

The Worship of Our God

Selected Scriptures

Dr. Steve Hereford

This message was Preached on 7/19/06 at Changed By Grace Community Church, 49 N. Bowlan Street, Jacksonville, FL.

© 2006 Steven R. Hereford. All Rights Reserved.



Pastor Steve is the featured speaker on "Changed By Grace" and the author of the How to Study the Bible Workbook and Grace Moments, a daily devotional blog from Changed By Grace. Steve is a graduate of North Florida Theological Seminary (A.Min), Jacksonville Baptist Theological Seminary (Th.B., Th.M), and Logos Graduate School (D.Min) and is the founding Pastor-Teacher of Changed By Grace Community Church in Jacksonville, FL where he serves with his wife, Theresa, and three kids: Jeremy, Naomi, and Karrah. Sermons by Pastor

Steve may be heard on sermonaudio.com, oneplace.com and locally on WAYR AM 550 Sunday's at 8:30 PM.

Tonight we are looking again at our current study of “the doctrine of God.” Tonight’s message is one that focuses on our response to all that we have studied. After learning about the trinity, God’s faithfulness, His unchangeableness, His holiness, His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, His wrath, His goodness, and His sovereignty, there is only one response that we can have that is appropriate and that is “worship.”

The New Testament uses several words for worship. The two most common words are *proskuneo* and *latreuo*. *Proskuneo* means, “to kiss toward,” “to kiss the hand,” “to bow down,” “to prostrate oneself” or “to reverence.” This word is used “to signify humble adoration” (MacArthur). The second word *latreuo* “suggest rendering honor, or paying homage” (MacArthur). “Both terms together carry the idea of giving, because worship is something we give to God” (John MacArthur, *The Ultimate Priority*). Simply speaking, worship “speaks of bowing before a superior with a sense of awe and homage” (John MacArthur, *Our Awesome God*). When we apply this understanding to the doctrine of God, we see quickly how our worship is regulated to the truth about God. Since God is one and three, He is to be worshiped in His Trinitarian fullness. Since He is faithful, unchanging, holy, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, wrath, goodness, and sovereign,” He is to be worshiped with the understanding of what He is like. So as we look at this tonight in light of God’s person and attributes, we need to see that He is *the object of worship*.

I. The Object of Worship

A. God

1. He is worthy of praise

2 Sam.22:1-4 says, “And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2 And he said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; 3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, Thou dost save me from violence. 4 "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; And I am saved from my enemies” (NASBU).

2. He is glorified by praise

a) Ps.22:23 says, “You who fear the LORD, praise Him; All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel” (NASBU).

b) Ps.50:23 says, “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.”

B. Jesus Christ

1. He is worthy to be praised (Rev.5:1-14)

2. Those who see Him for who He is worship Him

John 12:12-13 says, “The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they

heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'The King of Israel!"

3. Our praise is only acceptable through Him

Many think that God accepts their worship but they either have a wrong view of God, worship the wrong God, or ignore Christ. Their worship is unacceptable.

- a) Heb.13:15 says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."
- b) Eph.2:18 says, "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."
- c) Col.3:17 says, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."
- d) 1 Pet.2:2-5 says, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

C. The Holy Spirit

1. Even though there is nothing in Scripture that directly tells us to worship the Holy Spirit, He is coequal with the other two Persons of the Trinity and is therefore worthy of our worship
2. All worship is energized by the Holy Spirit
 - a) It is the Spirit who allows us to come into God's presence and cry, "Abba! Father!" (Ga.4:6; Rom.8:15).
 - b) He is both "the Spirit of God" (Mat.3:16; Eph.4:30) and "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom.8:9; 1 Pet.1:11).

True Trinitarian worship is "coming *to* the Father *through* the Son *in* the Spirit" (MacArthur).

Since the triune God is the object of our worship and each member is to be equally honored, notice how their attributes give us *the purpose of worship*.

II. The Purpose of Worship

Each purpose reflects on the attributes and Persons of the Godhead.

A. We Worship God Because of His Majesty

“Majesty” means “sovereign power, authority or dignity; greatness or splendor of quality or character” (Merriam Webster).

1. Ps.96:6 says, “Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary” (NASBU).
2. Because these qualities are His, verses 1-4 says to “Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. 3 Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. 4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods” (NASBU).

Because God is sovereign, we are to worship Him through our song and through our preaching. We are to “tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples” (v.3).

Just as we read last week from Jonathan Edwards where he said, “Let us therefore, labor to submit to the sovereignty of God. God insists, that His sovereignty be acknowledged by us.” This is how we do this; through worship!

Second:

B. We Worship God Because of His Glory

Nehemiah Rogers said, “As the sun, which would shine in its own brightness and glory though all the world were blind, or did willfully shut their eyes against it, so God will be ever most glorious, let men be ever so obstinate or rebellious. Yea, God will have glory by reprobates, though it be nothing to their ease; and though He be not glorified of them, yet He will glorify Himself in them.”

1. We don’t understand many of the things God does or does not do
 - a) He does not save all people from their sin even though He provided the way for their salvation
 - b) He allows people in their unbelief go to hell and yet the Bible says He “loves the world” (Jn.3:16)
 - c) I don’t understand all of those things but I know that He does what He does for His own glory and since His ways are perfect I can trust that what He does is right and just
2. The Bible says the “glory of the LORD” is “great”
 - a) Ps.138:5 says, “Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of

the LORD.”

“When God wanted to reveal Himself to certain people, He did so through a brilliant light called the Shekinah. That’s a Hebrew word meaning ‘to dwell’ or ‘to reside with.’ God revealed His glory...so that they might recognize Him as the glorious God that He is and give Him the respect He is due” (John MacArthur, *Our Awesome God*, 136).

- b) In Ex.33:18, Moses asked God to “show me Your glory!” The Lord replied in verse 19 by saying, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you. The Lord then explained how He would do that:

“I...will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" 21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen” (NASBU).

- c) In Ex.34:6-7 after instructing Moses to prepare for this it says, “Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations” (NASBU).

We worship God because of His majesty and glory and because of *His Holiness*.

C. We Worship God Because of His Holiness

1. When the angels worship in heaven, they do not say, “Eternal, eternal, eternal,” or “Faithful, faithful, faithful,” or “Wise, wise, wise,” or “Mighty, mighty, mighty.” They say, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Listen to what Isaiah heard when He came into the Temple in Isaiah 6:

After seeing “the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple,” He saw “Seraphim...above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory” (vv.1-3, NASBU).

2. In Revelation 4:8 we’re told that “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” (NASBU).

A.W. Pink says, “Because God is holy the utmost reverence becomes our approaches unto Him. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all about Him" (Ps. 89:7). Then "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; He is holy" (Ps. 99:5). Yes, "at His footstool," in the lowest posture of humility, prostrate before Him. When Moses would approach unto the burning bush, God said, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet" (Ex. 3:5). He is to be served "with fear" (Ps. 2:11). Of Israel His demand was, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. 10:3). The more our hearts are awed by His ineffable holiness, the more acceptable will be our approaches unto Him” (Gleanings in the Godhead).

D. We Worship God Because of His Power

Stephen Charnock said, “The power of God is that ability and strength whereby He can bring to pass whatsoever He pleases, whatsoever His infinite wisdom may direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of His will may resolve...As holiness is the beauty of all of God’s attributes, so power is that which gives life and action to all the perfections of the Divine nature. How vain would be the eternal counsels, if power did not step in to execute them. Without power His mercy would be but feeble pity, His promises an empty sound, His threatenings a mere scarecrow. God’s power is like Himself: infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; it can neither be checked, restrained, nor frustrated by the creature.”

1. Ps.21 speaks of God’s power when it says in verses 8-9: “Your hand will find out all your enemies; Your right hand will find out those who hate you. 9 You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger; The LORD will swallow them up in His wrath, And fire will devour them. 10 Their offspring You will destroy from the earth, And their descendants from among the sons of men” (NASBU).

In verse 13, the psalmist concludes by worshiping God because of His power:

“Be exalted, O LORD, in Your strength; We will sing and praise Your power” (NASBU).

2. Ps.62:11 also speaks of God’s power when it says, “God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God.”
3. In Mark 2 after Jesus rebuked an unclean spirit and commanded him to “be quiet, and come out of him” (v.25), he came out and “they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him. And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee” (vv.27-28).
4. When Jesus displayed His power to His disciples in Mark 4 by saying to the wind and the sea “Peace, be still!”, verse 41 says, “And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, ‘Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!’”

5. After His resurrection Matthew 28:16-17 tells us “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.”

Worship is the appropriate response to God’s power.

A.W. Pink says, “We cannot have a right conception of God unless we think of Him as all-powerful, as well as all-wise. He who cannot do what He will and perform all His pleasure cannot be God. As God has a will to resolve what He deems good, so He has power to execute His will” (Gleanings in the Godhead, 42).

E. We Worship God Because of His Goodness

1. Ps.52:1 says, “The goodness of God endures forever.”
2. Since that is the case we are to “give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!” (Ps.118:1).
3. Ps.107:8-9 says, “Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! 9 For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.”

A.W. Tozer says, “The goodness of God is the only valid reason for existence!” (The Attributes of God, vol. 1, 45).

It is because of God’s goodness that we’re still here. He showed His goodness to Adam and Eve by not killing them on the spot when they disobeyed Him by eating of the forbidden tree. He showed His goodness when He sent Christ to bear our sin in His body on the cross. He shows us His goodness by not condemning us for our sin but forgiving and cleansing us from it.

We never should cease in giving worship to God because of His goodness, not only because of His goodness to us but because “He is essentially good.”

Thomas Watson said, “In God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good. He is eternally and immutably good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to Him, so no subtraction from Him.”

Do you worship God because He is good? Do you worship Him because He created you and provides your every need? Do you worship Him knowing that it is “the goodness of God that leads you to repentance” (Rom.2:4)?

4. The psalmist said in Ps.54:6, “I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for it is good.”
5. There are many things to worship God for—all flow from His goodness:

- a) For His mercy - Ps.118:4 says, “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”
- b) For His truth - Ps.138:2 says, “I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.”
- c) For His faithfulness - Ps.89:8 says, “O Lord God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.”
- d) For His salvation - Ps.18:46 says, “The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.”
- e) For His comfort - 2 Cor.1:3-5 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”
- f) For His judgment - Rev.15:1-4 says, “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. 2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.”
- g) For His counsel - Ps.16:7 says, “I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel.”
- h) For His answers to our prayers - Ps.118:21 says, “I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.”

III. The Obligation of Worship

A. The Angels Are to Worship Him

Ps.148:1-2 says, “Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!”

C. Fred Dickason says, “Angels’ primary ministry seems to be that of worship and praise to God...Angels seem to always sing their praise. Song is a most fitting and expressive means of giving God the praise due His name (Job 38:7; Rev.5:8-9). Such worship suggests the indescribable majesty and glory of God which unfallen angels understand better than do fallen

men. Because of God's infinite worthiness, such beautiful and excellent worship continues forever without ceasing" (Angels: Elect & Evil, 90-1).

B. The Saints Are to Worship Him

1. Ps.30:4 says, "Sing praise to the Lord, You saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name."
2. Ps.149:5-6 says, "Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth."

C. All Creation is to Worship Him

Ps.148:3-13 says, "Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! 4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created. 6 He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away. 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths; 8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; 9 Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars; 10 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying fowl; 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; 12 Both young men and maidens; Old men and children. 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven."

IV. The Method of Worship

A. It Should Be Offered Intelligently

1. We are to have a proper understanding of God

That is the point of our study of the doctrine of God. We cannot properly worship Him if we do not understand who He is and what He is like as described in the Bible.

Ps.47:7 says, "For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with *understanding*."

2. We are to have a proper communication to God

- a) In the midst of the tongues movement many do not understand that 1 Cor.14:15 implies a proper intelligent communication.

It says, "What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I also will pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding."

- b) Mat.6:7 says, "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words" (NASB).

B. It Should Be Offered With the Whole Person

1. God requires “all that is within you” when you worship Him — this is with all your being

Ps.103:1 says, “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!”

2. God requires all that expresses you (emotions)

Ps.9:1 says, “I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart.”

“Heart” to the Hebrew referred to the “seat of emotions,” “the bowel” (Strong).

William Fenner said that “Grace comes not to take away a man’s affections, but to take them up.”

C. It Should Be Offered With A Proper Attitude

1. Joy - Ps.63:5 says, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.”

William Gurnall said, “Christ takes no more delight to dwell in a sad heart, than we do to live in a dark house.”

2. Gladness - Ps.100:2 says, “Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.”

3. Thankfulness - Ps.95:1-2 says, “O Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms” (NASB).

A.W. Tozer said, “Gratitude is an offering precious in the sight of God, and it is one that the poorest of us can make and be not poor but richer for having made it” (Signposts, Christianity Today, vol.39, no. 13).

CONCLUSION

Do you worship God for who He is and what He is like? Do you meditate on His attributes and offer to Him worship? Ps.35:28 says, “And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long.” Let’s give heed to that psalm this evening. Let your “tongue...speak of [His] righteousness and of [His] praise.” Let’s do that “all the day long.” I hope that this study of the doctrine of God has given you a better understanding of God and a greater understanding of the need to worship Him in spirit and truth. Let’s worship our God as we pray.