

## 14.11.2020 WORSHIP IN EDUCATION

***Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. 1 Chronicles 16:29***

Worship refers to the supreme honour or veneration given either in thought or deed to a person or thing. The Bible tells us that God alone is worthy of worship. False worship involves the worship of things, people, ideologies/ truths (see Matt 15:9) other than Jehovah. These include self (Daniel 4:30), people (Daniel 2:46), false gods (2 Kings 10:19), images and idols (Isa 2:8, Dan 3:5), heavenly bodies (2 Kings 21:3, Zephaniah 1:5), Satan (Rev 13:4) and demons (Rev 9:20).

**God Almighty alone is worthy of worship.**

*'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...'* Revelation 4:11

True worship involves 3 important elements:

1. Worship requires reverence.

We are called to worship God 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24). Our worship must flow from our spirits and must also involve the intellect, emotions and will. The content of our worship must be 'in truth', revealing our understanding of God's character.

2. Worship includes public expression.

*Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Psalm 95:6, 7*

3. Worship means service.

Worship includes the joyful service which Christians render to Christ their Master. The concept of worship and service to God are often linked in the Bible.

*"For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Matt. 4:10 (also Deut 8:19).*

### **Reasons for Worship**

1. God commands our worship. Exodus 20, Revelation 14:6, 7

2. God deserves our worship. See 1 Chronicles 16:23-34

- a. We worship His Name.
- b. We worship Him for His character; His Love, Justice and Holiness.
- c. We worship Him for His works; His power in Creation and Redemption.

3. We need to worship God.

- a. As creatures, it is necessary for us to worship our Creator (Rev 14:7, 22:9). Worshipping our Creator and Redeemer God gives us true fulfilment.

In the light of the end-time that we live in, we are particularly called to worship God and reveal to the entire world that He is worthy of worship. In an hour when men blasphemously judge God, we are called to declare our loyalty to Him, to express our worship publicly, to declare His gospel and character to the world by our testimony; the testimony of the spoken word and the witness of the Spirit-filled life.

### **We all Worship Something**

Man is the only created being on planet earth who has the ability to worship. This sets him above animal life. Man has a spirit which was created to communicate with God. In Eden, man had unbroken communication with God and worshipped Him aright.

Because of the entrance of sin, Man's focus of worship has been distorted. Adam and Eve listened to Satan and desired to be 'as god'. Since then, self and self-worship has been the focus of fallen man. This refusal to worship and give glory to God results in a downward spiral of false worship.

*Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Rom. 1:21-23*

God in His great love has redeemed us and calls us to worship Him as both Creator and Redeemer.

**When we accept God's salvation, we must come to worship God in the manner He has asked us to come. He will not accept any worship that is not according to His will.**

One sad example is found in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain and Abel represent 2 types of worshippers - false and true worshippers.

God accepted Abel's lamb. The lamb represented Christ, who is both Creator and Redeemer of the world. Throughout the Old Testament, a spotless lamb was offered as a symbol of the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Sinful man has access to God through the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

The fruits of our own work, no matter how pleasing to the sight and mind, have no power to remove sin and gain access to a holy God.

**Cain was not worshipping a false god. He was coming to worship Jehovah with the fruit of his own work.** But the Bible is very clear that our worship and boasting must only be in the Name and work of God (see Jer. 9:24 and 1 Cor. 1:30, 31). Our access to God is by the blood of the Lamb. Our only hope is in Christ's blood and Christ's righteousness.

**The worship of God excludes worshipping any other person, creature or thing.**

This is seen in the story of the Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 3). They refused to worship anyone other than Jehovah.

### **In Spirit and in Truth**

*"The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him **must** worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23, 24*

God seeks spiritual worship. Only spiritual Christians can offer spiritual worship; worship that proceeds from their spirit. If a Christian recognises all the blessings he has in Christ Jesus and chooses to live in total surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit (instead of his own will) he is a spiritual Christian.

'The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters.' *Desire of Ages: p 189*

**And Declare them to their Children**

*Give to the LORD the glory due His name...*

The central theme of the Psalms is worship. God is worthy of all praise because of who He is, because of what He has done and what He will do. His goodness extends through all time and eternity.

What comes across very strongly in the Psalms is the passion of the Psalmists. When they call us to worship God, their language is full of joy and gladness and delight; not the usual seriousness we seem to expect when we go to church today. The issue of worship is serious – Who shall we worship? But once we make the decision to worship God, then our worship must reflect the joy of knowing and living in God's presence and responding in gladness to His care of us.

The Psalmists recognise that remembering God's goodness in the past leads us to give Him glory. Even in the end-time, we are called to give God glory because of His work for us in Creation and Redemption. It is when we forget His works that we fall into rebellion and idolatry.

*Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. Psalm 107:21, 22*

*And declare them to their children...*

We are called to keep the memory of God's goodness to us alive in the hearts of our children, so that the generations to come will also worship God and be a witness to His name in a fallen world.

*That which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done... that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. Psalm 78:3-4, 7*

### **Idolatry**

*'And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'* Mark 7:7

'Among the sins to which the human heart is prone, hardly any other is more hateful to God than idolatry. The idolatrous heart assumes God is other than He is and substitutes for the true God one made after its own likeness. Always this god will conform to the image of the one who created it. A god begotten in the shadows of a fallen heart will quite naturally be no true likeness of the true God. "Thou thoughtest," said the Lord to the wicked man in the psalm, "that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Surely this must be a serious affront to the Most High God before whom cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that we are therefore free from it. **The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.** It begins in the mind and may be present where no overt act of worship has taken place. "When they knew God," wrote Paul, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

**Wrong ideas about God are themselves idolatrous.** The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true.' *From AW Tozer: The Knowledge of the Holy*

For Reflection:

Do I entertain wrong ideas about God?

Do I perceive Him to be less holy than He really is? Then my standard of holiness will be correspondingly low.

Do I think that God is harsh and judgmental? Then that will be my attitude to my fellow-men.

Do I mistake God's unconditional love and forgiveness as an excuse to continue in sin?

**Conclusion:**

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." *William Temple*

The foundation of true holiness and true Christian worship is the doctrine of the gospel, what we are to believe. So when Christian doctrine is neglected, forsaken, or corrupted, true holiness and worship will also be neglected, forsaken, and corrupted. *John Owen*

We must devote, not only times and places to prayer, but be everywhere in the spirit of devotion; with hearts always set toward heaven, looking up to God in all our actions, and doing everything as His servants; living in the world as in a holy temple of God, and always worshiping Him, though not with our lips, yet with the thankfulness of our hearts, the holiness of our actions and the pious and charitable use of all His gifts. *William Law*

*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Rev. 14:6, 7*

*Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy. Psalm 99:9*

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