

Reference: VARIOUS

Church: GRACE

Date: 1/2/00

Our worship and God's Character

Purpose: To show how our worship should closely reflect the character of God - those who see us at worship should know what kind of God He is.

1. Introduction

First week – looked at worship itself

What did we see? What is worship? Worth-ship

Respect, Honor, Reverence, Fear. Who is worshipped? Who may?

Where? Whole life, Private, Family, public

How? As we please?

Last week – 10 commandments

Are they relevant? All of them? Why should we expect this?

Because they are so closely related to the person of God

Extend the principle today.

Bible teaches that our worship should reflect God's character

Anyone walking in this morning should know what God is like by observing our worship of Him.

Need to realize that people judge our God by looking at us

True in all life (which is worship)

True in public worship

Need to be careful to give the right impression of Him

Where is this taught in the Bible?

Lots of places. General examples:

Romans 2:17-24 But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written.

2 Peter 2:1-2 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce

destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, **and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;**

Work out principle by looking at other passages

2. Worship from the spirit, not the flesh

John 4:19-24 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.²⁰ "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.²² "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.²³ "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.²⁴ **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."**

God is Spirit, so our worship must reflect this

What does this mean?

That our worship is no longer physical (bound to place etc)

It is no longer outward

Now it is inward, spiritual worship.

It is of the spirit as opposed to the flesh

Is God spirit? - Then we must worship Him in spirit

But can have wrong worship of the spirit of man

Colossians 2:23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in **self-imposed religion**, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

There is no value here in spiritual terms

Outwardly impressive but spiritually useless

Does not show what He is like

How shall this be prevented?

Because our worship must also be in truth

3. Worship in the Truth

What does this mean?

Jesus contrasts knowledge with lack of it

There must be nothing contrary to Scripture in our worship

It must all be based on the Bible

We must understand the truth, grasp sound doctrine

Is He the Truth? - worship in truth.

Anything less will not reflect His character

Spirit? – worship in spirit

Keep the two together
How often have they been separated through the years!
All in spirit – excesses of experience and error in doctrine
All in truth – doctrinal soundness but lifeless
Must have both
Only then will our worship reflect our God

4. Worship with reverence and fear

Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 **for our God is a consuming fire.**

Why should we worship God with reverence and awe?
Because He is a consuming fire!
Our approach is governed by His character
When people come loosely and with familiarity
What does this say about their god?
Is he a consuming fire?

5. Orderly Worship

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Why was this important?
What impression was the Corinthian worship likely to give?
Would this have been true? Safe? Why not?
Our God is a God of order, not chaos
We cannot reflect the character of God if our worship is a shambles:
There has to be decency and order in worship
Because that is what He is like
To do anything else is to insult Him
And to assassinate His character

6. Worship in Holiness

Psalm 29:1-2 Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name;
Worship the Lord in holy array. (in the splendor of holiness)

Holiness is the beauty of the Lord
Is He holy? Worship in holiness!

Should mark our worship
What will this mean in practice?

7. Any other attribute

Extend the principle by looking at other attributes of God:
What should our worship be like in the light of God's:
(Or – what should our worship be like if a visitor is to gain a correct view of God, bearing in mind his):
Grace? Love? Mercy? Patience? Faithfulness? Justice?
Righteousness? Hatred of sin? Goodness? Omniscience?
Omnipresence? Omnipotence? Eternity?

8. Conclusions

Can you see how closely all these things weave together?
Worship is about a person
About His character and about His worthiness
He has revealed Himself to us in His Word
His Law expresses His character and is therefore a useful guide to worship
Whatever else is true about Him must work out in our service
Not really new – obvious when you think of it
Think of ambassadors – they find out about those with whom they have an audience and approach accordingly
But they also represent their ruler abroad – so do we.
Hold on to this principle and never let it go!
Hold on to it as we look at the elements of worship
This will keep us on the right path
Also useful tool to examine worship of others –
What kind of god is reflected by their approach?
Is it the God of the Bible?
Next week look at preaching in the light of these principles