**“The Mystery of Worship”**

Series: “Sacred Mysteries” – Part 3

Sunday, June 7, 2020

In Conjunction with Challenge #5: “Letters to the Church”

**God’s Word tells us that some things are sacred to God**

The **church** is sacred to God.

**God’s Temple** is sacred to God.

**Worship** is sacred to God.

* Some think that worship is when we **go to church** and **sing some songs** and **listen to a sermon**.
* **But in reality, “Worship happens when people “connect” with God.”**
* It has been said that “**worship is like a ladder that connects heaven and earth.”**
* Without worship, there would be **no way** to **receive forgiveness of sins,** and **no way** to **give thanks to God for His grace**.
* **So worship is when we “MEET WITH GOD.”**
* **So, do we?**
* Can you honestly say that you “**meet with God in worship?”**

God issues to us …….

1. **The Summons to worship:**

* Old Testament worship is **a shadow** of New Testament worship.
* Even from the beginning, **the time of Cain and Abel**, we see men worshipping God through **sacrifice**.
  + **The OT sacrifices were divided into several types**:
    - **Burnt offerings** – sheep or goats
    - Sacrifice by fire as a **sweet aroma** to God
    - The **grain offering** for forgiving grace
    - The **fellowship offering**; the presenter could eat/Priest
    - The **sin and guilt offering**.

But listen to the Psalmist as He writes about…. **God, and** **the Summons to worship:**

**Psalms 50:4-5**

**He summons** the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: “**Gather to me my consecrated ones**, **who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”**

* **God gathers** those who **make a covenant** with Him **by sacrifice**.
* **The people who make this covenant with God by sacrifice (or worship)**, are the ones **whom God gathers**; they are God’s holy people who worship Him.
* There are so many people on earth who **claim to believe** in God.
* **But** **God carefully examines every act to see** which of them **worship Him sincerely**.

1. **Was Cain’s Act of Worship – sincere?**

**Jude 1:11 – warns….**

Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain;

* Not only was **Cain’s sacrifice unacceptable to God,**
* **The manner in which he offered it** was unacceptable as well.
* While God desires our worship,
* Note what God said to Cain;

**Genesis 4:7**

7 **If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?** But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

* We must remember that our worship **isn’t about us**,
* It’s about “**doing what is right**,” and approaching God knowing that worship is about……
* **God’s worth** – His honor, majesty, His glory.
* To Cain, he didn’t do what was right and Cain’s attitude about **God’s worth** was reflected in his sacrifice.

1. **Were Nadab and Abihu’s Worldly Acts of Worship accepted by God?**

**Leviticus 10:1**

Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and **they** **offered unauthorized fire before the Lord**, contrary to his command.

In the previous chapter, Moses and Aaron had set up the tabernacle and dedicated it to the Lord. **The fire of God had fallen on the altar, and the glory of God had filled the sanctuary.**

However, two of Aaron’s sons, **Nadab and Abihu sinned against God** and were **judged by God** as the fire of God fell, consumed the sacrifice and killed them in the process, as **Hebrews 12:29** says; **“Our God is a consuming fire.”**

* They didn’t take the worship of God **seriously**.
* They treated God’s offering with “**Contempt**” or **disdain**.
* The central theme of the chapter is stated in v. 3 as God says,

**“I will be sanctified, (or set apart as holy or sacred) in them that come near me, and before all the people I will be glorified (worship or adorned).”**

* **What does our worship look like to God?**

The prophet Jeremiah prophesied that God would replace the **sacrifices** of the old covenant, with a ***new covenant*** that God will write on their hearts. - **Jeremiah 31:34**

34 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. **“For I will forgive their wickedness**

**and will remember their sins no more.”**

* Jesus came to make the New Covenant possible, as he explains in ……

1. **The Spirit of Worship:**

* It’s amazing that so many people have such **different opinions** about worship.
* **How do you** remove the barriers of **opinion** or **race** of the proper way to worship God without starting an argument or worse (such as the Samaritans in Jesus day)?

**In John chapter 4; – Jesus went into enemy territory to have a conversation with a woman, but not just any woman, a Samaritian woman.**

• **The Samaritans believed** God had designated **Mount Gerizim** as the proper place for worship. They had built a temple there to rival the temple in Jerusalem.

• Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman **the difference between worship** **that was** **expressed in rituals** and **true worship in spirit**.

**John 4:21**

21 “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.** 24 God is **spirit**, and his worshipers must worship in the **Spirit** and in **truth**.”

* The term “**spirit**” refers to **the connection** between the **believers spirit** and **God’s Spirit** that can only come when the **Spirit of Christ** enters our hearts at salvation.
* The term “**truth**” implies that we conform to what **God says** or **demands**; not the what we want.
* Our conforming is not revealed by what we do **here**, but by **our actions when we leave here; produced by a changed heart.**
* After their conversation, **the Samaritan woman was so moved** that she went and told everyone about the man who told her everything she ever did. Isn’t he the Messiah?
* **Yes he is!** And the Samaritans proclaimed that he is really the Savior of the world. – “**That’s Worship**!”
* When is the last time you were that excited, that you ran to tell everyone – Isn’t this the Messiah!

Worshipping God in spirit and in truth leads us into ……

1. **The Sacredness of Worship:**

**Does worshipping God feel like a “sacred occasion” to you?**

Or does worship seem, **impersonal**, **cold** and **dry**?

If that is the case, **who’s to blame**?

**For some, worship can be like buying a “greeting card.”**

* You look for a **card**, with **some words on it**, **written by someone** **else, for someone you love.**
* Have you ever received a **form letter**? **Or sent one?**

I was visiting with a friend who moved to a new town. He visited a local church that his family was interested in attending. He said; **“The Pastor walked by but didn’t speak, but a few days later he receive a ‘canned letter or form letter’ in the mail.” He said they never returned.**

* When you sign your name and send a card, your Mom, Dad, grandma - **appreciate getting the card**.
* **But not God.**
* **That’s “not true worship” to Him.**
* **“Our spirits don’t connect”** when it’s **canned**, **distant**, and **impersonal**.
* That means “**something is missing**.”
* **The “connection” isn’t what it should be**.
* **God has provided all we need** to “**connect with Him**;”
* – Jesus sacrifice;
* the Holy Spirit living in the believer, and
* the promise that “**when we seek Him with all of our heart – He is there.”**

1. **From the beginning, worship was about sacrifice.**

* Even **Cain and Abel** brought sacrifices to God.
* One sacrifice was **accepted**, and one was **rejected**.
* The point is; **worship cost me something**
  + – it cost my pride, time, affections, money.
* **When we are focused on self – we will never receive the blessing of worship.**

**Christians know they should desire to worship God**, but what does that mean?

**Psalm 95 says**

1 Come, let us **sing for joy** to the Lord; let us **shout aloud** to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us **come before him** with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. 3 For the Lord is the great God,

6 Come, let us **bow down** in worship, let us **kneel** before the Lord our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

* **Do you see the connection?**
* The Psalmist calls us to **worship God** because He is **worthy**.
* **What is the greatest desire of your heart?**
* For the **believer**; **Our greatest desire is to worship and serve our God.**
* **What is True Worship?** The giving of **myself** to God; with my focus on Him, not me.
* **What should my proper sacrifice be?** For my heart to truly **treasure** the God I serve.
* **Sacred worship:** is giving to God all the honor He deserves and to no one else.

**What does this “Sacred Worship” look like?**

**Read: Revelation 4**

**Revelation 22:8-9**

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. 9 But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. **Worship God!”**

**• When our worship becomes sacred; we stand in awe of God; we marvel at His majesty, and absolutely delight in His presence.**

* **Are you in awe of God?**
* **Do you marvel at His majesty?**
* **Do you delight in His presence?**

**Song: “We are Standing On Holy Ground”**