...the importance of it is it’s all through Scripture, as we’ve seen in weeks past. The source of it is the Father’s effectual seeking, the Father seeks true worshipers. When I say an effectual seeking, I mean a saving seeking, an actual salvation. We are redeemed by God to become true worshipers, regenerated with new life and the properties of that new life include a desire and a longing to worship. We are worshipers by new birth. Philippians 3:3,

we've noted that several times.

So we've talked about the importance of worship, the source of worship. We finally came to the object of worship and I told you the last couple of times it was God as spirit. Notice please verse 24, "That we worship God as spirit," not in an idol form, not as an image made with hands. He is spirit who is holy.

Just briefly and I've already set it up for you, so we don't need to say much about it. Secondly, we worship God not only as spirit but as Father. Throughout the passage, verse 21, "You shall worship the Father." Verse 23, "True worshipers worship the Father." The concept of Father here then comes alongside the concept of spirit. To say that God is spirit, we already, I hope, made clear to you, immaterial, infinite. But we also worship Him as Father. And the concept of God as Father in this passage is not as our Father. We're not talking about the fact that He is a Father to His children. That is not the idea. The essence of God as Father here is trinitarian. We worship the God who is Father and the one who is saying this to the woman is in fact Himself the Son of the Father. It is a trinitarian sense of fatherhood that we're talking about here.

This, of course, is critical to an understanding of Christian truth. John 5:17, Jesus says, "My Father is working until now and I Myself am working," paralleling Himself with God. He does what God does. Verse 19 He says, "Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself unless it is something He sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." He is doing what God does the way God does it. This is the Father/Son relationship He has in view when He talks to the woman in John 4.

Verse 20, "The Father loves the Son, shows Him all things that He Himself is doing. Greater works than these will He show Him that you may marvel, for just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone but He has given all judgment to the Son." Then this critical verse, verse 23, "In order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." No one truly worships God who does not equally worship Christ.

You say, "Don't Jewish people who worship the God of the Bible really worship Him?" No...no, if you don't honor the Son, you don't honor the Father. And those are the words of Jesus Himself. And it's not as if it's some isolated statement or hard to interpret.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 11:27, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." You can't know the Father without knowing the Son. You can't worship the Father without worshiping the Son. That is the essence of how the Lord is using the term Father. It is as the Father within the Trinity.

This is critical for the Jews because they believe the Lord was one, but they did not have a commitment to the doctrine of the Trinity. In John 10:29 Jesus says again, "My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." And then this stunning statement, "I and the Father are one." John began his gospel by identifying Jesus as the Word and saying He was the Creator. He made everything and without Him was not anything made that was made. And we beheld Him, He says later in that chapter, the only begotten of the

Father, full of grace and truth, bearing the attributes of His Father.

In the seventeenth chapter of John as Jesus prays His High Priestly prayer, He says, “Father, the hour has come, glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Me, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” They are inseparable. In the fourteenth chapter, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life...verse 6...no man comes to the Father...what?...but by Me.” But by Me. This is eternal life, that they may know Me, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou sent.

Just like an errant theology proper hinders worship of God, an errant Christology hinders worship. You have to have your theology proper right. You have to worship the God who is God and you must worship Christ equally or you cannot honor God. And so, God is worshiped as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that is the only way He is worshiped.

Listen to Ephesians 1:17, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

Throughout the New Testament, this concept is repeated. Listen to 2 Corinthians 1:3, “Blessed be the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is known only in that relationship. Philippians 2 says that, “God highly exalted Him, bestowed on Him the name above every name the name Lord that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” That belongs only to God, Jesus is God. “Every knee should bow, those in heaven, on earth, under the earth and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” You only glorify God the Father when you affirm that Jesus is equal to Him. This is the heart and soul of worship and nothing short of an accurate theology proper which is the term used to describe the nature of God and in an accurate Christology can produce true worship.

In Romans 16:6 it tells us with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostles understood this. In the letters they wrote they affirmed it. Hear the words of Peter, 1 Peter 1:3, “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” John understood it clearly, 1 John chapter 1 verse 3, “What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also that you may have fellowship with us and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” First Corinthians 16:22 says, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be damned.”

Strong language. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 says that God will deal out retribution to those who do not know Him and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It’s impossible to worship God without worshiping Christ. This high priority that floods the New Testament defined the life of the early church. They worshiped God and they worshiped Christ as God and as the only way to God.

In the second century there was a hymn, this is how it went. “There is one physician who is both flesh and spirit, born and yet not man, true life in death, both of Mary and of God, first passable and then impassable, Jesus Christ our Lord.” ???? Clement wrote, “King of saints, almighty Word, of the Father, highest Lord, wisdom’s head and chief, assuagement of all grief, Lord of all time and space, Jesus, Savior of our race.”

There was a very early evening hymn the church sang, “Hail gladdened light,” referring to Christ, “of His pure glory poured, who is the immortal Father heavenly blessed, holiest of holies, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Fourth century Taddium(??), “Thou art the King of glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the virgin’s womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers, Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of Thy Father. We believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge, we therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with precious blood. Make them be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.” That’s the early church. Psalm 2 God says, “Kiss the Son lest He be angry.”

Who’s the object of our worship? The God who is spirit and the God who is one in essence with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Father, we thank You for a wonderful evening. Said a lot more than I expected to say, but these things are so wonderful and rich. Make us true worshipers. This is the work of Your blessed Spirit. To that end we pray for everyone here in Christ’s name. Amen.

A reminder that our prayer room to my right is open. The men are going over there. If we can counsel you, pray with you, tell you about church membership, salvation, baptism, anything, we’re here to serve you. Thanks again to our students and Dr. Plew. Don’t forget to pick up one of their wonderful albums. I’ve been playing the album in my car for days now since Paul first gave it to me. Pray for the college and pray for the ministry there. Continue to pray for our faith promise over the next week, that the Lord will do His great work and exceed our expectations. God bless you. Good night.

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