

INTRODUCTION: Exodus 20... but first go to John 4

- Today I want to look at what is True Worship
- We've been going through the Book of Exodus... and in many ways living the Book of Exodus through this Pandemic
- God command Moses to tell Pharaoh to let His people go and worship and serve Me in the wilderness
- Through His mighty power and wonders, God delivered them from Egypt
- He led them with the cloud by day and the fire by night to the Red Sea and then did what the Psalmist refers to as Marvelous Things...
- He divided the sea, made the waters stand up like a heap on each side and caused them to pass through
- He even split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them an abundance to drink
- He provided food for them... meat in the evening and bread from heaven in the morning... Psalm 78 refers to this as "angel's food"
- So we have the first appearance of Angel Food Cake!
- Now they've arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai... the place that God said they were to go to worship and serve Me in the wilderness
- God said they were to have a festival, a celebration, a time of worship
- What we will discover is God cares how we worship Him
- Which means, we can worship God wrongly
- Today I want to look at the 7 characteristics of True Worship from Exodus 20 and by way of introduction I want to briefly look at John 4

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well

John 4:23–24 (NKJV)

23 But 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.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

In The Greek it literally says...

- God is Spirit and those who worship Him... in spirit and truth **ONLY** do they worship...
- The word used here for worship is the most intimate word for worship
- It literally means "to kiss" and Jesus says it's this kind of intimate worship that can only happen in spirit and truth
- So what does Jesus mean?

- The first thing you need to look at is the context of John 4...
- It's after John 3 which deals with being born again, born of the Spirit
- Thus, when Jesus says... those who worship God, worship in spirit... He's talking being born of the Spirit
- Someone who is not born again cannot worship God... it's not worship
- You must be born of the Spirit to worship in spirit

Second, the word “en” or “in” suggests the presence of the Holy Spirit as constantly active in the life of a person

- In other words, the connection between the Presence of God and the worship we bring is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives
- To worship in Spirit is to have our personal worship led by the Spirit
- Now... as a Senior Pastor who also leads worship... I would say that the dividing line between worship and entertainment is this dynamic of what I call “spirit-led” worship
- It's important that the worship leader be led by the Spirit
- It's important for the musicians and singers to be led by the Spirit so they can follow the worship leader as they are being led by the Spirit
- But it's also important for the congregation to be led by the Spirit so they can follow the worship leader as they are being led by the Spirit
- But if you in the congregation are not allowing yourself to be led by the Spirit, if you're distracted or uninvolved... then to you it's just a few moments of entertainment before the speech... it's not a worship service
- When it's entertainment... you start criticizing the performance, the style, the level of talent, the music, the sound
- Then you hear things like... the worship was really good
- Oh really? Did God tell you that? Because it was for Him? Not you?
- What is interesting about John 4:24 is it doesn't say God is seeking worship... but God is seeking worshippers who worship in spirit, who are led by the Spirit in their worship

Third, God says He is seeking worshippers who worship in truth

- There two dynamics to truth...
- First Jesus said I am the Way, the Truth and the Life
- Which means... Jesus is the One who determines what truth is
- As we have studied in Genesis, before sin entered the world through Adam, man had the capacity to discern what is true and what is false

- But after sin entered the world, man's ability to discern truth was replaced with the knowledge of good and evil
- Man lost the capacity to discern truth, so all truth is moral truth, ethical truth, situational truth and man becomes the standard of truth
- You have your truth, I have my truth and my truth is my experience
- But Jesus says... NO! Let God be true and every man a liar
- Only Jesus can say what truth is... not my experience or my belief
- This is important because we have people today who have exchanged truth for a lie because they have allowed themselves to believe what Satan says is true over what God says is true... that's deception
- Only Jesus can say what is true... so I listen to Him only

Second dynamic to truth... because Jesus says what is true

- I worship God based on what Jesus says about me... not my feelings, my experience or my failures
- My performance, good or bad, has nothing to do with the worship I bring
- I bring to God the worship He is worthy to receive based on His performance, not my worthiness
- So take all the teaching about how you need to present a pure and holy offering to God, gotta repent of all known sin, be holy... throw it out
- You are not worthy based on your cleanness, you are worthy based on His righteousness that is given as a free gift, received by faith
- Now... before someone goes out and tells people that I'm preaching you can sin and you don't have to repent... that's not what I'm saying
- In fact, once you're encountered the real Jesus all you want to do is live a life that is pleasing to Him... and that is what repentance looks like

With these 4 things in mind... let's look at Exodus 20:22

Exodus 20:22–26 (NKJV)

²² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. ²³ You shall not make *anything to be* with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. ²⁴ An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. ²⁵ And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. ²⁶ Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

FIRST: True Worship is the sound of a REDEEMED PEOPLE

- The Lord said to Moses... thus you shall say to the children of Israel
- Who are the children of Israel?
- They are the ones who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb
- **REMEMBER:** only those who are born of the Spirit can worship in spirit
- Who are those who are born of the Spirit? Those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb

SECOND: True Worship is a RESPONSE TO GOD'S REVELATION

- **NOTE:** God said you have seen I have talked with you from heaven
- The word "seen" means to experience firsthand, to see with your own eyes and notice He said I have talked with **YOU... personally**
- God wasn't demanding to be worshipped from a group of strangers
- God doesn't demand to be worshipped at all
- Rather, God demonstrates His love for you and I through His mighty deeds, delivers us from slavery to sin and gives us the opportunity to experience this supernatural abundant life of the Spirit
- The response is worship
- This is the **TRUTH** of worship... I worship in response to God's love
- I worship in response to what the LORD has DONE for me
- I worship as a result of the change the LORD has brought into my life
- I am a new creation, I have a new heart (heart of flesh), a new mind (mind of Christ), the flesh is crucified with Christ and I am forgiven of all my sins, free from condemnation, free from the power of sin and death

THIRD: True Worship is EXCLUSIVE

- **NOTICE:** vs. 23 God says you will not make anything to be with Me
- No gods of silver or gold... God doesn't share... He is all in

Romans 8:32 (NKJV)

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

- God has kept nothing from us and wants nothing between us
- **REMEMBER:** God just defeated all the false gods, all the idols of Egypt
- He's demonstrated that He alone is God through His mighty power

- When we let another love, another passion, another interest come between us and God... it's a slap in God's face
- It's saying what you did was not enough for me... I need something else
- We will see in the life of Israel... they will flatter God with their lips, lie with their tongues but their heart is not steadfast with Him nor are they faithful in His covenant... they were not exclusive for God
- God did not receive their worship
- What does God do with them? Psalm 78 says But God being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity... even when we are unfaithful, not exclusive... God remains faithful and forgives us... amazing!

FOURTH: True Worship is COSTLY

- We don't often talk about this, but the sheep, the oxen, the livestock represented wealth
- There was a financial cost to worshipping the LORD
- David said... I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing (2 Samuel 24:24)
- Often when it comes to issues dealing with money... I find the underlying issue has to do with control
- Jesus said your heart is where your treasure is (your money)
- Money gives me power to control my life, power to make my own destiny
- There is a tendency to trust in your riches and to forget that everything belongs to God and God is the One who gives us everything
- Thus, built into the system of worship is a continual decision on the part of the worshipper to acknowledge that everything belongs to God, so I'm giving back to Him what belongs to Him anyhow
- God says... the tithe belongs to the LORD

FIFTH: True Worship RELEASES BLESSING

- NOTICE VS. 24: God says everywhere where I cause My name (which is synonymous with God's character) to be remembered I will come to you and bless you... what is God talking about?
- The word "record" means "to cause to be remembered"
- When God delivered Noah, Noah made an altar and worshipped God
- When the LORD appeared to Abram and called him, Abram built an altar and called upon the name of the LORD
- When the LORD appeared to Jacob, Jacob made an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress

- In every place... God appeared, God spoke, God blessed that place became a place of worship in that person's life
- Now Israel is at Mount Sinai and God has come to them to bless them
- This is what happens when we worship... God comes to us and God blesses us... the gifts of the Spirit are in operation, He is speaking to us through His Word, He blesses us with His Presence
- Which brings me to our 6th characteristic

SIXTH: True Worship ENCOUNTERS GOD'S PRESENCE

- Vs. 24 and 25 God speaks about the construction of the altar
- In vs. 24 He says make the altar out of earth and in vs. 25 He says don't build it out of hewn stone, build it out of natural stone
- Why is that? Because the pagan religions would build these elaborate temples and boast about their great temple
- I lived in Japan and we would visit these beautiful temples with huge idols in them... people were impressed with the size of the idol

God doesn't live in buildings made with hands...

Acts 7:48–50 (NKJV)

⁴⁸ "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ *'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest?'* ⁵⁰ *Has My hand not made all these things?'*

Rather God calls us His Temple

2 Corinthians 6:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: *"I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

- You and I we are God's dwelling place, we are His resting place
- So when we gather to worship God is in our midst, walking among us
- Moving among us in a way that can only be experienced together

FINALLY, True Worship is FOCUSED ON GOD ALONE

- Vs. 26 God says don't make the priests climb steps to the altar and expose their nakedness... this was a practice the pagans would do

- Many say this refers to modesty, but the point of modesty is to not be a distraction from God...
- At Mount Sinai, God was drawing near to the people to put on their face, to reveal Himself in all His beauty and glory so they would know Him
- That is what God intended and that is what God intends for you
- He is drawing near to you to reveal Himself... that you might know how great and powerful and loving and compassionate He is
- He doesn't want anything to distract us or take our eyes off of His glory

Psalm 66:1–4 (NKJV)

¹ Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! ² Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious. ³ Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. ⁴ All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises *to* Your name." Selah

- The LORD is and will ever be my magnificent obsession
- He is the reason we gather... He is the reason we sing
- He is the One who is worthy to receive all glory and honor and power
- For He created all things and by His will they exist and were created
- And there is coming a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the King of all Kings and the LORD of all LORDS
- And He will receive all the glory that is due His name for He was slain and has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and has made us kings and priest to our God
- This is our God... this is who we worship!