

Subject: *Worship That Pleases God*

Scripture: *John 4:1-26*

When you read this story of Christ and the woman at the well and what He said to her about living water, it makes you think of the statement in *Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* Two things stand out in this conversation—water and worship. This woman brought up the subject of worship as a distraction to avoid the conviction of her sin. How often people do that. They are willing to discuss worship and religion when they don't want to talk about God and their soul.

Christ had some very important things to say about worship in verses 21-24. This is the classic text in the Bible about worship. As we think about *Worship That Pleases God*, let's think about a few basic questions.

1. What is worship?

The word “worship” comes from the Old English *worþship*, and has to do with the worthiness of God or what God is worth. We sing a song called *Worthy of Worship* that goes like this:

*Worthy of worship, worthy of praise,
Worthy of honor and glory;
Worthy of all the glad songs we can sing,
Worthy of all of the offerings we bring.*

*You are worthy, Father, Creator.
You are worthy, Savior, Sustainer.
You are worthy, worthy and wonderful;
Worthy of worship and praise.*

Wayne Grudem said, “Worship is the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts.” Worship is the one thing we do on earth and in heaven. It's the one activity we do now and will do forever. Every time we worship we are practicing for eternity in heaven. Worship is the highest privilege and should be the ultimate priority of our lives. The first question of the beloved Westminster Catechism is about the great purpose of human life: “What is the chief end of man? The answer: “Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

A. P. Gibbs described the difference between ministry and worship, “Ministry is that which comes down from the Father by the Son in the power of the Spirit through the human instrument. Worship starts in the human instrument and goes up by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Son to the Father.”

2. Why do we worship?

There are two basic reasons to worship. First, God deserves our worship. Just think of who God is and all He does. He alone deserves our worship. Worship is our recognition and response to the God who reveals Himself in creation, providence, and redemption. God deserves our submission, reverence, devotion, praise, and adoration.

Second, God desires our worship. Look again at our text in John 4:23. He is seeking true worshippers. He is seeking people to worship Him in spirit and in truth. The purpose of all worship is to glorify and please God. In worship God must be our only attraction and the only audience. Sometimes the issue becomes all about the kind of worship service, the style of preaching or the style of music, but the only issue that matters is this: what does God want, what does He expect, and what does He deserve? Too much worship is concerned with the tastes and desires of people instead of the pleasure and approval of God. As we leave the worship service our only concern should be whether God was pleased and glorified.

We worship God because He deserves it and He desires it. But we need to remember that even though He deserves desires our worship, He doesn't need it.

***Acts 17:24-25** ²⁴ God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.*

***Acts 19:26-27** ²⁶ Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: ²⁷ So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth.*

3. Whom do we worship?

We worship the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In last week's sermon on The Unchanging God we focused on God's unchanging ways, words, and will. That should always be our focus—His ways, His words, and His will. MacArthur said, "To worship the Lord is to ascribe to him the honor, glory, adoration, praise, reverence, and devotion that is due him, both for his greatness and for his goodness."

4. When do we worship?

We worship every day and especially on the Lord's Day. Every day of the week there is personal worship and family worship. And then on the Lord's Day there is corporate worship with our church family. The writer of Hebrews describes the incredible privilege we have.

***Hebrews 10:19-25** ¹⁹ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; ²¹ And having an high priest over the house of God; ²² Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) ²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

5. How do we worship?

We should give attention to these things:

A. Preparation of the heart

Matthew 15:8-9 *⁸ This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. ⁹ But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

B. Praise from the heart

Psalms 34:3 *O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

Psalms 103:1 *Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

C. Presentation of the heart

We present our heart to listen, submit, believe, and obey. Worship transforms us so that our character is more like Christ and our life is more in line with God's will.