

Scripture Reference: John 4:19-24

Date: February 16, 2014

Title: "What Jesus Knows about Worship"

Focus: Worship, Encountering God (What the Church is Series 4 of 10)

1. Church is a group of people united by a common faith in Jesus as the one provided to take away sin. These people are active in the authority of Christ, doing what Jesus did, bringing glory to God. But, what are the things Jesus did? This is where our attention turns now.

2. One aspect of Jesus' life was worship. It was a regular part (Lk 4:16). If a person is to do what Jesus did, then worship needs to also be an aspect of the disciple's life. But, what precisely is worship?

3. This is a problem to be had as people and cultures have used the word in a variety of means. The topic of worship has, and continues to be, a source of consternation. What results is that God is not glorified and people are confused. In Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman He broached the subject of worship with her. In so doing, He exposed what worship is.

Worship is . . .

v. 21; . . . not confined to a space

The debate between the Samaritans and the Jews was whether Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim was the “appropriate” place for worship. This stems from the events of Deuteronomy 27:11-15.

The Northern tribes and Samaritans (who still do) long held that Mt. Gerizim (Just outside modern Nablus) is the site God chose for His temple. Such a point of contention was this, that for Samaritans to convert to Judaism, they had to renounce all allegiance to Mt. Gerizim.

So Jesus interjects Himself into this by saying, “Jerusalem or Gerizim isn’t the focus.” With the advent of Jesus, God’s dwelling is no longer in a temple. His people have become His temple and He dwells within the heart of those who trust Him, not at a location in space (2 Cor 6:16).

Worship is not about a place or a style. It is not a matter of expression: traditional, contemporary, western, liturgical, or free-church.

v. 22; . . . an issue greater than right vs. wrong

The Samaritans were worshipping, “*what [they] did not know*.” Locale had become more important than the person of God. What they held to be true became more important than truth itself.

YHWH's promise had been to reveal Himself and bring salvation from the Children of Abraham. The discord between the Samaritans and the Jews had kept Samaritans from seeking God.

Can it be that debate about what is correct worship and what isn't keeps people from finding God, who is to be the focus of worship?

v. 23; . . . a matter of spirit

What "spirit" is Jesus referring to? The word here is "pnuema" and is used in the Bible to speak of either the spirit of man or the Spirit of God. Is there an indication what Jesus meant?

In verse 24, Jesus tells the woman that "God is *pnuema*" and those who are to worship Him must do so in *pnuema*.

Worship is a matter of connecting who a person is at the core of our being with who God is at the core of His.

As we have seen, worship is not some superficial aspect of action. It is personal. It is the expression of an individual to God. It is the extension of who a person is.

Therefore, there is no more right and wrong way to worship than there is a right and wrong way to sign your name.

Worship is an expression of who a person is in response to who God is. It is an expression that is inner as well as visible (Romans 12:1)

v. 23; . . . an issue of truth

Jesus pointed out the Samaritans “*worship[ed] what [they] did not know.*” The Samaritan needed to know the truth of worship. That it is not focused on actions or places. That it is an expression from the spirit of a person aimed at the spirit of God.

The Samaritans were unaware of who they worshipped. Worship that lacks truth is prone to misdirection.

Many people still worship in ignorance. A Pew Forum survey found that 24% of the public sometimes attend religious services of a faith different from their own.

People continue to fail to know the truth about worship because they listen to sources other than the revealed word of Truth, Jesus

That was Jesus’ point to the woman in verse 26.

Closing:

Worship is more than an observable action that can be measured and evaluated. The truth is, worship is the expression of a person to God as an individual.

Worship is intended to be intensely personal, an encounter with the Living God.

In this context of spirit and truth, God will be glorified before all people.