

ADDRESSING SPIRITUAL DECLINE-PART 4
RESTORING A RIGHT WORSHIP OF GOD
PSALM 29:2; 95:1-11; 96:7-9

INTRODUCTION

We have been addressing the matter of **SPIRITUAL DECLINE** for the last three weeks. We began with the premise that every time we see **SPIRITUAL DECLINE** in Scripture (or even outside of Scripture for that matter), its root cause is **A LACK OF REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD!**

We've seen that in order to reverse **SPIRITUAL DECLINE** we **MUST** **RESTORE A REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD!**

IF WE REVERENCE THE WORD OF GOD, THEN WE WILL REVERENCE THE GOD OF THE WORD!

Last week we saw how that **OUR REVERENCE FOR GOD'S WORD OR LACK THEREOF IS SHOWN BY OUR ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS TOWARD THE HOUSE OF GOD!**

We said that, IF WE TRULY RESTORE A REVERENCE FOR GOD'S WORD, ALONG WITH THAT WILL COME A RESTORATION OF REVERENCE AND A FAITHFULNESS FOR GOD'S HOUSE BECAUSE HIS WORD COMMANDS IT!

Today multitudes of people all across America and in other places of the world either have attended or will be **attending a Church of some sort**. If we were to ask them **why they are attending Church services**, there is no doubt that we would get a wide variety of responses. *(Give some examples.)*

While there are **some who may attend Church for all the wrong reasons, no doubt there would be many who would say that they attend Church to "worship" the LORD!**

That is, after all, one of the main purposes of our coming together when we come together as a local Body of Believers in Christ—**We come to worship the LORD together as His Body of Believers in this local Assembly!**

We saw last week how Believers are commanded to assemble together and we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together!

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However, many people today have the wrong idea of what worship is! That has led to many folks away from a right worship of God! I want to preach today on RESTORING A RIGHT WORSHIP OF GOD!

I. LET'S CONSIDER SOME WRONG IDEAS ABOUT WORSHIP!

1. Some Say Worship Is A Waste Of Time—That's The Atheistic Idea!

The atheist says it is a waste of time because there isn't a God to accept our worship!

Psalm 14:1—“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

Sadly our nation has become increasingly pagan as humanistic philosophy has been allowed to permeate our public schools! Along with that has been an increase in the number of those who now deny the very existence of God!

The Atheist denies God's Revelation of Himself to them. *In Creation, In Conscience, In Christ, In the Canon Of Scripture, In the Conviction and Counsel of the Holy Spirit!*

So, if the Atheist doesn't believe there is a God, why does he spend so much time trying to disprove and deny someone whom he says doesn't exist? *(Is he trying to convince himself?)*

It is as if a denying that there is a God makes it so! That's foolish! Two things that make it foolish are found in: **Hebrews 9:27—“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:**

2. Some Say Worship Is A Shot In The Dark—That's The Agnostic Idea!

The agnostic says it is a shot in the dark because he can't know or doesn't know who to worship! Well, that might be true if God had not revealed Himself, but He has!

John 17:3 – “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

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John 3:16—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

1 John 5:20—“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

3. Some Say Worship Is A Shotgun Approach—That’s The Polytheistic Idea! (Acts 17:16ff)

The polytheist says worship every god you find and don’t dare leave any out!

*Deuteronomy 4:39—“Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that **the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.***

*Isaiah 44:6—“Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; **I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.**”*

*Isaiah 45:5-6—“5 **I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.**”*

4. Some Say Worship Is Up To You—That’s The “Just Be Sincere” Idea!

These folks believe that it is up to the individual. It doesn’t matter who you worship or how you worship because in the end all roads are leading to the same desired end! So, just be sincere in your worship because that’s the important thing. *Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25—“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*

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Exodus 20:3—“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

*Luke 4:8—“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, **Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.***

5. Some Say Worship What Is Within Each Of Us—That’s Both The Pantheistic And Humanistic Ideas!

The **pantheist** says worship is a matter of looking within everything because God is in everything and everything is a part of God! So, just get in touch with your inner thoughts and feelings through **meditation** to commune with deity! (e.g. *Many of the tree huggers and animal rights activists!*)

However, the Bible reveals that God is separate from His creation! *Genesis 1:1—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

Romans 1:25— “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”

The **Humanist** believes there is a spark of Divinity in each one of us! We are evolving upward as time goes along! So, just trust your heart and live your life to its fullest! *Jeremiah 17:9—“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (e.g. Jackie Gleason)*

Romans 3:10—“...There is none righteous, no, not one:”

6. Some Say Worship What Is Around You—That’s The Materialistic Idea!

This view says that **worship** is enjoying all that God has given to us. The more that we have and the more we enjoy what we have, the more we are worshipping God.

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*Matthew 6:24 – “...ye cannot serve God and mammon”
(i.e. riches)*

7. **Some Say Worship Is All In The Liturgy—That’s One Religionist Idea!** (*I’ve got 4 to share with you*)
This view says that **worship** is following a set of repeated religious words and/or exercises. (*Cp. Isaiah 1:11-20*)

Jesus said in *Matthew 6:7 – “...use not vain repetitions as the heathen do.”*

8. **Some Say Worship Is Something That Only Happens At Church—That’s Another Religionist Idea!**
This view says that **worship** can only be achieved when the time and the setting are right.

Well, there is **NOTHING** in Scripture that I have found to suggest that the **worship** of God is limited to the House of God.

Now, I sometimes hear people say, “*I don’t think you have to go to Church to worship the LORD.*” That would be correct!

**We can and should worship the LORD in our home.
We can even worship the LORD at our job if we do it in a way that doesn’t interfere with our job!
We can even worship the LORD in our car as we’re driving down the road!
Worship is found in a variety of places and settings in the Bible.**(*e.g. Many of the Psalms ; Paul and Silas in jail.*)

Worship should be a part of our everyday experience with the LORD (personal devotions)!

The truth is, we can worship anywhere and anytime!

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Nevertheless, having said all that, the LORD still wants us to come together and worship corporally also! Ever since the LORD founded His “Church”—*ekklesia* = “*a called out group or assembly*—His desire for Believers is for His Church to come together and worship corporally with other Believers!

That gets back to last weeks message of “Restoring A Reverence For The House Of God!”
Hebrews 10:25–“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as t the manner of some is...”

9. **Some Think Of Worship As Just Showing Up At A Church Service And Sitting Through And/Or Participating In The Motions Of Worship—That’s Another Religionist Idea!**
Some will come to Church, **endure** the song service, **sit impatiently** for the sermon to be over, **give an hour or more of their time** to be here, and **maybe even give of “their money,”** and in doing all these things think that God looks on them a little better even though they may have thought little, if any, about the LORD all week, including during the Church service! **THAT...IS...NOT...WORSHIP!**

Listen, if we come to Church without a desire to **worship** the LORD in our hearts, no **worship** will take place!

Psalm 42:1-2–“1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. 2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

Matthew 5:6–“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

Do you come to Church with a hunger and thirst after God? If you don’t, most likely no worship is happening!

10. **Sadly, Some Live Like The Devil All Week And Come To Church Thinking That Their Presence In Church Is Worship That Somehow Offsets The Sin In Their Hearts And Lives For That Week—That’s Another Religionist Idea!** News alert...it doesn’t! And that’s not fake news!

So we have considered *SOME WRONG IDEAS ABOUT WORSHIP...*

Now stay with me, we’re almost done for today...

II. LET’S CONSIDER WHAT TRUE WORSHIP REALLY IS!

Lord willing, we’ll dive deeper into this matter of **worship** in the weeks ahead. But let’s consider for a moment just the meaning of the word “*worship*”!

The **Hebrew** word that is most often translated as “*worship*” in the **Old Testament** means “*to bow down, to do homage.*”

(*i.e. To pay respect to by external action; to give reverence to; to express someone as exalted above one’s own self; it implies a humbling before.*)

The **Greek** word that is most often translated as “*worship*” in the **New Testament** means “*showing reverence*” or “*bowing down to God.*” There is also another **Greek** word translated as “*worship*” that means “*to serve, to minister.*”

What about our English word “*worship*”? It comes from an old English word that contains the ideas of “*ascribing honor and worth to.*” The dictionary defines *worship* as “*adoration or, homage to be given to God.*”

Understand that for worship to take place it takes an engagement of our entire being! Jesus said that the greatest commandment is...

Luke 10:27– “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”

Just think with me on Jesus’ statement...

If our **love** for God is not involved in it, can it really be **worship**?

If our **heart** is not in it, can it really be **worship**?

If our **soul** is not involved in it, can it really be **worship**?

If our **strength** (our body; our effort) is not involved in it, can it really be **worship**?

If our **mind** is not involved in it, it is not **worship**!

If we are not treating our neighbor with at least the same love that we have for ourselves, can the **worship** we offer be acceptable?

(**Turn to Revelation 4:8-11; 5:8-14**) Two things we see here:

A. **Worshipping The LORD Recognizes His Person!**

B. **Worshipping The LORD, Exalts And Honors Him!**

Conclusion

What am I saying?

Worship involves both an **attitude of reverence and adoration** as well as the **action of humble, loving service to God**, Who alone is worthy!

So, let’s examine what we are calling our **worship** and think on how the LORD views it. Would He say that we are truly **worshipping**? Or would the LORD say that some change is in order in our **worship**?

Maybe the LORD has quickened your heart and mind in some area of your **worship** that needs attention today. If He has, respond to Him right now!

If you don’t know the LORD, your **worship** is unacceptable! You have first got to know the LORD in order to offer acceptable **worship**!