

Unashamed Worship – John 4:23-24

Ps 95 (p.499); This is a different service, where we're going to spend the bulk of our time singing/praising God, *after* we open the Word; B/c our focus this morning is worship And my hope, my prayer in fact, is that these *truths* about worship, will fuel yours That's the goal anyway; We don't worship so you'll *listen* better, we preach so you'll *worship* better And I trust you'll walk away from here thinking – truly God is among us

- In any case, this is the 3rd message in our **Pillars of the Church** series The first was unapologetic preaching – i.e. proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology The second, last week, was unceasing prayer; And I trust your discipline in that is already bearing fruit, and turning into desire and delight

And then the third, *this* week, is **unashamed worship** – lifting high the name of Jesus in worship; And I want to give you 6 reasons to cultivate it 6 reasons that I hope will stoke your fire and increase your passion to exalt Jesus Christ – in your heart, and in your praise, and in your life, and in our church And then we're going to do it; Much like we *prayed* last week at the end of our service

1. Worship Unashamed – because it's the command of God's Word (Ps 95:1-6)

That ought to sound familiar; B/c that was the case with preaching and prayer as well It's a command that demands our obedience; A command first of all to worship Like **Ps 29:2** says for instance – *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name* *Ascribe* meaning credit, attribute, give; IOW give to Yahweh, give to God – *the glory due his name*; The exaltation he rightfully deserves *Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness*. IOW enter into the radiance and beauty and perfection that's God – and declare his greatness; It's a command

As is Ps 95:6 – *Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!* Or as the Christmas carol says it – Oh come let us adore him And **Heb 12:28** – *let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe* And in **Rev 22:9**, some of the last words of the Bible – *Worship God*.

It's the command of his word; To focus your mind's attention, your heart's affection, and your will's submission on him, and him alone Allowing your soul to overflow in joyful response, as you focus on his awesome glory That's worship, and it's not an option*****

- And neither is doing so *unashamed*; Look at **Ps 95:1-2**; It says . . . *Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! [2] Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!* *Sing, make a joyful noise, and come into God's presence* are not expressions of someone *ashamed* of what they're doing; Someone who wants to hide it . . . Someone who wants to *conceal* what they're up to

It's just the opposite; Those are expressions of the *un*-ashamed Especially when you consider that God's presence and God's worship in those days, was primarily localized in a public place – the temple

And once again, notice that it's a command; *Let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!* He's not asking, he's saying [2] *Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!* 4 times in 2 verses; Cluing us in that it's something we should do

2. Worship Unashamed – because it's the desire of God's heart (John 4:23-24)

Jn 4:23-24 (p.889); This is our pillar passage, where Jesus is speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, and says . . .

The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. [24] God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

The emphasis here is not so much on the unashamed part, but the worship part God is actually *looking* for people who will worship him; He desires it Not on their terms, but his – in spirit and in truth

- In truth, as in – based on the factual reality of who he is, what he's done, and what he requires; Not who we *think* he is; Not who we *want* him to be Not who we're *comfortable* with based on our lifestyle, or mood, or culture . . . But who he *is*; True worshippers worship him in *truth*

Which was a problem for the Samaritans in those days, b/c they had long since *twisted* the truth, to suit themselves; For instance, they believed that the *real* temple . . . The real place of worship – was on Mt Gerazim in *northern* Israel, instead of Mt Zion in Jerusalem; So they built their own temple, invented their own form of religion . . . And essentially “played worship” like school girls play house In fact, they went so far as to completely reject the Psalms and Prophets, and accepted only the Law of Moses as truth – only the first 5 books of OT

But even then they twisted it in order to rationalize their practice; Like saying that all the mountains mentioned in Gen–Deut *really* refer to Mt Gerazim They just magically said so; Not unlike what Muhammad, the founder of Islam did – in “accepting” the Law of Moses himself, but changing it to suit his fancies Or accepting the gospels but changing what they mean, by claiming they're corrupted

All of which is why Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in v22 – *you worship what you do not know, we worship what we know* IOW your *intentions* may be good, but you don't have a clue who you're worshipping You not only reject the truth of who God is, and what he's done – but you replace him with a figment of your imagination; Not good B/c God desires worshippers who worship him in *truth*

- And in spirit; Meaning – from the heart, regardless of location That's the thrust of v21, where *Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain [Mt Gerazim, where he was] nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.* IOW where you worship is going to be a moot point

There will come a time he was saying, when location, location, location doesn't matter A time when the Holy Spirit would indwell every single believer, and they could worship wherever, and whenever

And we're *in* that time; Jesus said so in v23 – *the hour is coming and is now here*

Which means, that our whole life should be one great big worship service; One unbroken, continuous act of honoring and glorifying God in all we do, and how we do it
Punctuated, with regular times of *corporate* worship when we come together
Like we do every single week; And at special times like Christmas Eve, and Good Friday, and our Night of Worship coming up
That's the desire of God's heart – that we worship him in spirit and in truth, alone and together, formally and informally, all the time, anywhere and everywhere

3. Worship Unashamed – because it's the pattern of God's people (2 Sam 6:16-23)

Like the Apostle John who fell to his face in the presence of an angel, b/c of God's glory he brought to bear; That's unashamed worship
And the prophet Daniel did the same; And King David who *danced* before the Lord
Captured and captivated by the glory of God, they worshipped unashamed; Worrying less about their humiliation before *man*, and more about their *humility* before *God*
That's been the pattern of his people, at least his righteous ones, for 3000 years

Made explicit by David when he ushered the ark of the Lord into Jerusalem, in 2 Sam 6
I won't have you turn there, but I want to tell you about it

- David had yearned for so long to have the ark of God, the focal point of his presence, in the capital, in Jerusalem; So much so, that when it finally happened . . .
He worshipped unashamed; He *danced before the Lord with all his might* (2 Sam 6:14)

But when David got home, his wife Michal wasn't happy; B/c he had taken off his outer garments to do so; And she accused him of shamelessly dishonoring himself
To which he basically replied that it was going to get worse before it got better
That he would be even *more* contemptible in her eyes – b/c her perspective was wrong, and he wasn't going to stop; That's the implication
He worshipped unashamed

- Now, that doesn't necessarily mean that dancing has to be a part of *our* worship, but it does mean there's *freedom* in worship
If you want to raise your hands, raise your hands; If you want to stand, stand; If you want to sit, sit; If you want to bow your head, bow your head
If you want to lift up your eyes, lift up your eyes
If you want to get on your knees, get on your knees – whether it's up front, in the back, or at your seat; There's freedom in worship

But not at the cost of *order* in our worship *services*; Where *all things should be done decently and in order* Paul says in 1 Cor 14:40

That's why we don't dance in the aisles, or wave a bunch of flags, or tap on tambourines, or who knows what else; There's freedom, but not at the cost of order

And not at the expense of others; Whatever you do in *your* freedom, be mindful of others so you don't inhibit *theirs*

So you're not a *distraction* to them, where all they see is *you*, instead of God

There's freedom in worship, but not at the cost of order, and not at the expense of others

- Having said that, the vast majority of you have *nothing* to worry about in this respect
In fact, most of you are on the other end of the spectrum; You need to *stop* worrying about what people think, and *start* worrying about what *God* thinks
You need to stop trying to *save* face, and get on your face
B/c unashamed worship is the pattern of God's people

4. Worship Unashamed – because it's a celebration of God's greatness (Ps 96:1-9)

Ps 96:1-9 (p.499); *Oh sing to the LORD a new song*;

If you were here for the Walk in the Word tour recently, you might recall that the word "Oh" conveys a sense of intense yearning and longing

Oh sing to the LORD a new song – as in make it so; make it happen at all costs

That's one of the reasons we cut our own worship album; Not to mention the goal of encouraging you all the more in your own worship

Sing to the LORD, all the earth! [2] Sing to the LORD, bless his name – that is, praise and exalt him, by declaring his name above all others

Tell of his salvation from day to day. [3] Declare his glory [the manifestation of his greatness and power] *among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!*

[4] For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

[5] For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

[6] Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary [the place of his presence].

[7] Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

[8] Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! [9] Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

Now *that's* a celebration; A celebration of God's greatness, that's anything *but* ashamed
And rightly so in light of such splendor, and glory, and power, and majesty, and strength, and beauty, and holiness, and salvation

You couldn't keep a lid on it if you tried – not if you're in your right mind

Not if you see with the eyes of your heart

- Which is why it's often accompanied by clapping, and loud songs of joy, and the raising of hands; Like it says in **Ps 63:4**
Because your steadfast love is better than life . . . in your name I will lift up my hands.
It's a physical expression of unashamed worship and desire, just like singing
And **Ps 47:1** says – *Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*
And Ps 150 – *Praise him with loud clashing cymbals!*
That's unashamed worship, in celebration of God's goodness and greatness

- Does that mean *all* worship has to be loud? Not at all
Or that you have to clap and raise your hands during *every* song? No
The Psalms give credence to times of reflection as well; Even silence*****

But having received the greatest gift in the world from God himself . . .

And having beheld his power and glory, his greatness . . .

A joyful response in *celebration*, should characterize your worship more often than not

5. Worship Unashamed – because it’s a part of our witness (Acts 3:8-10)

Remember the story about the lame beggar in Acts 3, who after being healed by Peter and John, went walking and leaping and praising God? Remember that guy?

It says in **Acts 3:8-10** that – *Leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them*; Why the temple? To worship

That’s why Peter and John were there in the first place – it was *the hour of prayer* v1 says; the appointed time for corporate worship

So he joined them (**next line**); He entered the temple *walking and leaping and praising God*. That’s worship (**next lines**)

[9] *And all the people saw him* [here’s the witness part] *walking and praising God*, [10] *and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms* [for donations]. *And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him*. He worshipped unashamed, they recognized the difference . . .

And it impacted them – *they were filled with wonder and amazement*

IOW his unashamed worship was a witness to those around him – one of the ways he conveyed the goodness and greatness of God in his life

One of the ways he conveyed his testimony – his story of God’s work*****

And it should be for you as well; Worship should be an ongoing part of your witness

Especially at church; B/c unbelievers aren’t the only ones who need to see and hear about the impact of God’s work in your life; Believers need to as well

They too need to see God’s glory; They too need to be reminded of God’s power; They too need to be encouraged in their walk, and their witness, and their worship

Worship unashamed b/c it’s a part of your witness, your witness about what God has done in your life – to believers and unbelievers alike

6. Worship Unashamed – because Jesus is worthy (Col 1:15-20)

Worthy of our praise, worthy of our love, and worthy of our life; After all . . .

He’s God in the flesh – the image of the invisible God, who dwelt among us (Col 1:15; John 1:14); And therefore worthy of our worship; Not only that . . .

He’s the agent of creation – the one who spoke and brought the world into existence (Col 1:16)

He’s the sustainer of the world– upholding *the universe by the word of his power* (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3)

He’s Lord of all – including the dead and the living (Rom 14:9)

He’s highly exalted – so much so that there will come a day when at the mention of his name, *every* knee will bow, and *every* tongue confess, that he is *Lord* (Phil 2:9)

Jesus is worthy of our unashamed worship, b/c he’s highly exalted; What’s more . . .

He bore our sins – *in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness* (1 Pet 2:24); Including the righteousness of unashamed worship

He appeased God’s wrath – *as the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world* (1 Jn 2:2)

He rose from the dead – causing *us to be born again to a living hope* (1 Pet 1:3)

And last but not least . . .

He’s the focus of all eternity – where those who know him *now*, will worship him *then*, forever and ever (music starts); Saying . . .

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Lamb who was slain – to receive glory and honor and power and wealth and wisdom and might and blessing! (Rev 4:11; 5:12)

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb – be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (Rev 5:13)

He’s going to be the focus of all eternity, as we fall down and worship him – *unashamed*

• I don’t know about you, but I’m ready (**Summary**)

B/c Jesus is worthy; And it’s a part of our witness; And a celebration of God’s greatness And the pattern of God’s people; And the desire of God’s heart; And the command of God’s Word

So let’s stand, and offer up a sacrifice of praise – in unashamed worship (worship set)

Prayer – Lord, we’re all about worship because we’re all about you; And our hearts overflow in the splendor of your holiness; To the praise of your glory, we worship and pray, in Jesus’ name

Close – Worship Album; Night of Worship; Cultivate a life of worship