

Introduction to Christian Worship

Text

John 4:20-24 ²⁰“Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Memory Verse

Matt. 15:9 ‘And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

Introduction

In Chapter 1 we defined worship in general terms. Now we focus on Christian worship, the worship of the only true God.

CHAPTER 3

There are many so-called gods in the world (1 Cor. 8:5-6), so we need to be clear on what makes Christian worship different. In the New Testament, Christ established a covenant where we worship God “by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Jesus put it plainly: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

This means Christian worship is not about outward rituals or location. It happens through God’s word, which is spirit (John 6:63), engaging our inward person. “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16)

Because many spirits operate in the world (1 John 4:1), it is vital that we understand true worship. Christian worship is life-wide. It is what we think in our heart, speak with our mouth, and do with our hands for the good of others, done in the awareness of God’s love in Christ.

Whatever we think, say, and do that brings good to our neighbour in God’s love is worship. God cannot reward anything that was not offered to Him in this way. That is why Jesus said, “Be

CHAPTER 3

perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48)

Objective

To highlight practical ways in which Christian worship is defined and lived out every day.

Presentation

1. Christian Worship is an Exchange of Offerings

God first gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, God’s Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14). In response, we offer ourselves back to Him in word and deed: “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.” (Col. 3:17)

Worship under Christ gives us power to do good for others in His love (2 Cor. 5:14; Phil. 2:13; 4:13). Before Christ, worshippers mainly watched God act. Now we participate with Him. Worship fails when it makes us afraid to do good (Jam. 4:17), or when it is mixed with greed and pride (1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Tim. 3:1-7).

CHAPTER 3

We must also keep the difference between worship and respect clear. We respect leaders, but we worship God alone. Peter refused worship from Cornelius (Acts 10:25-26), and the angel refused it from John (Rev. 22:8-9). Christ alone is the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:15), and He alone has authority to fulfil God's law (Matt. 5:38-44).

2. Christian Worship is a Lifestyle that Fulfills Scripture

Worshippers live by faith and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25). Their lives show that God is still governing through His word. The ceremonial laws of Leviticus pointed forward to moral and spiritual realities fulfilled in Christ's love (John 13:34-35; Heb. 7:11-15).

The grace of Christ is not another legal system. "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)

As children of the New Covenant, we are "covenant children of God" (Heb. 8:10-13).

3. Christian Worship Brings a Good Reward from God

Following human traditions in worship leads to empty religion and no reward from God (Matt. 15:9; 7:21-23). True reward comes from worshipping God as He directs, not from observing man-made ordinances (Col. 2:18-19).

Sometimes reward comes through obedience to godly leadership (Heb. 13:7-8; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:29). God meets the needs of His people, even when leaders are imperfect, because His care never fails (Deut. 13:1-3; 32:49-51). God's power has no limit and no expiry. He rewards His worshippers in His time.

4. Christian Worship Maintains Our God-Given Role Over Creation

We are called to reflect God's righteousness on earth (Matt. 5:48). When we think, speak, and act with God's love in mind for the good of others, we glorify God. This is worship, and it is why God calls us "gods" in the sense of His representatives (John 10:34-35).

CHAPTER 3

5. Christian Worship Glorifies the Holy Spirit

Obedience to God's Spirit glorifies Him. Peter warned that anyone who speaks for God must speak "as one speaking the very words of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). True worship is always backed by Scripture and a life that matches it.

Conclusion

When we make worship of God central to daily life, we position ourselves for success in every venture. More importantly, our lives become a credible witness that draws others to Christ. May God's grace and love enable us to live in this way. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. In what way can worship of God result in receiving a bad reward?
 - * When we follow human rules instead of God's word, our worship is empty and God does not reward it.

Matt. 15:7-9⁷ "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:⁸ 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour

CHAPTER 3

Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁹ And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

Matt. 7:21-23 ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!’ ”

2. Give at least two definitions for worship as you just learned.
 - (1) An exchange of offerings - God gave us Christ, and we respond with our lives in word and deed (Col. 3:17).
 - (2) A life lived in faith and obedience that fulfils Scripture and glorifies God (Gal. 5:22-25; John 13:34-35).

CHAPTER 3

3. How will worshipping God sincerely make us higher than other creatures before God?

- * Sincere worship aligns us with God's Spirit, making us His children and representatives on earth.

John 10:34-36 ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods?"'" ³⁵ If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'"

Ps. 82:6 I said, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High."

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

4. How is worship an exchange of offering?

- * God gave His Son for us. We respond by offering our lives, words, and actions back to Him in service and gratitude.

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your

CHAPTER 3

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

1 Cor. 10:31 *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

5. Acceptable worship is said to be of spirit.
Why?

- * Because God Himself is Spirit, and only our inward person, renewed by His Word, can truly engage with Him.

John 4:24 *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.*

John 6:63 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

Prayer

Father, thank You for calling us to true worship.
Give us fresh zeal to do what is good and pleasing to You, so that our lives may reflect Your righteousness on earth. In Jesus's name, Amen.