

Worship Seminar – Session 1 (Friday, 20 Jan 06)

IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH WE WORSHIP

Opening Text: John 4:23-24

Worship is primarily a response to God - to his character and to his deeds.

Worship is:

To express reverence

To have a sense of awe

To bow low before the object of worship

To esteem the worth of

To give place to

In order to respond to God's character and deeds, we need to see them and understand them. This is why both Spirit and truth are absolutely necessary for us to worship God as he deserves: they are the twin routes to giving us an understanding of God that we can respond to.

'In spirit' means that we must worship the Creator with the inward man, not just the outward physical man! (c.f. 1 John 3:24; 1 Corinthians 2:9-14). What the mind can't grasp, the spirit can - aided by the Holy Spirit. Spirit speaks to spirit, bypassing the mind because it fundamentally can't understand some spiritual truth: it's spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

Singing or speaking in other tongues, is the ability given by God to an individual, to sing or speak in a language not known or understood by that individual. The language could be one of the common languages, or it could be an obscure or totally unknown language. People spontaneously begin to sing praises to God, both in English and in other tongues. (Ephesians 5:19)

The PSALMS were the only songbook part of the Bible, that the church used for many centuries. There are many HYMNS with which we are all familiar, many of which are in the church songbooks. There are SPIRITUAL SONGS, which is the individual's expression in song of worship to God, without the aid of words and melody written by someone else. It is from the Spirit.

Many people 'go through the motions' of worship, but their heart is far from Him: Worship is no longer a three-song-and-offering preliminary for a sermon. Now, it was an entity of its own--a joyful companion to the receiving of the Word.

In truth' means that we must worship the Creator according to His will, His precepts, His doctrines, NOT man's doctrines. This means that every Christian must worship with the correct attitude and the correct actions. God is the One Who is being worshipped. He is the audience. Therefore, He is the One Who must be pleased!

True Worship is laying aside all formulas and places as a prerequisite for true worship. The temple is now our hearts. Worship is anywhere and any time and in whatever form focuses my adoration on God. Any attempt to return to a form associated with the temple or to any form as a prerequisite is a violation of these words of Jesus. (c.f. Matthew 15:8-9; Colossians 2:20-23)

What God is, is the truth.
To really know God, is to really know the truth.
To love the truth is to love God.
To be satisfied in your ignorance does not please God.
He wants you to seek him out.
He wants you to desire him, to love him.

Worship requires something of you, and that is OBEDIENCE. Worship is "free will obedience. (c.f. John 14:12, 23)

The first use of the word "worship" in the scriptures is in Genesis 22:5 where Abraham went to "worship" on Mt. Moriah by offering Isaac on the altar. There was no music or dancing or shouting, it was Abraham's free will offering of obedience and sacrifice. The Hebrew word "Shachah" simply means, "to bow down. Worship does not mean feelings of ecstasy, for Abraham's heart was breaking. Worship is DOING what God commands.

Part of worshiping "in truth" involves ordering our times of communion with God and with one another according to God's ways. Worshiping in truth is a matter of discipline according to God's word. We can discipline ourselves for times of worship according to our own good ideas, or we can do it according to the word of God, which would be worshiping in truth.

Truth brings freedom - freedom from fear, freedom from hate and replaces fear with faith and confidence. Truth brings spiritual eyesight which leads its possessor into the pathway of holiness. (c.f. John 17:17; Ephesians 4:15)

To worship in truth is to allow God to search the inner depths of our heart. (Proverbs 20:27; John 14:16-17)

True worship is God-centered worship. When we worship God in truth we are expressing our love for Him. We can not love so much that we fail to express in truth. (Luke 10:27)