

John 4:19-24

I want to take today and next Sunday to get into some of the details of this passage. There is much to learn from Jesus' confrontation with the Samaritan woman. One area of lessons concerns worship. That is the focus on this passage.

It is interesting that the woman was kind of doing worship wars. Your place of worship is not better than ours. That is kind of the spin we see that the woman is giving about worship.

Jesus did not address the place of worship, but the nature of worship and the manner of worship. That is where I want to take you for today and next Sunday.

First, let's look at the nature of worship. The nature of worship is found in one word—worship. Specifically, it is found in the Biblical understanding of worship as defined in the term worship.

The Greek and the Hebrew languages are very deep in meaning. It is sometimes hard to define one Greek or one Hebrew word with one English word. Such is the case for the Greek and Hebrew word for worship.

There is a Hebrew word for worship that I want us to look at briefly. I want you to see it in its context. Exodus 12:27.

In the context, God is giving instructions of what to do concerning the first Passover, when the death angel will Passover the homes where the blood of the lamb was painted on the doorpost. *Verse 26-27 - <sup>26</sup>And when your children say to you, <sup>[ab]</sup>What does this rite mean to you?' <sup>27</sup>you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD <sup>[ac]</sup>who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but <sup>[ad]</sup>spared our homes.'" And the people bowed low and worshiped.*

They worshipped. God did not tell them to worship. They just did it. They bowed to the ground. That is the meaning of that word. But more, they paid homage to royalty. They bowed in respect to a superior being. They worshipped because God had just promised the final act that would deliver the people from the bondage of Egypt.

This Hebrew word is the equivalent to the Greek found in John 4. Worship is honor paid to a superior being. It was the ancient custom of the subordinate kissing the hand of a superior. It is the bowing of the head and kissing the hand.

In worldly kingdoms, the subordinate pays homage out of duty. They have to if they want to keep their lives. In God's Kingdom, worship should not be a duty. It is to be looked at as a privilege. Worship of God, by nature, should be, ought to be, is to be above anything that we do in life.

Now let's get very specific in letting this definition of worship help us understand more of the nature of Biblical worship.

Biblical worship is focused on a Person

As the simple definition says, worship is honor paid to a superior being. Who or what is your worship focused on? Surely it is not the music. The music is the means to helping us reach the end of worship. What is your focus? Is it on something else, someone else? Is

your mind on Facebook that you scroll through during sermon time or the game you're playing on your phone?

This is worship. It is time to focus our undivided attention on the only person worthy of our worship, and that is our Holy God. Have you lost focus of who He is? He is Creator. He wonderfully created you. Honor Him for that. He is God of grace. Our ability to approach Him in worship is not of your doing, He gives us the undeserved privilege of experiencing Him. He is your Redeemer. He is forgiver. He is Almighty God. He is Holy God. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the King of the kingdom that will not perish. This is God. Our focus is to be so on Him that nothing else in this room matters.

Have we forgotten who our God is? Have we lost the sense of awe? Have we become blind to His transcendence? Have we lost our respect for Him? Have we begun treating Him as less than He really is? Woe be to us for doing so. How we do this part of worship affects the rest of what we are looking at as far as the nature of worship.

Maybe we quit experiencing God's transcendence because we quit looking for it, or expecting it. Acts 2 church continuously felt the sense of awe as they saw signs and wonders being done. God was moving in that church because they looked with excitement for his exaltation.

When this aspect of the nature of worship is met, the rest of what we will identify as the nature of worship will fall into place.

### **Biblical worship is to be unique to any other "worship"**

Let me show you an OT example of the uniqueness of worship. Exodus 30:34ff

Notice the last verse. This perfume is not to be used for any other purpose other than worshipping God. The uniqueness of worship is to be such that no other perfume is to be used, and that perfume that is to be used is not to be used for anything else.

Our worship of God is to be done with most utmost respect that it is to be unique in comparison to anything else we admire in life.

Do you admire your play as more worthy than your worship of God? Do you admire yourself as more worthy than your worship of God? I want to treat my worship as exalted and far above anything else. After all, this is my God, my Savior, my Lord, and my Redeemer that I am worshipping.

### **Biblical worship is to be in the position of highest priority**

It is the most important thing our church can do. It is the most important thing you can do through the week. This day, God has ordained to be used as a day of worship. As we recognize the worth of God in our lives, then worship will be a priority.

It is to be a deliberate act. It will be given out of a heart of what's best, not from a heart that gives what is left. The church that meets in the meeting house in Maple gather at 10 a.m. for Bible study and 11 for worship. What would it be if those hours were guarded as highest priority than anything through the week?

Never forget driving to Sumter down 378. One of the church signs said, "Ball is a sport, not a god." It seems that in these days, God is in competition with other stuff. It's a beautiful day. We won't get days like this very much. Let's skip church and go to... you fill in the blank.

Where are your priorities? Have we become accustomed to God to the point that we've lost the respect that is due to Him? When we have a rekindling of our souls as to the Person of God in Jesus Christ, worship will have priority. And it won't matter if the worship goes overtime just five minutes or so.

### **Biblical worship happens in humility**

The Biblical act of worship is bowing to a superior being. Paying honor involves humbling ourselves before Him.

Humility—that's a quality missing in people these days.

When researchers asked a million high school students how well they got along with their peers, none of the students rated themselves below average. As a matter of fact, 60 percent of students believed they were in the top 10 percent; 25 percent rated themselves in the top one percent. You'd think college professors might have more self-insight, but they were just as biased about their abilities. Two percent rated themselves below average; 10 percent were average and 63 were above average; while 25 percent rated themselves as truly exceptional.

If that kind of thinking has infiltrated the Church, no wonder our worship is weak.

### **Biblical worship is life-changing**

We don't find that happening immediately with this Samaritan woman, but we do find it in other places in scripture.

I want to close with one of those passages. This passage not only demonstrates that Biblical worship is life-changing, but it reveals everything else about the nature of worship that we have identified.

Luke 7:36ff

There are two persons in this story I want you to pay attention to. One is the unnamed woman. The other person is the Pharisee who invited Jesus whose name was Simon.

*<sup>36</sup> Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to <sup>[a]</sup>dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup> And there was a woman in the city who was a <sup>[b]</sup>sinner ( she was an immoral woman); and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, <sup>38</sup> and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet(humility) and anointing them with the perfume. (unique and priority) <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a <sup>[c]</sup>sinner."*

Knowing Simon's thoughts, Jesus told him a parable.

*<sup>41</sup> "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred <sup>[e]</sup>denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" <sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged*

correctly.”<sup>44</sup> Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.”<sup>45</sup> You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.<sup>46</sup> You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. (She acknowledged Jesus for who He was, the Person of a King who became a great grace giver for her)

<sup>47</sup> For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”<sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”<sup>49</sup> Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say [to](#) themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?”<sup>50</sup> And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

The woman focus of worship was on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Her worship was unique having poured an expensive vial of perfume on him.

Her worship was humble, wiping His feet with her hair.

Her worship was of priority. She had to be there. The fact that this was the home of a Pharisee, one of the very ones who condemned her did not stop her.

Her worship was life-changing. She went away never the same again.

Which one are you? Are you Simon? Are you the woman?