

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Fundamental Christian Attitudes: Worship, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-132

The Lord always has His hand in His work and I see it in so many ways. In all the ministries the Lord has privileged me to be involved in, I see His hand at work. And certainly that's true in the preaching that the Lord has called me to do.

As I sort of plan out this series on the anatomy of the church, I can't really anticipate exactly how long it's going to take me to work my way through the issues that have been so important to us, but it seems as the Holy Spirit has all along had a perfect plan in mind. And we find ourselves coming, this morning, to the next in our series of looking at spiritual attitudes. You remember now, we're talking about the anatomy of the church and as we look at what the church should be, there are certain attitudes that must exist in the life of the church, we've called those the internal systems. We spent some time on the skeleton, the structure of the church and now we're looking at the internal systems, those spiritual attitudes and spiritual motivations that carry the life of the church, that really make the church what it is on the inside. And, after all, what it is on the inside is really what it becomes on the outside.

And we've been talking about spiritual attitudes like faith and obedience and love and humility and unity and contentment and joy and thankfulness and forgiveness. And we've worked our way through those things, including courage and boldness, strength, all very essential spiritual attitudes. As far as I can tell right now, I just have two more that I want to address...one more at the very end will be the attitude of hope. We don't hear a lot about hope and not a lot of sermons are preached about hope. But, after all, it's one of that great triumvirate...faith, hope and love in 1 Corinthians 13, and so it will be addressed. And I think fittingly so just as we come to the end of this year and begin to launch into next year, we'll look at the subject of hope because hope addresses the future.

But before we get to the issue of hope, there is another matter of a spiritual attitude that is absolutely crucial, and it is perhaps likely that we will spend not only this Sunday on this attitude but next Sunday as well. And that's fine, that works out perfectly because it fits so wonderfully into the theme of this season of the year.

Now this attitude that I want to address this morning I had to think about for a while because it could fit into the next category in my discussion of the anatomy of the church. There could be a case made that it really belongs in the muscles. We're going to talk about the muscles, the actual function of the church, and maybe that's where I thought it would go initially, but I backed away from that after some consideration and I feel it needs to go right here in the internal systems because it's on the inside

before it ever shows up on the outside and it is the attitude of worship...worship....worship.

This is at the very heart and soul of all that we are as Christians individually and collectively. The church worships when it comes together and that's what we did this morning with those Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. And as we were listening to the greatness of those lyrics and the majesty of that music about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, our hearts were lifted up in worship and we felt the emotion of those truths surging through us in the joy and the exhilaration of that music. The church collectively comes together to worship, that is a function of the church.

But it can only do that functionally if it has worshipping people. And that's why we say it starts in the heart. And so it really does belong in this particular category of spiritual attitudes. There are a lot of things being emphasized in the churches in our country today and sad to say worship is not one of them. In a very self-centered church, in a very pragmatic oriented church, in a church that's concerned more about how unbelievers feel than about the heart attitude of believers, worship is deprioritized. In churches that are well programmed and run very efficiently and their services are all timed down to the gnat's eyebrow and everything serves a pragmatic purpose, worship has a very difficult time finding a place. Services emphasize all kinds of things today and rarely is the high point and the focal point worship. I suppose it's important for me to say at this point that we would desire that every time we come together on Sundays in the presence of the Lord and with one another, it is for the primary purpose of worship. And even the teaching is designed to enhance our personal worship, not just while we're here but after we've gone.

Worship is absolutely at the heart of everything that we do. We can in our society, of course, get very busy and very acclimated toward activity and action, it's kind of the American way. We can get so busy that it just translates into our church life which is a whole lot of activity with very little contemplation, very little real heartfelt worship.

I remember reading some years ago about a distinguished explorer who spent a couple of years among some savage people in the upper Amazon. And he attempted a forced trek through the jungle of extraordinary speed for some of his exploring purposes. He was driving these native carriers to the limit physically. And all went well for about two or three days of this hard driving march. On the third day all the natives just sat down beside their burdens and refused to move. The explorer was frustrated and tried to command them to get up and get going and their chief explained, quote: "They're waiting for their souls to catch up to their bodies."

And maybe that's how it is in the church in our country. There's an awful lot of action and an awful lot of activity, but maybe we need to stop and let our souls catch up with our bodies. Now to turn to a passage of Scripture that will help us focus on worship and really is only a launch point, and I confess to you, I don't know everything that I'm going to say. I know there is much more in me than I can say,

but we'll get a good start this morning if we begin in John chapter 4. This will be our launch point to talk about worship.

It is the theme of verses 20 to 24, John chapter 4 verses 20 to 24. Let's begin in verse 20, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 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 if you notice as we were reading through the word "worship" is repeated a number of times, eight to be exact, in just those brief five verses. Eight times worship is mentioned, it is clearly then the theme of this conversation between a Samaritan woman and the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now seeing the word "worship" mentioned eight times demands from us then a definition. What is the word "worship" in its singular meaning? What is it saying? Well simply it means to give honor to a superior being...to give honor to a superior being. That would be a dictionary kind of definition. So this is a discussion here about giving honor, in this case, to God who, of course, is superior. Worship is to give honor, to pay honor to a superior being.

Now in the New Testament there are a couple of words used for worship throughout the New Testament. One of them is the word proskuneo, and it literally means to kiss toward, and that was because it was somewhat common in days of kings and monarchs for people to come down and kiss the feet or kiss the ring or kiss the hand as an act of homage, an act of submissive honor and adoration. It can mean to kiss the hand, it can mean to bow down, it came to mean to prostrate oneself, which is what subjects did beneath the feet of kings who were elevated on thrones. And that is the word that is used here. It is that word of abject obeisance where you literally bow down and prostrate yourself before one who is superior to you.

There is another word in the New Testament, however, that you will also note is used and translated worship in English, it is the word latreuo and it means to render service, to render homage, to render honor, and it's used elsewhere in the New Testament. But in either case, and I mention those two not to show you so much the difference but just to note there are two words that basically mean the same although a case could be made that latreuo more relates to the priestly kind of service to God whereas the word proskuneo is more of a royal word, latreuo being more of a priestly one. But nonetheless they both have to do with one who serves or honors or gives homage to one superior to himself.

Now how does that Greek get into English? Well when you come to English there's an old English word that you don't find anymore, obviously, it's from the old Anglo Saxon language and the word was

worship, and worship became the sort of the progenitor to the word that we used worship, and it means to render homage to a superior being. And, of course, in Anglo Saxon culture and in the culture that developed out of that in England, they were very used to having chiefs and kings and rulers over them to whom they gave worship. That's been a part of humanity through all of the centuries and we are among those people in more modern times who don't have those kinds of cultures, we don't have an understanding of kings and so we have to fill in a few blanks as we...as we read the Bible and it uses these kinds of motifs, these kinds of backgrounds to express divine and spiritual truth. But we can understand, I think, what it means simply to give honor to God, to give Him reverence, homage, adoration, praise and glory.

Now there are a number of ways that we can sort of jump in to understanding worship, but let me take you back clear back into the Old Testament to the thirtieth chapter of Exodus...to Exodus chapter 30. And there's an interesting...there's an interesting formula here that I think will fascinate you. The Lord giving commands to His people through the book of Exodus about how they were to worship Him...commands about how to build the place of worship, commands about how to bring their offerings, about how the priests should function, how the Levites who assisted the priests should function, commands about all matters of worship. And one that I find most interesting is in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus in verse 34. "Then the Lord said to Moses, `Take for yourself spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each.'" Now that's a recipe, folks, that's a recipe, that's a formula for a mixture...equal parts of all of those that are mentioned.

And then in verse 35, "And with it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure and holy. And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting." That is you part of it in the tabernacle right in front of the Holy of Holies. You put it there. "Where I shall meet with you; it shall be most holy to you. And the incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the Lord. Whoever shall make any like it, to use as a perfume, shall be cut off from his people."

You know what that means? Killed. Anybody...anybody who pirated the formula to make perfume for himself out of it was to be executed. That's really an amazing thing to me. There was something so sacred, there was something so unique and so separate and so holy about worship that even in as simple a formula as the mixture required to make a perfume that acted as incense burning before the tent of meeting where God met with His people, that formula was never to be reproduced for any other personal use. Worship then is something very unique and it is symbolized in that incense. It is symbolized in that fragrant perfume that rises to God. It is something pure and separated from all of the rest of life. And that's how we have to consider it. It is something sacred. And a violation of worship is a very serious thing, even violating the formula resulted in death. Worship is that important to God. Even in its symbols God was saying...This is very important and I expect pure worship.

Turn over to the New Testament for another illustration of the centrality of worship, to John's gospel again, only this time go beyond chapter 4 to chapter 12. In chapter 12 we read this, "Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead." Of course, Lazarus stands as a monument to the power of Christ. "So they made Him a supper there and Martha was serving. But Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him." You get the scene. He's in the home of these beloved friends, just a chapter earlier in the eleventh chapter that Lazarus was dead and Jesus raised him from the dead, an incredible reunion has occurred because his body had been in the grave for four days when he came forth. The word has spread from Bethany of the resurrection. In fact, it spread into the city of Jerusalem and it is the reason why when Jesus entered Jerusalem they threw palm branches at His feet and hailed Him as King because they had heard that He raised Lazarus from the dead. This was the monumental prepassover miracle that was convincing enough to the people to indicate that this was their Messiah. So now the reunion has occurred. Lazarus is raised. A supper is being held to celebrate this tremendous event. And Lazarus is there at the table, having a discussion. And I've always wondered what they were talking about. My first question might have been...Lazarus, where were you for those four days and what was it like?

Lazarus was the only person I know of who had not a near-death experience, but a real death experience. And came back and didn't say anything about it in Scripture. But anyway he was there eating. Martha was serving. Verse 3, "Mary, therefore, took a pound of very costly perfume, of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume." Just a little note here. Martha serving and Mary...what?...worshiping. Martha serving and Mary worshiping. It's fine to serve, has a place but it comes second to worship. She anointed Him with costly perfume, sacrifice was involved in that, adoration was involved in that, humility was involved in that. She wiped His feet with her hair, the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

It's probably true that her hair went all the way down maybe to her knees so there was plenty of it to use. She was lavishing on Him worship for what He had done. Martha's approach was to provide a meal, Mary's approach was to worship and Mary chose the better part.

Can I talk about that for a moment? There is a distinction between ministry and worship...a very important distinction to recognize. Ministry...listen to this now...ministry is that which comes down to us from the Father. Now mark this. Ministry comes down to us from the Father through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit out through the human instruments. Okay? That's kind of the flow. Ministry starts with God, through His Son in the power of His Spirit through the human instrument.

On the other hand, worship is that which goes from us by the Holy Spirit's power through the name of the Son back to the Father. And so while they are distinct, they are connected. As the ministry flows

down, the praise flows back. Ministry descends, praise ascends. Like the prophet who speaks to the people for God and the priest who speaks to God for the people. There is that distinction. And I really do believe that that balance must be maintained in the life of the church. That's really why we do what we do, that's why we have a service where we initiate praise and in the power of the Holy Spirit through the name of the Son we take it back to God. And then we have a time for the ministry of truth which comes from God by His Son through His Spirit through the human instrument to enable you then to go out as well and minister. That is a very essential and biblical balance.

But even the ministry of the Word, even the ministry that we carry on here is designed to enhance worship. If you attend church to see what you can get out of it, you missed the whole point. If you came here for a blessing, you missed the whole point. The truth of the matter is you don't come to get, you come to give. And even what you get is to enhance your ability to give, right? In other words, whatever you receive from the ministry of the Word of God, whatever truth comes to bear upon your heart is only to enhance your worship. I mean, if you go to church and the sermon is really lousy and it happens, believe me, and somebody says to you, "Well what did you get out of that?" That isn't the right question. If it was a two on a one-to-ten scale, the issue is not what did you get, the issue is what did you give, isn't it? What did you bring to God, a right heart attitude, even a fumbling, bumbling preacher who simply states things in a very colorless way when he speaks the truth should excite the heart of a true worshiper. No matter what he lacks in prose, no matter what he lacks in charm or skill, when truth is spoken it should excite the worshiping heart.

Worship is utterly involved with giving honor to God. And that's why we come together and it has to rise out of the heart.

The psalmist said in Psalm 45:1, "My heart is overflowing with a good matter." And he used the Hebrew term that means to bubble up like boiling water going over the edge of the pan. My heart is just bubbling, boiling over. And when you live with a bubbling, boiling, overflowing heart of worship, the sermon no matter how weak it might be, the lesson no matter how lacking in skill it might be will still excite your heart.

Each of the five books of Psalms...there are five books of Psalms among the 150 Psalms, each of the five books ends with an explosion of worship. Each of those five books of Psalms ends with a doxology, an explosion of worship. Why? Because the people would read through the Psalms and accumulate all of this information about God and His character and His work and eventually they would explode in adoring praise and worship. That's what we're supposed to do.

When a Jew went to the tabernacle or the temple to worship, he didn't go there and have somebody say, "Well, what did you get out of it?" That wasn't the point. He took an animal. He took a sacrifice. He went to make an offering. He was giving to God what God required. He was bringing to God his worship and his adoration and his penitence. His heart was reaching out to glorify God. And when

Christ was born, the child came into the world, the angels glorified God, "Glory to God in the highest," they said.

That's what worship is. Worship is giving to God. And it's giving to God out of a heart that is bubbling over because one understands and is grateful for God's saving power and unending goodness. There are doxologies not only in the Old Testament, there are doxologies in the New Testament. Some months ago I gave you a sermon on those doxologies. Be reminded of one of them. Romans 11:33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways, for who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again, for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." And that's Paul's boiling over, bubbling outburst of praise after eleven chapters of contemplating the doctrine of salvation. That's what worship is. It's boiling over, it's bubbling over, it's overflowing with gratitude to God in worshiping and honoring Him. That's what it is. It's recognizing that my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus, like it says in Philippians 4, and then saying immediately after, "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever amen." That's it, that's worship. In contemplation of God's gifts there's an outburst, almost an uncontrollable outburst of praise.

And coming to church on the Lord's day to worship the Lord shouldn't be a drudgery, it shouldn't be something you have to do, something you feel obligated to do, something you think you should do because you want to train the kids in that direction. You ought to be here so eager to get in the place that you're here early and you can't wait for the corporate opportunity to lift your boiling over soul in praise to God.

Paul in Galatians says, "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," and just contemplating that he bursts out, "To whom be the glory forevermore. Amen." And he says amen only in the third verse of the first chapter. He's only in to this thing four verses and he bursts out in praise. That's a heart of worship.

At the end of the book of Romans, or near the end of the book of Romans in chapter 15 we come down to verse 27, well 25 really...I'm sorry, 16, verse 25, "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 which has been kept secret for long ages," that's the gospel, "but now is manifest and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God has been made known to all the nations leading to obedience of faith to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever. Amen."

You say, "Well I know about these." Yeah, I know you know about them, I'm simply reminding you that that is the attitude of worship...that is the attitude of worship. You find it as Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 1, he is a Psalm 45:1 person, he's boiling over and any small, it seems, any small discussion of the greatness of God's grace causes him to boil over. In 1 Timothy he's talking about how he was saved. He was...he was a blasphemer, verse 13, he was a persecutor, he was a violent aggressor, he was shown mercy and he says in verse 15 that he was the chief of sinners and he was saved. And he gets down into verse 16 and talks about how he found mercy with God. And then in verse 17 he boils over, "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

Now when you sing the hymns that we sung this morning, those are simply ways to give expression to that worshiping heart. And I'm sure that many of the doxologies in the New Testament, we can't reconstruct the situation obviously, we don't have any recordings, but I'm sure many of the doxologies of the New Testament became songs of the early church as they give expression to the joy that they felt in contemplating the greatness of the salvation God had provided for them. And you find those stretching throughout all of the New Testament. The end of 2 Timothy chapter 4, "To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." It was just spontaneous. It was like a...it was a like a knee-jerk reaction. When you brought up a salvation truth, Paul reacted in worship...in worship.

How long has it been honestly, how long has it been since your own heart experienced that kind of spontaneous worship? How long since you were so controlled by divine truth and so overwhelmed by the goodness of God and the greatness of salvation and the grace and mercy the Savior provided for you, so overwhelmed by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, so thrilled with the truth of Scripture, so grateful for God's constant care and protection and provision in your life that it just took a small indication of divine truth to cause you to boil over in worship? Are you right on the brink of a doxology at any moment? Should be if your mind is set on divine things, if your mind is set on heavenly things. There is no joy, there is no exhilaration, there is not thrill, there is no happiness that can compare with the joy and the thrill and the exhilaration and the happiness of one who is...who lives doxologically...now there's a phrase for you. And that's what I'm after in this look at worship. I want to get you to live on the brink of a praise explosion. And not some artificial thing, not something that has to be induced by a certain mood, but something that is absolutely spontaneous, sort of like you just pulled the trigger of divine truth and it goes off. That's spontaneous worship.

You know, there are a lot of ways, I suppose, that through the years people have suggested you might be able to tell a spiritual person from a fleshly one. Or you might be able to tell someone who is totally committed to the Lord from one who is not. And there may be a number of ways to do that, but none is more evident and none is a better indicator than the person who is always on the brink of praise.

You say, "Well you don't know my circumstances." Ah, that isn't the issue. Paul and Silas were in stocks in the middle of the night in jail, for all they knew they were going to die. And what were they doing? Singing. Why were they singing? They were singing because it gave expression to their praise. You say, "Well why didn't they just recite the words?" Well that would be worship in truth and they wanted to worship in spirit and in truth and God has given you emotional capability. And when your emotions move along with the truth, your whole person is exhilarated in the expression of worship. That's why you love the kind of music you enjoyed today. That's why you could look at the faces of these young people and they were just lit up brightly as they sang those songs because they came from within the heart. They sang because that's what Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit do.

Just to give you a biblical context for that, Colossians tells us in chapter 3 that those in whom the word of Christ dwells richly, Ephesians 5 says those in whom the Spirit is controlling life, speak to themselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and sing and make melody in their heart to the Lord. They are spontaneously joyous. They spontaneously worship. Even when difficulties come along, they become cause for Psalms and songs and hymns.

That's the kind of attitude I want the church to have, not a self-centered attitude. And self-centered preaching, psychological preaching and quasi psychological preaching and man-centered stuff and all of that just breeds the very antithesis to true worship, where as God-centered, Christ-centered, Spirit-centered worship produces worshipers. That's the goal.

Well let me tell you a little bit about the background here in John chapter 4, now that we've sort of gotten that started. Jesus is speaking to a Samaritan woman. Now this woman has some real serious problems. She is a wicked sinful woman. And she knows it. And so does Jesus because He knows everything. Jesus came to a well in Samaria. He by all normal standards shouldn't have been in Samaria. Samaria was a place of outcasts. You remember in Israel's ancient history that the kingdom was divided after Solomon...ten tribes went to the north and constituted what became known as Israel...two tribes stayed in the south and made up what was known as Judah, those two tribes being Judah and Benjamin. And you remember that both the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom fell into serious and deadly idolatry. And eventually the northern kingdom was taken captive from which they never really came back, although many in those ten tribes had filtered down into Judah and Benjamin and so that eventually the reconstituted Israel after the Babylonian captivity included all twelve tribes. But the northern kingdom was taken off in 722 B.C. into captivity. Later on in 603 or 604 and then 586 B.C. the southern kingdom was taken off into captivity.

Some of the people who were left behind, some of the women who were left behind intermarried with pagans, intermarried with Gentiles and made a half-breed race that became known as Samaritans. They developed their own sort of form of religion, made their sacred mountain Mount Gerizim and had a religion of their own, a sort of a mixture of paganism and Judaism, which by the way still exists

today among a very, very small Samaritans, still worshiping on Mount Gerizim today. But they were outcasts to the Jews because they had intermarried. They had done the forbidden thing and married idolatrous Gentiles.

So when Israel came back from captivity after its seventy years of captivity and came back into the land and the nation was reestablished, the Samaritan, these mixed people, were not accepted. Furthermore, they were...they demonstrated themselves to be enemies of Israel and so there was a continuing hostility. Well, Jesus went into Samaria and Jews would have said He shouldn't be there, but He was there. And in fact, He runs in to a woman at a well and He asks this woman to give Him some water. And she does, and it wasn't an easy thing to do because to draw water out of that well was a formidable task and she did it and provided for Jesus. She had come to get water, as women did in that part of the world. Women would go to the well in the time of the evening and fill up the pots either on their heads or across their shoulders and they would carry them back to the village. And then Jesus had this little discussion with her about living water and about water that you drink and never thirst again. And He's really talking about spiritual satisfaction.

I think she got the message. So in verse 15 she says to Him, "Give me this water." It's remarkable that a Jew is even offering her salvation as an outcast. It's astonishing really. And she gets the message. She knows that something unique is going on. She knows He's not talking about H₂O. "Give me this water, I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw." And I think she's talking back in metaphoric terms, I don't think she's simply talking about some kind of magic water. He said to her, "Go call your husband and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said I have no husband, for you've had five husbands and the one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have truly said."

In one simple statement Jesus unmasks her iniquity because before He gives living water to anybody, before anybody can receive salvation, they must acknowledge...what?...sin. And so again as with the rich young ruler, and we see that in Matthew 19 later in Jesus' life, we find here the same barrier. Fine, you want living water, I have living water. I can give you living water. The issue is your sin...before I can give you the living water there must be a recognition of your sin, the sin is unmasked. And He says you've had five husbands and the one whom you now have is not your husband. By the way, that's a good text to prove that just because you live with somebody doesn't make you married. Some people say, "Well, you know, since we came together physically we feel it's marriage and when people come together physically that constitutes a marriage." It doesn't because this woman was living with this man and Jesus says he is not your husband...so that doesn't constitute a marriage. That's a footnote. But it does constitute adultery, fornication.

So she was unmasked as a wicked woman. And she says to him in verse 19, "Sir, I perceive You're a prophet." This has all been building. I mean, she knew He was a prophet when He was offering her some kind of spiritual life, and now that He unmasks her sin she's sure He's a prophet. And her

response immediately is this..."Our fathers worshiped..." And what does that mean? She immediately introduces the conversation about worship. Now let me get this point settled because it's very important foundationally of what I'm going to say tonight. This whole conversation is all about a worship matter. The woman sees getting her life right as an act of worship. She now knows that this man has spiritual satisfaction to offer her. And she knows that she has to deal with her sin. And the way she understands that is, "I have to go before God and worship...I've got to settle some things with God. I just don't know where to go. Our fathers, the Samaritans, say this is the mountain, Gerizim. You people say it's Jerusalem. Where do I go to worship?"

And, beloved, just enough to start this little study by introducing this, to sum it up by saying this. From the very moment that you came to Christ, you began a life of worship. You fell on your face before God and embraced Jesus Christ repenting from your sins. At that moment you were a worshiper of the true and living God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and you submitted yourself, you acknowledged your iniquity, you submitted to the great King, the great Lord, you prostrated yourself as a sinner and you begged for grace and mercy as an iniquitous individual might do, falling prostrate before a king who held his life in his hands. You prostrated yourself and you worshiped God. And that's how you began your Christian life, and it should have been from there an ever increasing expression of worship.

That's what Christian living is, it's worship from start to finish. And finish, that's heaven where we worship forever perfectly. And so I ask you the question which I'll endeavor to answer tonight and next Sunday and hopefully you'll apply these truths and be able to answer the question for your own life, the question is...how long has it been since you have really regularly experienced this kind of worship of bubbling over, boiling over, spontaneous sort of knee-jerk reaction, instantaneous response to every mention of God's grace and mercy in your behalf with immediate expressions of worship? We should be boiling over when we think of all that God has done for us. And maybe as we go through this series the Lord will enable us to get back that first love where we experience that kind of worship. Let's pray together.

Father, we didn't get very far this morning but we thank You for the reminder again of how important it is to worship You, how basic, how absolutely essential to our Christian experience. We are worshipers. The Father seeks worshipers. And like this woman, we come and we know that there is life but in the way is sin. And in that moment when we came we fell on our face and bowed our knee and we worshiped. We asked You to be merciful and gracious and forgive us and we submitted ourselves to You and we pledged obedience and we said that we would honor You and adore You and love You. And, Lord, since that time we have tasted Your goodness day in and day out and yet in so many cases our worship has grown cold. Forgive us for that. Take us back to that first love which so easily exploded in praise and adoration when thinking of all You have done for us. Forgive us for our apathy and rekindle in us the fire of our praise and we'll thank You in Your Son's name. Amen.

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