

Acceptable Worship

Introduction

(He 12:28)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on “Acceptable Worship.”
 - a. Worship has become over the years a “hot topic” so to speak in the brotherhood.
 - i. There are so many today changing what God deems acceptable it is hard to keep up with all the “new and improved” or rather “new and unapproved” changes.
 - b. Today we are going to examine “Worship” itself and what it means and is.
3. Why study worship?
 - a. Simple...in heaven we will be constantly worshipping it appears.
 - i. It makes sense therefore that we ought to know how to worship here on earth than so that we will be able to get to heaven.
4. With that in mind let us examine what acceptable worship is...

I. Worship Biblically Defined

- A. There are five Greek words that are translated as worship in the N.T.
 1. They are...
 - i. proskuneo, sebomai, sebazomai, latreuo, eusebeo.
 - a. Combined one can see that worship is more than just feeling awe and devotion or being reverent toward God it can be more generic, meaning simply to render religious service.
 1. “A consideration of the above verbs shows that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deed done in such acknowledgment.”
- B. Thus...
 1. Worship at its most basic level is performing a religious act.

II. Worship’s Biblical Elements

- A. Jesus and the woman at the well
 1. Jesus meets a Samaritan woman.
 - i. **Jn 4:7** “A woman from Samaria came to draw water...”¹
 2. Jesus strikes a conversation with her.
 - i. **Jn 4:7-18** (Discuss)
 3. The woman perceives Jesus is a prophet and asks a question.
 - i. **Jn 4:19-20** “The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.””

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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4. Jesus expounds upon the profound to the woman.
 - i. **Jn 4:23-24** “But 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.”
 5. Jesus here mentions the two necessary elements for acceptable worship.
 - i. Truth & Spirit
- B. Truth
1. This word has been abused far too long!!!!
 - i. However this word is not hard to understand but for some it is hard to accept.
 2. Truth is the absolute of anything.
 - i. In other words truth is that which has definite conclusions.
 - a. Example: $2 + 2 = 4$
 - ii. There are zero interpretations of truth on absolute conclusions.
 3. Now what is biblical truth?
 - i. It is the Word of God.
 - a. **Jn 8:32** “and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - b. **Jn 17:17** “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”
 - ii. It is the pattern set by God.
 - a. We see a pattern set for singing.
 1. **Co 3:16**
 - b. We see a pattern set for giving.
 1. **I Co 16:1-2**
 - c. We see a pattern set for preaching.
 1. **Ac 20:7-11**
 - d. We see a pattern set for partaking of the Lord’s Supper.
 1. **Mt 26:26-29**
 - e. We see a pattern set for praying.
 1. **I Th 5:17**
 4. So worshiping in truth is worshiping according to the divine pattern found in the Word of God.
- C. Spirit
1. This word too has been abused far too long outside and inside the brotherhood.
 - i. How many times have you heard this, “Truth is doctrine and spirit is emotions.”
 2. Spirit none-the-less cannot be simply emotions.
 - i. The word emotion left unto itself is way too broad.
 - a. **Pr 14:12** “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”

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3. So what is biblical spirit?
 - i. This is the emotional resolve to follow truth.
 - a. “Steve Higginbotham, “one may submerge themselves in water throughout the Summer months in one’s own backyard pool. There’s nothing “spiritual” about that act. However, to perform this act with a view toward reenacting the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus makes this event spiritual.” (<http://goo.gl/eQoj21>)
 - ii. This is the essence of God...love.
 - a. God is spirit cannot be referring to the “bodily” form of God.
 1. We cannot worship in the bodily form of spirit.
 2. However God is love (spirit) makes complete since.
 - i. **I Jn 4:8** “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”
 - b. Love (agape) is the active desire for the soul of others to be righteous.
 1. This is seen in God sending Jesus to die for us.
 - i. **Jn 3:16** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (NKJV)
 - ii. **Ro 5:8** “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - c. The emotional resolve to follow truth (what’s best for my soul) is based in love.
 1. **I Jn 4:16** “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”
- D. Thus...
 1. The two elements needed to have acceptable worship are truth and spirit.

III. What This Means For Us

- A. It means our religious acts must be...
 1. Righteous (in spirit) not in vain.
 - i. **Mt 15:7-9** “You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 8 “ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ” ”
 - ii. **Co 2:20-23** “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.”

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- a. Everything we do that is a religious act we must do from the heart seeking truth in that act.
2. Divine (based in truth) not in ignorance.
 - i. **Ac 17:22-23** “So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”
 - a. Everything we do that is a religious act we must do according to the pattern laid out by the Word of God.
- B. Thus...
 1. We must ask ourselves therefore “is what I’m doing a religious act and if so am I upholding the divine pattern.

CONCLUSION

1. Worshiping the Almighty has become somewhat of a mundane affair for people.
 - a. Gordon Dahl said it best when he stated, “Most middle class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, and to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot.” (<http://goo.gl/wjyLXt>)
2. Question: Are you diligent to make sure that all you do is righteous and divine when you perform a religious act?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**