

“Why the Church” - Week 7

SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Why the Church: Worship”

As we continue our examination of the church this week, we will examine John 4:1-26 regarding the traits and characteristics of worship in the local church. For the past six weeks, we have examined traits we desire to have, create, and keep as vital components at Rich Fork. Thus far, we have examined the following: Biblical Preaching, Evangelism & Discipleship, Prayer, Obedient Generosity, and the practices/ordinances of Baptism and The Lord’s Supper (communion). This week, through the passage in John 4 and a few others, we will examine the trait, the thread of worship—not simply the thought of singing or preaching alone, but the intention and heart of worship. One way we can lead our community towards a relationship with a Holy God is to worship through a relationship with Jesus Christ, worship with sincerity, in spirit and truth, with compassion and grace, and lead others to worship that can satisfy their deepest longings; worship of the living God, who still fills hearts and souls with the living water of his saving grace, that will never end.

Scripture - John 4:1-26 - Jesus and the Woman at the Well

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” 11 The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” 19 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.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 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.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study:

Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Luke 10:27; John 4:1-42; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:16-25; Hebrews 12:28-29

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Jesus Christ is pursuing a conversation with a woman with a sordid past, a Samaritan, in order to exchange her current way of life of emptiness for something far more significant. Jesus was interested in a spirit-filled, truth-filled relationship with someone who did not, according to culture, deserve his time, his conversation, or his energy. Still, after all, he had an appointment with her that was far greater than any thoughts the disciples had that day.

Notice that Jesus enters a legitimate conversation, but what he does not do is avoid confrontation with her sin. Jesus is not there to give her physical water; he is there to help her quench the thirst that has led her to a lifestyle of emptiness and embarrassment that could only be quenched by what Jesus had to offer.

“Your soul will never be satisfied apart from worshipping God. It does not matter how big or luxurious your house is; it will not satisfy you. It does not matter how much money you make; it will not satisfy you. It does not matter who you marry, what degree, rank or status you achieve, what job you have or position you attained, how healthy you are, or how comfortable your 401k is. None of these things will satisfy your soul. Your soul is designed by God to be satisfied in worshipping Him. A call to worship God is a call to satisfaction-satisfaction that is deeper, truer, fuller, and longer lasting than anything else this world offers.” ~ David Platt

This conversation began with cultural awkwardness, continued with the reference to living water, and then landed upon her sinful past. Jesus does not hold back in the confrontation—not to embarrass her, but to bring her to the point of recognizing her emptiness and need to be filled with something that can bring her true satisfaction.

We are created to worship. This leads us to a specific question: What makes you happy? What brings you satisfaction? This is a difficult question because it is at the heart of why and how we worship collectively.

“You will almost always answer by thinking of something outside of you. Some of us have our hopes set on romantic love, some on career, some on politics or a social cause, and some of us on money and what it will do for us. But whatever it is that makes us say, “If I have that, if I get there, then I’ll know I’m important, then I’ll know I have significance, then I know I’ll have security” - it’s likely something outside of you. Yet Jesus says there’s nothing outside of you that can truly satisfy the thirst deep down inside of you.” ~ Tim Keller

Key Thoughts

Jesus confronts the rituals of worship, with the relationship of worship. This Jesus who confronted this woman 2000 years ago, this Samaritan, this adulterer, this woman full of shame, was offered living water, and it obviously changed her life. Jesus had a purpose for sitting at the well. To meet the woman at the well. Jesus formed a real relationship with this woman. To lead her to salvation and a new life. Today, the message is the same!

Jesus, who suffered and died for the sins of all mankind and wants to meet us in our sin, in our guilt, in our shame, and give us a spring of life that can never be quenched. He desires to change our heart's desires and replace them with truth, peace, grace, mercy - hope, and fulfillment, and exchange the false objects of worship in our lives with the ones that matter to Him. He desires to impart the living water, the spring of life, the Holy Spirit, into our lives

The object and focus of worship is not you and me; it is God. "Since the object of our worship is the glorious and majestic God of Heaven, when worship becomes empty, the problem lies with the subject (us), not the object (God)." ~ Donald Whitney,

Worship in this passage from John 4 is not about a song, a style, or how we dress, but about a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Bring people to a realization of the state of their life (vs. 16-18)
- Lead them to repentance and new life in him (vs. 25-26. 39-42)
- Model and lead others so they would honor & worship God (vs. 21-26)
- Pursuing worship in Spirit & Truth daily. (vs. 23-24)

"Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose--all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable." ~ William Temple

Worship leads to conviction because of God's holiness (vs. 16-18). This is what leads us to repentance and recognize our sinfulness and need for a savior.

Worship matures us through His truth; the preaching of God's word (vs. 23-24). Jesus reminds this woman of the truth, with compassion, but with truth.

Worship aligns us with the Spirit of God (vs. 23-24). Worship leads us to surrender, confession, and honesty. Worship causes us to adore and give thanks. Godly worship will draw others to worship a Holy God. (vs. 39-42)

Reflect & Respond

Worship is not about a three song set list at the beginning of a service, what style of music is being played, or what the atmosphere of the room feels like at church. Worship is about our hearts being aligned with the heart of God and turning our lives over to His will as we learn what it means to die to self and follow Christ. What does worship typically look like for you? How do you engage in regular worship of God? Is how you are worshiping the Lord leading you into a deeper relationship with Him?

What makes you happy? What brings you satisfaction? What do you “hunger” and “thirst” for? As you think of these things, are they tied to your relationship with Jesus Christ, or are they outside of it? Are they tied to areas of sin that you need to repent of? Are there any “false idols” that perhaps need to be destroyed in order to pursue your relationship with Christ more deeply? These are hard questions, but ones that must be asked and answered in our hearts if we are to draw closer to the Lord in worship.

Who do you know that you would consider to be a true worshiper of God (spirit and truth)? Does their life spur you on to pursue Christ more? Are others drawn to Jesus because of the way in which you worship Him with your life? Who is the “Samaritan” in your life that you are purposefully pursuing as you worship?

Reading through John chapter 4, and especially verse 23, what does it mean to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth? Spend some time in this as a group. Dive into Blue Letter Bible, Bible Hub, Got Questions, commentaries, etc. to gain further understanding. Look at definitions for “worship”, “spirit”, and “truth” in this context. What do you believe is the “both and” of worshipping in this way?

Read the following quote from Pastor John Piper: “Truth without emotion produces dead orthodoxy and a church full of artificial admirers. On the other hand, emotion without truth produces empty frenzy and cultivates shallow people who refuse the discipline of rigorous thought. But true worship comes from people who are deeply emotional and who love deep and sound doctrine. Strong affections for God, rooted in truth, are the bone and marrow of biblical worship.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement from John Piper? Please discuss in your groups. Where have you seen spirit and/or truth abused within churches and Christianity? Where have you, or are you currently seeing, spirit and truth lived out in balance that is leading to repentance, new life, deep relationship with Jesus Christ, and others being drawn to Him because of this?

What is one practical thing you can do this week to live as a worshiper of God in spirit and truth?

As we work through this series, please know that you have [FREE access](#) to the book [Twelve Traits: Embracing God’s Design for the Church](#), by David Platt, which this series is taken from. You can find and download this short book for free at the link below and we encourage you to read through this with us throughout the series.

https://radical-net-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/images/20220308095847/12Traits_Web.pdf

