Brethren, We Have Met To Worship

John 4:19-24; Psalm 33

God has been impressing upon my heart the subject of worship for the past several days (through music, reading, sermons). When God deals with a pastor about a particular issue, it not only for the pastor's sake, but also because the congregation needs it as well.

The task of sermon preparation involves the preacher keeping his Bible before his eyes... his fingertips on the pulse of his congregation... and his heart in tune with God's Spirit. When these three things are linked together, the preacher will always know what message to preach to his flock.

So today I want preach on this all important subject of worship.

I desire a deeper experience of worshipping God, don't you? How is your worship experience? Are you satisfied with your worship? Would you say, "Preacher, my worship of the Lord couldn't be any better than it is right now. I believe I know all there is about worshipping God." If that is your answer, then you may as well leave and go home. Nothing I say will help you because you've already arrived when it comes to worship. But if you are like me and desire a deeper worship experience with God, listen to what I say, and we might both learn something.

I. The PRIORITY of worship.

- Why are we here this morning? The old hymn we sang earlier answers—"Brethren, We Have Met To Worship." We have NOT met to gossip... to be entertained... to make a fashion statement. Brethren, We Have Met To Worship," and don't ever forget that!
- A. Worship must be the main priority of the Church—God desires worship above all else (John 4:19-24).
- B. Emphasized in both O.T. and N.T.
 - 1. Exodus devotes 25 chapters devoted to the Tabernacle—The focal point of Jewish worship.
 - 2. Leviticus is a 27 chapter manual of worship conduct.
 - 3. Psalms is a 150 chapter worship hymnal.

4. Revelation 4 and 5 gives a preview of the worship in heaven around God's throne. What will we do throughout eternity—Worship!

II. The PARTICIPANTS of worship (Psalm 33:1).

A. Their **SPIRITUAL POSITION**.

- 1. The participants of worship "Rejoice IN THE LORD..." If you are not "IN THE LORD" you are outside the perimeters where worship occurs. You cannot participate in worship if you are not "IN THE LORD."
- 2. You cannot rejoice IN something that you are not in yourself! It is futile to try to get someone to "rejoice in the Lord" when they are not "in the Lord."
 - ►ILLUS: A husband shouts and jumps up and down when the Seahawks score a touchdown! His wife sits there with a blank stare. Why isn't she excited also? Because she ain't into football! She ain't in the game.
- B. Their **MORAL CONDITION**. What about those who are "in the Lord," but are not rejoicing "in the Lord?" Two moral qualifications:
 - 1. Righteous—Living in holiness.
 - 2. Upright—Adherence to moral principles. Moral integrity.
 - You cannot rejoice in the Lord when you know your heart is not right with God.
 - You cannot lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting if your hands are dirty... angry... or doubtful.
 - You cannot sing His praise with your tongue if it has been used gossiping, cussing, or speaking lies during the week.
- ⇒If you are going to "rejoice in the Lord," you must first BE "in the Lord" and second be RIGHT with the Lord!
- C. Their **PROPER ADMIRATION**—"...for praise is comely..."
 - ⇒It is due Him! It is proper and fitting for those...
 - 1. ...who have been <u>saved</u> by grace to praise God for His grace.

- 2. ...who have been <u>forgiven</u> of their sins to praise God for His forgiveness.
- 3. ...who have been given eternal life to praise God for giving them eternal life!
- Something is very wrong with anyone who has been the recipient of God's blessings and does not continually praise God for those blessings!

III. The PRACTICE of worship (Ps. 33:2-4).

 This is not private worship, but public worship of a gathering of people at the sanctuary.

A. THOROUGH worship—

- 1. With our enthusiastic voices. It grieves me to see people whom God has gifted with the ability to sing, but they will not sing in the choir! I ask, "Why do you refuse to add your voice to the choir?" You are robbing God of that which He has given you to use in assisting the people of God in worship!
- 2. With our *skillful* instruments. Some have the skill to play a musical instrument, but will not join our church band.
- He deserves our all and our best.
- B. **TRUTHFUL worship** (v. 4a). Worship must be done according to the truth of God's Word (John 4:24).
 - Songs must be Scriptural— Not all religious songs are true.
 No singer should sing a "lie" anymore than a preacher should preach a lie.
 - →God will not accept our singing if what we are singing is not true or we are living a lie.
 - 2. Old time song-writers were theologians and their song were rich in doctrinal content— Isaac Watts (When I Survey); Charles Wesley- Methodist Pastor (And Can It Be); Martin Luther (A Mighty Fortress); Luther Bridges (He Keeps Me Singing); John Newton (Amazing Grace); Robert Lowry-Baptist Pastor (Shall We Gather At the River; Christ Arose; Nothing But the Blood);

Wm. R. Newell (*At Calvary*); George Atkins-Methodist pastor (*Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*).

IV. The POINT of worship.

- Why do we worship? Is it for God or for man? A visit to many churches today might leave the impression that worship is for us—To meet our needs. They are entertainment-focused while those in the pews watch a performance.
- Attenders who ask after a church service: "What did you think of the service?" The <u>real questions</u> should be: "What did God think of the service? Was God pleased with my worship of Him today?"
- A. Worship must be God-centered, not man-centered. Our focus must be to "worship **HIM** in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24; Rev. 22:9)).
 - 1. In Revelation 1:20, **Jesus is in the midst** of the church. He walks up and down these aisles and sits beside us seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.
 - 2. Sometimes during the song service I see people talking to the person next to them instead of singing. It grieves me, because they are not worshipping. You cannot worship when your mind is on the person next to you and not on God.
- B. God is mentioned in every verse in Psalm 33 except one (v. 16).
 - 1. We worship Him for the **perfection of His WORD** (v. 4). The greater your understanding of God's Word will deepen your knowledge of God. And the greater your knowledge of God, the more manifest your worship experience will be (John 4:20-24).
 - 2. We worship Him for the performance of His WORKS (vs. 4-9). We stand in awe of His creation!
 ⇒vs. 6, 9—God spoke the universe into being (Heb. 11:3; Gen. 1)
 - 3. We worship Him for the **principles of His WISDOM** (vs. 10-17). His counsel is sure. He is our "wonderful Counselor." We don't have to look at the alinement of the stars to know what career to choose... who to marry... what church to attend.

- ▶ILLUS: Dr. Craig Conner tells of a marriage counselor seeking referrals. Upon checking him out, it was discovered he had been married four times. I've got a better counselor!
- 4. We worship Him for the **promise of His WATCH-CARE** (vs. 13-20). Praise God He watches over us with loving care!

SUMMATION (v. 21-22): The Psalm ends as it begins, with rejoicing. Worship prepares our heart for the day ahead because it produces an inner joy. "The joy of the Lord is my strength."

We don't need leave a church service just "feeling good." Feelings are temporal—Up and down. We need to leave a worship service with lasting joy. I have strength to face the trials of life by the joy I received from my worship of the Lord.

- Do you need strength today? Come and worship Him with rejoicing.
- Do you fit the perimeters of worship? Are you "in the Lord" and right with the Lord?

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