

Subject: *A Heart for Worship*

Scripture: *Matthew 15:1-9*

Someone described the modern man like this: “He worships his work, works at his play, and plays at his worship.” For some people worship is a plaything. It is something done out of convenience, not out of conviction. The problem is simple...their heart is not in it.

But true worship, real worship, genuine worship is always a matter of the heart. What does it mean to have a real heart for worship?

1. A heart to please God

True worship is all about God. We only worship God when He is the center of attention. God is our one attraction, and He is our one audience.

In our text (vs. 1-2) the scribes and Pharisees confronted Jesus as they always did. They were the religious leaders of the day, but Jesus called them out in verses 7-9. The scribes and Pharisees had no heart for God. The name “Pharisee” means separated one. They wanted to appear holy to other people, and they were good at it. Jesus called them hypocrites (the word means “play actor” or someone who wears a mask to play a part. For them it was all about people, and nothing about God.

In verses 12-14, Jesus described them as (spiritually) blind leaders of the blind. They were not interested in God’s approval, but only in the approval of men.

See **Matthew 23**.

2. A heart to know and obey Scripture

True worship is all about God’s Word. We only worship God when we worship in spirit and truth. The scribes and Pharisees were only interested in their religious tradition, not the truth of God’s Word (see vs. 2-6). They looked for loopholes in God’s law or ways they could justify their disobedience to God’s commands. In effect, they replaced God’s words with their own teachings. Jesus said their worship was “vain” (empty, useless, worthless).

Proverbs 28:9 *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*

Do you have a heart to know God’s Word? We love to sing that we are “standing on the promises of God,” but are we obeying the commands of God?

John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

John 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

3. A heart to draw near to God

In worship we come into God’s presence and draw near to Him. We enjoy His presence. Worship is not a drudgery or a duty. It’s a desire to be with Him.

A few weeks ago we celebrated Valentines Day. Some of us gave flowers to our sweetheart. I gave Nancy the roses and she hugged me and said, "Thanks, sweetie." What if I had said, "No problem...it's my duty." Nobody wants roses out of duty. God doesn't want our worship out of duty. He wants our worship out of desire and delight.

Psalms 27:4 *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

Psalms 122:1 *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.*

Psalms 37:4 *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

What is your attitude in worship? Do you say, "it's a duty" or "it's a joy and privilege"?

4. A heart to confess and repent of sin

Confession is agreeing with God about sin or saying the same thing about sin that He says. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of behavior. This was precisely the problem of the scribes and Pharisees. They were concerned about washing their hands before they ate bread, but they were totally unconcerned about their filthy hearts (Mt. 15:15-20).

Psalms 51:10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

Psalms 51:16-17 ¹⁶ *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.* ¹⁷ *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Sacrifice without confession and repentance is hypocrisy.

Isaiah 1:10-18

In worship we should think about God and His attributes (character qualities). We should think about His holiness that should cause us to confess and repent. Remember Isaiah's vision of God in His holiness and how he said, "Woe is me." We should think about His knowledge and wisdom, and that should cause us to confess and repent.

Psalms 139:1-4 ¹ *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.* ² *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.* ³ *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.* ⁴ *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

As we think about His glory and how we have failed to glorify Him.

As we think about His grace and how we have taken it for granted.

As we think about His power and how we worry about what's going to happen.

As we think about His righteous judgment and how we should be concerned about the lost.

Everything we know about God should stir our heart to confess and repent of sin.

Psalms 19:14 *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*