

Considerate Worship (part 1)
Pastor Joe Oakley
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We are in a sermon series called High Praise / Deep Worship. It was motivated by a prophetic word we gave on March 21 when then Lord said He wants to take us into a higher dimension of praise and a deeper dimension of worship in our church and our everyday lives.

God said that experiencing this deeper dimension of praise and worship requires 4 things.

I spoke on the first 2 of those - which were Consecrated Worship and Concentrated Worship. Today I am speaking on Considerate Worship.

When I use the word considerate, I mean to be attentive, thoughtful and concerned for others. The others I am talking about are first of all – God. And then the other believers in the worship service. I am going to speak on both of those topics in 2 separate sermons.

Today we will be considering what God wants in worship. Our first consideration in worship must be God. God's first purpose for the church and for individuals is worship!

All throughout the Bible worship is a central theme. Worship is mentioned more than any other subject except Jesus. The highest and continual occupation of heaven is praise and worship. Therefore, the highest and continual occupation on earth is praise and worship.

This sermon today is vitally important to you because God created you to worship, called you to worship and commands you to worship. In Isaiah 43:21 God says:

I formed these people for Myself, so that they will proclaim My praise.

We were created to praise God. To bless His name. To lift Him up. To magnify and glorify Him for who He is and what He does.

I realize different people are comfortable with different worship styles. Christians often differ on the way to express praise to God. But these are usually just personality and background differences.

I understand that different people like different styles of music – and that's okay. But I also know that the word of God reveals ways He wants to be worshipped. So we must be considerate about what God wants in worship. That's the ultimate issue is: how does God want to be worshipped?

We cannot choose to refrain from worship because we don't like a song or the style it's sung in.

I heard a story of a man who went up to the worship leader after church and said, "I didn't like any of the songs you sang." The worship leader replied, "That's okay, we weren't singing them for you anyway. We're singing them to God."

Unfortunately, Satan has convinced many people that how we worship is determined by our personality or our emotions or our personal preferences or the traditions of our church rather than the Word. But Colossians 2:8 says:

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

We don't follow some tradition in worship; we follow Christ!

We don't follow some person's opinion in worship; we follow Christ!

We don't determine how we want to worship God; God determines how we should worship.

We don't tell God how we will worship; God tells us how He wants to be worshipped.

We don't worship based on our personality or our personal preferences; we worship based on God's commands in His word.

We don't worship based on the examples of people, but the example of Jesus Christ! We learn how to worship Jesus from Jesus!

In John 4:20-24 – Jesus got into a discussion with a Samaritan woman about worship. She tried to debate Jesus on the best time, place, and style for worship. Jesus replied that these external issues are irrelevant; what matters is your heart. She said,

"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

Let me give you a little background here. This woman was a Samaritan. Samaritans were the offspring of Jews who intermarried with pagans. Their faith was a mixture of truth and error. Jews and Samaritans did not even agree on where worship should take place.

And they both got into error about worship. Emphasis on truth without spirit can cause legalism = which the Jews were doing.

Emphasis on spirit without truth can lead to error and emotionalism = which the Samaritans were doing.

Jesus said that where you worship is not as important as how, why and who you worship. God says a true worshipper worships in spirit AND truth.

AW Tozer said Worship is to feel in the heart and to express it in a biblically appropriate manner. That's Spirit and truth!

Jesus said that God is seeking true worship from true worshippers. This flies in the face of those who say, "It really doesn't matter how you worship." God is looking for a certain kind of worship. God is not looking for people worshipping their own truth – He's looking for people who will offer true worship in led by His Holy Spirit and based on the truth of His Word.

What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth? Let's look first at what it means to worship in spirit. Is the spirit talked about here the Holy Spirit or the spirit of man? I believe it is both. Worship in spirit is our spirit being led by the Holy Spirit. Jesus says true worship flows out of our hearts.

What does it mean to worship in truth? First of all, true worship is real, not fake. You can go through the motions of worship and not be worshipping. You can sing songs or lift your hands or dance in the aisles - you can do those things and not worship.

When we worship, God looks past our words to see the attitude of our hearts.

1 Samuel 16:7 says: *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

Matthew 15:8 says: *These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.*

True worship flows out of our hearts.

That's why Psalm 9:1-2 says:

I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.

I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Worship in truth is real, genuine, heartfelt worship.

Secondly, worship in truth is worship based on God's word. Remember, the Bible reveals how God wants to be worshipped. How do you think the early church worshipped? In Acts 24:14 Paul said,

I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.

What Paul is saying is that New Testament worship was based on the way God revealed He wanted to be worshipped in the Bible. For the early church – all they had was the Old Testament.

Thirdly, not only is God's word truth, but Jesus Christ is truth. True worship will be Christ-centered – it is centered on Jesus, who is The Truth, not A truth.

We must worship God as He is revealed in the Bible; anything else is idolatry. You can't just create your own image of God ("I like to think of God as...") and worship that. Real worship is rooted the Word; it's based on truth, not our imagination. Worship based on imagination results in worshipping an imaginary god.

And listen: sincerity alone is not enough; you can be sincerely wrong. That's why both spirit and truth are required. Worship must be both authentic and accurate. God-pleasing worship is deeply emotional and deeply doctrinal. We use both our hearts and our heads.

Worship in spirit and in truth starts in the heart and is expressed in a biblical way. Worship in spirit and truth is based on the Word of God and centered on Jesus Christ. Worship in spirit and in truth is worshipping as God wants it, not as we want it. And the Bible is very clear and specific about how God wants to be worshipped. Here are some of the ways to worship that the Bible teaches:

By Praising – Psalm 109:30 says:

I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; Yes, I will praise Him among the multitude.

By Singing – Psalm 47:6 says:

Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.

By Shouting – Psalm 32:11 says:

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

By Lifting our hands – Psalm 134:2 says:

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.

By Clapping – Psalm 47:1 says:

Clap your hands, all you people; shout to God with a voice of triumph.

By Standing – Psalm 134:1 says:

Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord.

By Bowing/Kneeling/Prostrating – Psalm 95:6 says:

Oh come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

By Dancing – Psalm 149:3 says:

Let them praise His name with dancing and make music to Him with tambourine and harp.

By Giving – Psalm 96:8-9 says:

Give to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the Lord...

By The New Song – (spontaneous songs of praise)

Psalm 96:1 says: *Sing to the Lord a new song...*

These are all ways God wants us to express our worship.

Some people say that type of praise and worship is not for me. But let me remind you, the way we worship is determined by God, not by us. In the Bible, God tells us how He wants to be worshipped and He tells us who He wants to worship Him in that way.

Psalm 117:1 says:

Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise Him, all you people of the earth.

In other words, praise is for everyone everywhere, including you.

Psalm 47:1 says:

Clap your hands, all you people. Shout to God with a voice of triumph!

God wants all people to clap and shout. All includes you.

Psalm 150 tells us to praise with music and dancing. Then it ends by telling us who should praise like this in verse 6.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Here's the way to know if praise is for you - Are you breathing?

If the answer is yes, then you praise the Lord.

Some people say, "Well, all of that is Old Testament." Well, let's look at the New Testament. How about this? Romans 15:11 says:

Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles. Sing praises to Him, all you people.

There's all again, and all includes you. 1 Timothy 2:8 says:

I want men everywhere to pray with holy hands lifted up to God.

There's a New Testament verse telling everyone everywhere to lift their hands.

You can find this type of teaching all through the New Testament. Worship is for everyone.

You see there is something that God loves so much that He actively seeks it out.

Do you want to get noticed by God? John 4:23 says:

The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.

God is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

And He is seeking them right now! What are you waiting for?

When people ask if we are a seeker friendly church, I say, “Yes, but the seeker we are concerned about is God!”

We want to be a church full of people who free to express themselves in worship. We want to be more concerned about what God wants than what we want!

You might not think this is a big deal to God, but it really is. Luke 17:12-19 tell us of a time when Jesus healed 10 lepers.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

By the way – this man praised, worshipped and gave thanks.

He praised God by glorifying Him with a loud voice.

He worshipped God by falling at His feet.

And He gave thanks for what Jesus did for Him.

So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

What Jesus teaches us here is that God expects all of us to praise, to worship and to be thankful. Jesus expected praise from all 10. But if you look at the percentages here – only 10% were grateful. 90% were ungrateful – and that percentage probably holds true today!

So many people are part of “the other nine” those who never say thanks to God.

They get an answer to prayer, but never say thanks.

They get healed, but never say thanks.

They get set free, but never say thanks.

I don't want to be one of the other nine. I want to be grateful.

It's easy to be ungrateful. It takes effort to return to Jesus to give thanks, but that's what He expects.

I don't know about you, but one of my pet peeves is ungrateful people.

I do things for people with no strings attached, but it bugs me when they don't say thanks.

I'm not asking for much – just show a little gratitude.

When's the last time you said thanks to your spouse – or your boss for your job – or your parents for all they do for you – or your teacher?

When's the last time you said thanks to God?

Jesus taught us that we should be thankful people.

And, Jesus taught us that thanks needs to be given.

The other nine may have been thankful in their hearts, but Jesus expects people to come to Him and give Him thanks.

Yes, thanksgiving starts in the heart, but it is expressed in words and actions. Thayer's Greek Lexicon says the word used in the original Greek for thanks means "to feel grateful and to give thanks."

Some people say, "I'm thankful in my heart so I don't need to express it." WRONG! Jesus taught otherwise. Yes, God wants us to be grateful in our hearts, but He wants to hear it from our mouths! Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Jesus wants our thanks to be given.
After all, the word is Thanks – Giving!

I found a biblical key to thanksgiving in 1 Chronicles 16:34

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.

To me, this says that we will never be thankful until we see that God is good and no matter how circumstances may change – God never changes!

So, if you have problems with praising God, you should probably reconsider your view of God.

You will never worship a god who you consider to be bad.

You will never worship a god who you think is the cause of all your problems!

You will never worship a god who you think is uncaring or unconcerned.

You need to start considering that God is good all the time!

He was good when you were born and He'll be good the day you die.

He was good when you got your job and He was good when you lost it.

He was good when He told you 'yes' and He was good when He said 'no.'

He was good when He said 'now' and He was good when He said 'wait.'

Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good!

Give thanks for all He's done for you!

Give thanks for answered prayer!

Thanks be to God who always gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift of salvation by grace.

ALWAYS give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In all things give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you!

Can you consider thanking God for something this morning!!!