



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

DEEPER WE ENGAGE IN WORSHIP JOHN 4:19-26 10/13/2024

MAIN POINT

We Engage in Worship!

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you hear the word worship, what comes to mind?

Everyone worships something. What are some of the most common things that people in our community worship today?

What are some things that keep us from worshipping God more wholeheartedly?

God created us for His glory (Isa. 43:7). This tells us that we exist to know, love, and worship God. Thus it is essential for us to carefully consider how God would have us worship Him. While the Samaritan woman questioned Jesus about the proper place people of God should worship, Jesus seized this opportunity to teach us a far more important lesson on worship.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 4:19-24.

Based on what you know about the Samaritan woman Jesus encountered at the well (John 4:1-18), why do you think she changed the conversation to focus on a religious controversy?

Jesus knew the woman's moral history, and it was a tragic record of failure. During their conversation, Jesus brought the woman to face her sinful life. Perhaps uncomfortable with the direction the conversation was going, the Samaritan woman called Jesus a prophet and tried to divert the exchange away from her and her sinfulness to a less personal issue.

What was the issue the woman raised? How does this passage relate to our discussion of worship?

How did Jesus redirect the woman's question to a more important issue? How might debates about worship style, dress, and location, distract us from the heart of worship?

How did Jesus describe true worship? What role does Jesus have in the true worship of God?

The woman at the well tried to divert the exchange away from her and her sinfulness to a less personal issue. She pointed out that Jews worshiped in the Jerusalem temple; Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim. In response, Jesus guided the conversation to a more important matter—the object of worship. He emphasized that God is interested in quality of worship, not the place of worship—in how people worship, not where.

What does it look like to worship God “in spirit” (see John 3:3-8; John 1:12-13)? Is it possible to worship God without the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

What does it look like to worship God “in truth” (see Ecclesiastes 5:1-3)?

Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit on our hearts to breathe new spiritual life in us, we will not wholeheartedly worship God. Those who do not have the Holy Spirit may appreciate God on some level but their hearts are still cut off from Him. By commanding the Samaritan woman to worship God in spirit, Jesus revealed that true worship requires a spiritual transformation of the heart. Before approaching God in worship we must make sure that we have trusted Christ as Lord and Savior. To worship in truth means to worship God as He truly is. Our worship must be focused on the character of God as it is revealed in Scripture.

How do you prepare your heart for worship?

Worship, though expressed in a variety of forms, will always be a matter of the heart—the response of our hearts to God's revelation of Himself. Put another way, true worship is

our spirit's response to God's Spirit. The next few verses of John 4 shed light on why this communication is even possible.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 4:25-26.

In response to Jesus' words about genuine worship, the woman brought up the coming Messiah. Based on their understanding of Deuteronomy 18:18, the Samaritans also looked for a Messiah, a prophet like Moses. They believed this prophet would restore the worship system on Mount Gerizim and convert Jews and pagans. The woman wistfully anticipated this long-awaited prophet. Jesus' response no doubt stunned the woman: "I am He." Jesus was God incarnate, "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) to provide redemption for sinners. The woman found herself in the presence of the One who could forgive her sins and give her new life. We, too, find ourselves in His presence, a truth that should fuel our worship.

How does the reality that Jesus is your Messiah impact your worship?

What are some ways we can fight to keep the work of Christ our first priority in worship?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

The most common Greek word for worship is proskuneo and it envisions falling on one's face in reverence or bowing the knee in homage. What can you read or do this week that might lead you to a posture of worship that you are not accustomed to? (Essentially, how can you worship expressively like Pastor Phil talked about?)

What are some ways to keep the sacrifice of Christ central to your thinking as you seek to worship God throughout the week? (Essentially, how can you ascribe worth to God like Pastor Phil spoke about?)

Whether our worship is at church, in our group, or at home, what are ways that we can ready ourselves daily and weekly to meet with God in worship? (In other words, how can you worship both publically and privately like the sermon discussed?)

What is your next step toward DEEPER worship? (membership / inviting others / serving / etc.)

PRAYER

Lead your group in prayer, thanking God for His work on the cross and for the joy that is found in responding to His work in worship. Ask Him for forgiveness if you have placed your focus on anything other than Him. And ask Him to make the church more powerful for the gospel as you become more passionate spiritual worshipers.

COMMENTARY

| JOHN 4:19-26

4:19. The woman recognized that Jesus knew her life circumstances without apparently having been told by anyone—hence He must be a prophet (cp. Luke 7:39).

4:20-21. The fathers who worshiped on this mountain—a reference to Mount Gerizim (Deut. 11:29; 27:12), the OT setting for the pronouncement of blessings for keeping the covenant, and the mountain on which Moses commanded an altar to be built (Deut. 27:4-6)—included Abraham (Gen. 12:7) and Jacob (Gen. 33:20), who built altars in this region.

4:22. Jesus indicated that the Samaritans were wrong: “You Samaritans worship what you do not know.” After all, this must be the case since salvation is from the Jews. Significantly though, Jesus swept the entire argument aside: “an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.” The Father intended both the tabernacle and the temple to be temporary arrangements in His redemptive plan. His manifested presence in a sanctuary was a privilege Israel enjoyed under the old covenant, but it would eventually be replaced with His personal presence in His people as a provision of the new covenant—the indwelling Holy Spirit who would come after Christ’s ascension. In fact, as Jesus explained to the woman, that time had arrived: “an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” The old covenant and its provisions were coming to an end and a new covenant was being inaugurated. Under the new covenant, there is no sacred place or sacred space. We can and should worship our Father anytime and anywhere, for the Father wants such people to worship Him.

4:24. God is not a physical being. God is spirit, so the physical realm is not of primary concern for Him. Since God is spirit, those who worship Him must worship in spirit and

truth. Answering an altar call by kneeling on the steps at the front of the church worship center does not commend us to the Father; it does not make us more spiritual or our prayers more powerful. The Father always looks at our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7). If our hearts are not in tune with Him and do not respond to Him according to the truth of His Word, then we are not really worshiping Him. True worship flows from hearts that are right with God and lives that are consistent with the truth of the Scriptures.

4:25. In response to Jesus' words about genuine worship, the Samaritan woman said: "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). Her response perhaps was another attempt to evade acknowledging her sins and her need for forgiveness. On the other hand, her comment may have expressed her anticipation of the Messianic Age. Some Jews looked for a priestly Messiah, but most expected one from David's line—a conqueror. They awaited a Messiah who would be a political/military leader similar to David. This deliverer would drive out the Romans and restore the Jewish nation to power and prominence.

Based on their understanding of Deuteronomy 18:18, the Samaritans also looked for a Messiah, a prophet like Moses. They believed this prophet would restore the worship system on Mount Gerizim and convert Jews and pagans. The woman wistfully anticipated this long-awaited prophet. Jesus' response no doubt stunned the woman: "I am He." In Jewish territory, Jesus avoided the title Messiah, preferring instead the designation Son of man, which did not carry the baggage of a political/ military deliverer. He was not the kind of Messiah either the Jews or the Samaritans anticipated. He was the Suffering Servant who would sacrifice Himself willingly to provide forgiveness for people's sins. In Samaria among non-Jews, Jesus asserted His identity as God's anointed one.

The words I am are significant because in John's Gospel they convey deity, reflecting God's revealing His name to Moses in Exodus 3:14. Jesus was God incarnate, "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) to provide redemption for sinners. To emphasize His identity, Jesus added that the One speaking to the Samaritan woman was the Messiah. She was in the presence of the One who could forgive her sins and give her new life. She faced a decision about Him. As the rest of the account reveals, she made the right choice. Not only that, but the woman influenced many others to trust Christ (4:39-42).