

Recently I read a statement that said, “I will die tonight for my beliefs.”

As I thought about this, I asked myself, “Will I die for worship?”

Because, as A.W. Tozer says, “We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God.”¹

Is this so important to you that you would die for it to be right and biblical?

Many view worship differently.

Some see it as merely attending Church.

Others view it as to how many times you say the name Mary.

But our worship of God is much more than that.

¹ A.W. Tozer, Christianity Today. Vol.41. No.5

As we consider this subject this morning, I want to ask 5 questions regarding worship.

We will look at two of them this morning and the remaining three next week.

The five questions are What is worship? Who are we to worship? What are the prerequisites? How is it to be done? and When are we to worship?

Let's begin with the first question:

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The common NT word for worship is proskuneo.

It means, "To kiss toward, to kiss the hand, to bow down, to prostrate oneself."

Worship carries the idea of “prostrating oneself before a superior being with the sense of respect, awe, reverence, honor, and homage.”

If you haven’t noticed the definition I read talked about giving something to God.

Giving Him respect, awe, reverence, honor, and homage.

John MacArthur, in his book called *The Ultimate Priority*, says, “When we gather together to worship the Lord, our focus is to be on giving to Him, not getting from Him. Worship is a consuming desire to give to God, and it involves the giving of ourselves, our heart attitudes, and our possessions.”

So “we gather together to give worship not to give respect to the preacher or those in the choir, we gather to give honor to God. The sermon and

the music are just to be the stimuli that create the desire in our hearts to honor Him.”

Scripture gives us many examples of worship. In fact, the word *proskuneo* is used in Scripture indiscriminately to refer to homage given to people other than God.

We see worship of the true God, worship of false gods, and the worship of Satan.

In Romans 1:18-25 we hear of worship of idols and material things. Even verse 25 indicates a worship of self.

Listen to what it says:

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19**because that which is known about God is

evident within them; for God made it evident to them. **20**For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. **21**For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **22**Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23**and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. **24**Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. **25**For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

“Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks.”

In fact, when they refused to worship God, they began to make images and according to verse 23 they “exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

They refused to worship God, turning instead to false gods, and that is unacceptable.

Verse 24 tells the consequences of worshiping a false god: “God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity.” Verse 26 says, “God gave them over to degrading passions.” Verse 28 adds, “God gave them over to a depraved mind.”

The result of their improper worship was that God simply gave them over to their sin and its consequences.²

When men reject God they worship false gods.

No wonder the wrath of God is revealed.

In Matthew 4:8-9, when Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil, Satan “showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, ‘All these things will I give to You, if you fall down and worship me.’”

Satan now drops his pretense and makes one final, desperate effort to corrupt Jesus.

² John MacArthur, *The Ultimate Priority : John MacArthur, Jr. on Worship*, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998). 7.

He finally reveals his supreme purpose: to induce Jesus Christ to worship him. He had first suggested what Jesus ought to do for Himself.

Next he suggested what the Father ought to do for Jesus.

Now he suggests what Satan could do for Jesus- in exchange for what Jesus could do for him.³

Satan wanted Jesus to worship him.

He wanted the respect, the awe, the reverence, the honor, and the homage that is only due God.

But Jesus said to Satan in verse 10, “Go Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.’”

³ John MacArthur, *Matthew* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989). 95-96.

God is the only one to be worshiped.

We are not to worship Satan or ourselves or even angels.

Two times John tried to worship the angel that was revealing the vision to him in the book of Revelation.

And both times he is told, “Do not do that” (Rev.19:10; 22:9)...Worship God” (22:9).

Angels worship God!

But Satan wanted angels to worship Him!

He didn't stop there, he wanted everyone and everything to worship him.

He didn't just want to be like God, he wanted to be God!

According to Isaiah 14:13-14 he said, “**13**"But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. **14**'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

If the Son of God would not compromise even the least important truth in the universe, He would surely not compromise the greatest: that God, and God alone, is to be worshiped and served. ⁴

God created everyone and everything for His glory.

That is the purpose for our lives.

⁴ John MacArthur, *Matthew* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989). 97.

When we hear the four living creatures and the twenty four elders in Revelation 4:8-11 worship God, we see what they were created for.

John says, “**8**And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

9And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, **10**the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11**"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

We we read Revelation 7:9-12, we hear the same truth about worship:

9After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; **10**and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." **11**And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12**saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever Amen."

John MacArthur says, “I think a comparison of worship with ministry might help to distinguish what true worship really is.

Ministry is that which comes down to us from the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit, to one another in the form of spiritual gifts.

Worship, on the other hand, is that which goes up from us, by the Spirit’s power, through the Son, to the Father.

Thus, ministry is that which descends from God to us, while worship is that which ascends from us to God. And both must be in perfect balance.

Unfortunately, we tend to be too ministry oriented (like Martha) and not oriented enough toward worship. We need to learn from Mary how to sit at Jesus’ feet and worship Him.”

Let's pray.

LIFE APPLICATION

Will you die for what you believe about worship?

Since worship is giving honor, reference, respect, and adoration to God, are you doing this? How?

Does this show up in your attitude?

What is unacceptable worship?