

Jesus
The Living Water Pt. 9
“Worshipping the Father”
John 4:13-26

- 13** Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,
- 14** but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”
- 15** The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”
- 16** Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”
- 17** The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’
- 18** for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”
- 19** The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.
- 20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”
- 21** Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

- 22** You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.
- 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.”
- 25** The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”
- 26** Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

Introduction

Comedian Flip Wilson used to have a character in his repertoire named Reverend Leroy, who pastored The Church of What’s Happenin’ Now.

In the early 1970s Reverend Leroy and his church were an outrageous parody. But, truthfully, the evangelical community these days is swarming with Reverend Leroy’s and churches that might aptly be named The Church of What’s Happenin’ Now.

There is almost no limit to how far some churches will go to be “relevant” and “contemporary” in their worship

services. And nothing, it seems, is too profane or outrageous to be fused with worship.

The Los Angeles Times Magazine recently reported on one Lutheran church in Southern California that distributes flyers advertising their church service as “God’s Country Goodtime hour.” The flyers boldly promise “line dancing following worship.” According to the magazine article, “the pastor is dancing, too, decked out in Wrangler boots and Levis.” The pastor credits the campaign with revitalizing his church. The article describes Sunday morning at the church:

Members listen to sermons whose topics include the pastor’s ‘70 Ford pickup, and Christian sex (rated R for “relevance, respect, and relationship,” says [the pastor], “and more fun than it sounds”). After the service, they dance to a band called—what else?— the Honkytonk Angels. Attendance has been steadily rising.¹

You might think such a scene is merely an aberration from an obscure or offbeat church. Sadly, that is not the case. Current church-growth theory has opened the door wide for such antics. It sometimes seems as if P. T. Barnum is the main role model for many practitioners of church growth these days. In fact, the following ad for a Sunday evening service appeared in the bulletin of one of the largest and best-known churches in the heart of America’s “Bible belt”:

Circus

See Barnum and Bailey bested as the magic of the big top circus comes to The Fellowship of Excitement! Clowns! Acrobats! Animals! Popcorn! What a great night!

This same church once had their pastoral staff put on a wrestling match during a Sunday service, even going so far as to have a professional wrestler train the pastors to throw one another around the ring, pull hair, and kick shins without actually hurting one another.² Again, these are not extraordinary incidents. Scores of churches are following similar methods, employing every means available to spice up their services.

Clearly, the corporate worship of the Lord's Day is undergoing a revolution that has few parallels in all of church history. The resulting crisis within evangelicalism cannot help but be profound in its direct bearing upon the health of thousands of our churches.

"John MacArthur 'How shall we then worship'"

All of this nonsense is directly related to the decline of the centrality of the Pulpit in Worship.

We are not just speaking of the need of a lecture made from a podium at some point in a worship service either.

Just because you give 50 minutes to a guy to speak does not mean that truth has been communicated.

What we mean by "centrality of the Pulpit" is a commitment to the exposition of all Holy Scripture so that a correct understanding of God, and His purpose and plan of redemption are communicated by trained and gifted men"

This is done faithfully and without compromise. with no capitulation to the cultural and religious pressures put on the church.

In an Article “The Forgotten Pulpit”

In traditional Protestantism, the pulpit has served to position the Scripture as the ultimate authority. After the Reformation, the pulpit was moved from the left hand side of the nave (sanctuary) to the center. It is even placed above the alter and/or communion table. This placement serves to illustrate how expositional preaching (preaching from the Scripture—not using the Scriptures and a spring-board to one’s own ideas) is the central foundation to spiritual life. As you may have noticed in the past, many pulpits have a picture of the Bible carved on it. The surface of the pulpit is designed to house the Bible and other study material. In every way it is meant to communicate that the Scripture alone is our final and only infallible authority for our faith and practice (sola Scriptura).

It is as simple as this: pastors and church-goers alike are abandoning the pulpit for more “authentic” relationships. This may sound nice, but, in the end, I fear it is representative of something very tragic and dangerous—the abandoning of the authority of God’s word.

The centrality of the Pulpit means the Exaltation of Truth.

Truth Matters

The Wheaton College controversy regarding Dr. Larycia Hawkins and her comments about Islam is gaining momentum not only in the United States, but also here in Australia, with the ABC publishing two articles on the issue this week.

The controversy relates to this statement made by Dr Hawkins on twitter in December last year, “I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a Christian, are people of the book”, and “And as Pope Francis stated last week, we worship the same God.”

Dr Hawkins has been suspended by the Council of Wheaton College, and discussions are being held regarding potential dismissal from her teaching position.

There are many issues surrounding this saga, but for here, I wish to offer comment on two of the questions: First, does it matter? Does it matter whether Muslims and Christians worship the same God or not? Second, is Prof. Miroslav Volf right to use a Jewish view of God as a defence for the proposition that Muslims and Christians worship the same God?

1. Does it matter?

Writing on [The Drum](#), Ruby Hamad has bemoaned Wheaton’s position, referring to the ‘wildly disproportionate reaction from the college’ and ‘it’s surprising that such a statement is even considered enough to raise an eyebrow.’

Hamad believes that Muslim and Christians do worship the same God:

“A professor who sparked a controversy by wearing a hijab at the Christian college where she worked and ended up leaving after the school moved to fire her has resurfaced at University of Virginia, where she will do research on Islam.”

Review

A. In Truth

v23 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.”

I. **The Person of the Truth**

II. **The Place of the Truth**

Lesson

1. The Priority of Truth

I Cor 14:

- 23** Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?
- 24** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.
- 25** And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

Genuine worship is a response to divine truth. It is passionate because it arises out of our love for God. But to be true worship it must also arise out of a correct understanding of His law, His righteousness, His mercy, and His being. Real worship acknowledges God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. We know from Scripture, for example, that He is the only perfectly holy, all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent source from which flows all goodness, mercy, truth, wisdom, power, and salvation. Worship means ascribing glory to Him because of those truths. It means adoring Him for who He is, for what He has done, and for what He has promised. It must therefore be a response to the truth that He has revealed about Himself. Such worship

cannot rise out of a vacuum. It is prompted and vitalized by the objective truth of the Word.

The Purpose of the Truth

1. Proclamation

2 Ti 4:1–6

4:1 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season.

“All worship is an intelligent and loving response to the revelation of God, because it is the adoration of his Name. Therefore acceptable worship is impossible without preaching. For preaching is making known the Name of the Lord, and worship is praising the Name of the Lord made known. Far from being an alien intrusion into worship, the reading and preaching of the Word are actually indispensable to it. The two cannot be divorced. Indeed, it is their unnatural divorce which account for the low level of so much contemporary worship.

Our worship is poor because our knowledge of God is poor, and our knowledge of God is poor because our preaching is poor. But when the Word of God is expounded in its fullness, and the congregation begin to glimpse the glory of the living God, they bow down in solemn awe and joyful wonder before his throne. It

is preaching which accomplishes this, the proclamation of the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God.”

-John Stott, Between Two Worlds

2. Protection

2 Tim 4;3

Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- 3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;
- 4** and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
- 5** But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Ac 20:27–31

- 27** For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.
- 28** Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.
- 29** For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.
- 30** Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.
- 31** Therefore watch,

The nineteenth century pastor-theologian Charles Bridges wrote,

“So powerful is the influence of the Pulpit upon the church, that the general state of the Church at any given period may be correctly estimated by the prevalent style of preaching” (190, footnote 1).

1 Pe 5:1–2

- 5:1** The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:
- 2** Shepherd the flock of God which is among you

3. Preservation

Ga 1:6–9

- 6** I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.
8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

2 Ti 2:24–26

- 24** And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,
25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,
26 and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

4. Purity

Jn 17:17

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Ps 119:9–11

- 9** How can a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed according to Your word.
- 10** With my whole heart I have sought You;
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
- 11** Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.

Eph 5:25–27

Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing
of water by the word,
27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church,
not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that
she should be holy and without blemish.

2 Th 2:13

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you,
brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the
beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by
the Spirit and belief in the truth,

Matt. 18:15

- 15** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
- 16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’*
- 17** And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.
- 18** “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
- 19** “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.
- 20** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

2. The Practice of Truth**Jn 8:31–32**

- 31** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Jas 1:21–22

21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

1 Pe 1:22

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

1 Pe 2:1–2

2:1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,

2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

“Remember the perfections of that God whom you worship, that he is a Spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and truth; and that he is most

great and terrible, and therefore to be worshipped with seriousness and reverence, and not to be dallied with, or served with toys or lifeless lip-service; and that he is most holy, pure, and jealous, and therefore to be purely worshipped; and that he is still present with you, and all things are naked and open to him with whom we have to do. The knowledge of God, and the remembrance of his all-seeing presence, are the most powerful means against hypocrisy.”

— **Richard Baxter**