

10.08.2019 WORSHIP THE CREATOR

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?” Isaiah 58:6, 7

Our study this week looks at the fact that true worship of God the Creator and Redeemer results in social justice. Those who recognise that they worship a God of justice, mercy and righteousness will reveal these same characteristics as they allow the Holy Spirit to produce Christ’s character in them.

In contrast, those who have a false understanding of God’s character e.g. that He is a harsh, judgmental and unforgiving God, will reveal those same false ideas in their lives. Those who believe in external religion alone will never reflect the character of the God of grace and truth.

Those who turn from worship of the true God to idolatry (the worship of false gods) will manifest the spirit of Satan, who is the mind behind all idolatry and false worship.

Psalms 115 contrasts the futility of idol worship with the trustworthiness of God. It tells us that we reflect the things or persons we worship:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, “Where is now their God?” But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. Psalm 115:1-9

A Reason to Worship

We worship God because of who He is...

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. 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 95:1-7

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. Deuteronomy 10:17-21

True worship of God leads to total commitment to Him...to ‘love the Lord with all the heart’.

“Such commitment to Christ affects all of life. God’s redemptive transformation of individuals leads also to changes in families, in social relationships, in education, and in many other spheres. The people who are redeemed begin to live differently, and the way they live changes every area of their lives... We are servants through whom Christ may be pleased to show His glory by bringing transformation and healing, based on His unique redemption, accomplished once and for all.” *VS Poythress: The Lordship of Christ; serving our Saviour all of the time, in all of life, with all our heart.*

Idolatry and Oppression

Throughout history, man has chosen not to know God and reaps the consequences of this wilful blindness. In Romans 1:18-32, particularly verses 19, 21 and 28, Paul describes the same attitudes towards the knowledge of God and the consequences it reaps. The sorrow of God is that His own people choose to do this. The results are seen in their spiritual and social life.

What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, 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... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness... Romans 1:19-21, 28, 29

The Results of Deliberately Choosing to Deny the Knowledge of God and His Will:

1. Self, not Service becomes the focus of our lives.
2. The World, not God becomes our source of help.

The Way to Worship and the Blessings that follow True Worship

Isaiah 58 tells us of worship that pleases God. He is not interested in weekly rituals that do not affect the rest of our life and the community we live in. He wants us to be a blessing to our communities.

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” says the Lord. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or goats.” Isaiah 1:11

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’

If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul:

Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones. You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.” Isaiah 58:6-12

Since the Fall, man has lived for his own glory. But God’s people are to live by the example of Christ who came to this earth ‘not to be served, but to serve’ Mark 10:45. Since in Christ we have received every spiritual blessing (see 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31 and Ephesians 1:3), we no longer live to ourselves, but we live to share the good news of God’s salvation and share in Christ’s mission of service and salvation.

‘For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’. Mark 10:45

‘Take my yoke upon you and learn of me... my yoke is easy and my burden is light’ Matt 11:28

‘Preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.’ Matthew 10:7, 8

Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. John 13:16, 17

“Many who bear the name of Christians are serving other gods besides the Lord. Our Creator demands our supreme devotion, our first allegiance. Anything which tends to abate our love for God, or to interfere with the service due Him, becomes thereby an idol. With some their lands, their houses, their merchandise, are the idols. Business enterprises are prosecuted with zeal and energy, while the service of God is made a secondary consideration. Family worship is neglected, secret prayer is forgotten. Many claim to deal justly with their fellow men, and seem to feel that in so doing they discharge their whole duty. But it is not enough to keep the last six commandments of the decalogue. We are to love the Lord our God with all the heart.” *SDA Bible Commentary. EGW comments on 1 Samuel 7:3 (Modern forms of idolatry).*

“Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’” Matthew 9:13
