

(This sermon is from our *New Testament* Collection)

## **WANTED: TRUE WORSHIPERS**

**John 4:16-26**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

It seems that today mission statements are everywhere. A mission statement is simply a written expression of an organization's purpose for existing. Schools have mission statements, churches have them, hospitals have them, restaurants have them, and even the license bureau has one.

It might not be wide of the mark to suggest that the chief mission of the Christian is to worship God. We see this truth stressed throughout the Bible. In the Garden of Eden we saw the test of worship. Moses received 10 famous words from God which functioned as commandments of worship. The Israelites were to set up the tabernacle in the middle of their encampment, no doubt showing the centrality of worship.

\*The temple was filled with smells and smoke indicating the sacrifices of worship.

\*The Psalms and other biblical works functioned as books of worship.

\*The Prophets who came after the exile had to try to re-institute proper worship.

\*When Christ came He showed us how important worship was by attending it regularly.

\*The early church found reason to change the day of worship.

\*The NT letters functioned partly as a liturgy of worship.

\*And much of the book of Revelation is a rejoinder to, "Worship God."

As Jesus has an encounter with the woman at the well in today's text, we find more "worship talk" per square inch than anywhere else in the Bible. Let's examine it to find out what the Bible has to say about "True Worship."

- READ vv. 16-26

Transition: First of all, let us;

### **1. NOTICE WHO IS TALKING ABOUT WORSHIP**

#### **A. It is not a Theologian.**

It is not a Bible College professor. It is not a preacher, or an elder, nor a Sunday School Teacher. The one talking about worship in our text is a morally wounded woman.

That doesn't sound quite right. But maybe that's the point. The only people who will truly worship will be those who sense their need to worship. In Luke 7 we read of a sinful woman who came to a Pharisee's dinner party that Jesus had been invited to. The woman wiped up her tears from Jesus' feet with her hair, kissed his feet, and then poured perfume on them. Simon the Pharisee was upset, and felt that Jesus couldn't possibly be a prophet--if He were, He wouldn't allow this sinful woman to touch Him. So Jesus taught his host a lesson in a parable, He said *"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman*

*and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."* (Luke 7:41-47)

I cannot come to God for worship until I realize my own condition. Those who have come to the realization that they have rebelled against God are those who are able to come to God to worship.

**B. This morally wounded woman is undone as she talks to Jesus about worship.**

She is the one who will bring the topic up in their conversation. But she is stopped in her tracks when Jesus says, "Go call your husband." "I have no husband," she said. It turned out that she had 5 husbands in the past, and a man now that she wasn't married to.

Did you hear about the man who has been unlucky in both his marriages? His first wife left him and his second wife refuses to.

Worship will never be popular, because we have to face God, and when we do that we have to face ourselves in light of God. And when we are faced with God and see the sinfulness of our own lives it will undo the best of us. Notice who's talking about worship -- a sinner; a morally wounded woman.

Transition: 2ndly, let's;

## **2. NOTICE WHAT WORSHIP IS NOT**

**A. While we all want to know what worship is, we find that Jesus defines it by the power of what it is not.**

Maybe it's because Jesus is more interested in us doing worship rather than merely defining it. Some within our churches have tried to come up with a legalistic definition of worship based on Acts 2--apostle's teaching; fellowship; breaking bread; prayer. But Acts 2 is not a rulebook on worship; it is merely a historical example of how the early church experienced God immediately following Pentecost. The one thing that will kill worship in a church is when we try to define it so narrowly that everything has to always fit into a precise pattern. Again, notice that Jesus told us what...

**B. Worship is not:**

### **1. Geography.**

This woman wants to know if worship should take place on Mt. Gerizim where the Samaritan Temple had been built 400 years before her time---or should worship be done in Jerusalem at the Temple there. In so many words Jesus tells her that the place of worship is not important. Whether I am in the so-called "Holy Land", or in a church building, or in my prayer closet, or driving down the street, the geographical location is not important. It has no bearing on my ability to worship God or on His ability to accept my worship.

### **2. Based on one's race.**

This woman was a Samaritan--a hybrid--of a mixed race--she was part Jew and part Gentile. The Jewish people would have nothing to do with Samaritans. But Jesus

sits with her and speaks with her and tells her of eternal life. And he talks to her about her and her people's worship. Worship is not based on a person's race.

### **3. Anything and Everything.**

It has been popular to say that everything we do is in worship to God. But if everything is worship, than nothing is worship. Jesus said, "You worship what you do not know." There is such a thing as wrong worship.

### **4. Enthusiasm**

Some have substituted enthusiasm for worship. But to worship "in spirit" means something different than clapping hands or having an energetic service. Some feel that if we would only raise our hands in worship than we would be truly worshipping. Paul said (1 Tim 2:8) "*I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer...*" The Psalmist wrote (Psa 134:2) "*Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.*"

This is a biblical practice, but it is not necessarily a sign of true worship. We can be enthusiastic, and raise hands, and stomp our feet, but that doesn't mean we are worshipping.

Transition: We've spent some time discussing what worship is not; let's turn to the positive and;

## **3. NOTICE HOW WORSHIP IS DONE**

### **A. In v.23 Jesus says that "true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit".**

Now it is true that we worship the Father in Spirit in the sense of the Holy Spirit. Here Jesus is saying that we must worship the Father in sincerity of heart and attitude--(spirit with a lower case "s")

A gifted public speaker was asked to recall his most difficult speaking assignment. He said, "That's easy. It was an address I gave to the National Conference of Undertakers. The topic they gave me was 'How to Look Sad at a Ten-Thousand-Dollar Funeral.'"

If we are trying to look sincere, then it's obvious that we aren't. This word translated "worship" has the background of a dog licking his master's hand. It literally means to "bow down" to "prostrate one's self." Now, I don't think Jesus wants us to consider ourselves to be dogs. But if we are to worship God in sincerity of hear and attitude that means we are going to come to Him with the realization that He is the Master, He is the Creator, He is the Alpha and Omega, He is God and we are mere men. We must come to God with the understanding of the great privilege it is for us to even be able to approach Him. We worship Him with a sense of awe and wonderment. We come to Him sincerely wanting to please Him.

### **B. In v.23 Jesus also says that true worshipers will "worship the Father in truth".**

That is, our worship to God will be genuine. Of course we want to worship God according to the Bible, but here Jesus is again talking about a state of the heart.

A.W. Tozer once said, "We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God". Our heart is so in tune with God that we must come and worship Him in truth.

Transition: Lastly, let's;

#### **4. NOTICE WHAT WORSHIP LEADS TO**

##### **A. It leads to a further disclosure of God.**

The point of John 4 is not to give us a manual of personal evangelism. As the woman talks about worship with Jesus, He is revealed. First she sees Him to be just a man, then a prophet, then the Messiah, and finally the Savior of the world.

A dear elderly lady was teaching the 4s and 5s S.S. class at her church. During one of the lessons they were learning about the building of the Temple. The teacher explained to the students that when the Temple was finished, the presence of the Lord filled the Temple. Instantly the eyes of each child got wide and full of excitement. She soon discovered, however, that the source of their excitement was not joy that God had come to dwell in the Temple, but rather, delight at imagining that huge building filled with presents from God!

Aren't we often much like those children? We are easily more excited about our presents from God than being in the presence of God. When we come to God in worship it leads to a further disclosure of God. I learn of God through study, and from other people's teaching about Him. But if I am ever going to really experience God's presence I must bow down to worship Him. The study helps me to know more facts about God, but the time of worship leads me to know God in a more intimate way. Worship also;

##### **B. Leads to world evangelism.**

If we would read on in John 4 we would discover that many people believed in Jesus because of this woman's testimony. Worship should always drive us into the fields of harvest. If we know Him, then we will seek to make Him known.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Someone once said, "A Christian should be hallelujah from head to toe." As our perception of Christ grows, the only appropriate response is worship. The more I know of Him, the more I sense my need to bow down to Him.

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