

"What We Believe"

Session 12

Worship-- God Transforms

I) INTRODUCTION

- A) In history past, the social life of most cultures revolved around sanctuaries, temples and stadiums. Within these places various gods and goddesses were worshiped by people bringing their time, treasures and talents to lay before them.
- B) Today, little has changed. These sanctuaries have been changed into tanning beds and warm weather resorts. Other temples include hardware stores and craftsman tools. Where these other temples were physically and literally located, they have been replaced by soccer fields, baseball parks, football stadiums and basketball arenas where fans dress up, like they always have, as birds and animals to cheer for their gods as they score points.
- C) Instead of archaic shrines that used to fill homes where people poured out their financial sacrifice, we have now upgraded to having home entertainment systems and high speed internet connections.
- D) Worship is something that every human does, either towards the living God or towards dead lifeless gods called idols. We all are worshipping something.

II) What Is Worship?

- A) For us to rightly understand worship we must look at both the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Doctrine of the Image of God. The Trinity is a continuous out-pourer of Themselves into Themselves and others. Humans are no different, because we are made in the image of God. We are built to worship something and to pour out our lives to something.
- B) Worship is not a part of what we do, but actually *who we are* as God's image bearers. Worship is more than singing songs. It's what we are continually pouring ourselves out for.
- C) We weren't created to worship but actually created worshipping.
- D) At all times, every person in every place is worshipping something, day and night, night and day.
 - 1) **Hebrews 13:15-17** *"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. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those that must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."*
- E) Here we see that worship is continual and also includes Praise, Proclamation, Service to others in God's name, Participation by sharing with others, Sacrifice of our time, talents and treasures, and Submission by respecting the Godly authority placed over us.
- F) In light of that worship, we can ask ourselves 6 questions to see where our worship is going, or how well we are worshipping God with our lives.

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- 1) Who or what do you praise most passionately and frequently?
- 2) How commonly and clearly do you confess Jesus Christ in what you speak, type and sing?
- 3) Do you serve others with joy or would you rather be served? Do you serve when it's inconvenient and unnoticed?
- 4) Are you active in the life of our Church with your time, talents and treasures?
- 5) Who do you give your time, energy, emotions and money to?
- 6) Are you submissive to godly authority or do you rebel against authority, parents, teachers, bosses, pastors, etc...?

III) What Is Idolatry?

- A) The opposite of worship is idolatry. We either worship God or practice idolatry and if it's not worshipping God then it is practicing idolatry.
- B) Christians aren't defined by skin color, money, geographic location, gender or good behavior, but rather by which god they worship. You are a Christian if you worship God.
- C) Worship is both a Biblically faithful understanding of who God is, combined with a Biblically faithful response to Him.
- D) Idolatry is an unbiblical, unfaithful understanding of God with an unbiblical and unfaithful response to Him.
 - 1) **John 8:44** *"...when the devil speaks, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*
- E) Underneath idolatry is the "lie" that tells us, you are a god, you can become god, you're a part of god, you can be the source of meaning for your own life, you can transform yourself, you can change the world and its sin problem.
- F) The answer as told by the "lie" tells us it's within you, not outside in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Things that help us go inward are drugs, trances, yoga, meditation, self esteem, and self improvement, all of which help us go inward to drown out the voice of the Creator who is shouting from the outside, **YOU'RE NOT GOD! I AM!**
- G) *Twoism* helps us understand the truth. There is a Creator and a creation. The Creator and the creation are separate. Separate meaning the creation has to leave itself to find the Creator.
- H) *Oneism* helps us understand the lie. This lie erases the two circles and makes them one. They are no longer separate but found within themselves. This means we don't need to leave ourselves to find answers, we possess them.
- I) While idolatry manifests externally, it originates internally. It starts in the heart and then makes its way out. This means that whatever the heart is set upon *will* become your reality.
 - 1) **Matthew 6:19-21** *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."*

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where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

- 2) Many of us struggle with our worship of God because of where we have laid the eyes of our heart. Even though we’re in Christ, we have set our eyes on other treasures.

IV) How Does Idolatry Harm Individuals and Societies?

- A) Idolatry affects more than just the worshipper. We are all connected. What we do affects others, for the good and for the bad.
- B) Whatever grabs our attention, if it’s other than God, becomes that which we worship, live for, and give unto. These things become terrible task masters. If it’s our kids and we do a bad job raising them that will punish us until we die. If it’s our career and we never get the one we dreamed up, it will punish us all along the way.
- C) But if you serve Jesus your whole life and you fail Him, He will forgive you and give many more chances.
- D) This explains why those whose idol is beauty become frantic to maintain their appearance, even if it should compel them towards eating disorders, abuse of cosmetic surgery and panic as they age.
- E) When a culture turns away from the living God, it is still turning towards something else. If it’s not God, it is an idol. Whenever we idolize we also demonize.
- F) If we idolize our race, we demonize other races. When we idolize our gender, we demonize other genders (chauvinists and feminists). If we idolize our political party, we demonize the others ones.
- G) The reason we do this is because, anything that’s not our idol, is a threat to our idol so we work to tear it down and defend our idol, whatever it may be.
 - 1) **Matthew 6:24** *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other...”*

V) What Is Required In Church Worship?

- A) It’s clear now, that God alone is to be worshipped. We worship God according to how He wishes, not as we wish. God judges those who worship Him in a wrong way, whether it be internally or externally. Therefore the Church must care about people’s hearts, as well as their actions.
- B) As Christians we are called to gather together for adoration, and then to scatter into our culture for action. **“Encountering Jesus and the people of our culture.”** We are gathering and scattering.
- C) Here are 5 things that should be taking place when Christians gather together to worship.
 - 1) Worship must be God centered (**Matthew 4:8-10**).

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- (i) Gathering together for worship is not about hearing sermons about us, singing songs about us, and having classes about us. It should be about God! We are prone to worship ourselves, and our gathering time should be redirecting our worship towards God.
- 2) Worship should be understandable (**1st Corinthians 14:1-12**).
 - (i) This means that the pastor and leaders are working to explain what is being said, sung and communicated. Explaining big words so people can understand.
- 3) Worship should be seeker sensible (**1st Corinthians 14:20-25**).
 - (i) We must understand that there are going to be non-believers in our service so we need to explain what's going on when we gather together. We explain what singing is, what communion is. This doesn't mean that our entire service needs to be geared towards reaching the lost, but we must host those among us that don't know Jesus well.
- 4) Worship is to be orderly (**1st Corinthians 14:40**).
 - (i) Though the Bible doesn't tell us what a worship time together should look like, and God doesn't expect us to be perfect, there also needs to be some foresight that goes into our time together to help people encounter Christ in a community setting. God is not looking for an impressive performance, but He also wants to show people that He's not chaotic.
- 5) Worship is to be *missional*.
 - (i) We must understand that we are a part of our culture, not separated from it. **"Encountering Jesus and the People of our culture."** This means that we aren't trying to do Church in the way it was done in the past, but no longer fits the culture in which we live. We want to be a part of what's going on in our culture so that we can help shape it, and influence it. If we do our methods from the past because that's the way we like it, our methodology has become *methodolatry*.

VI) How Does Worship Transform Us?

- A) Because we have worshipped our way into sin, we must worship our way out.
- B) When we sin, we don't stop worshipping; we are actually moving further away from Christ. Repentance is the act of turning an idolater into a worshipper. This means we turn from worshipping those things that aren't god or gods and turn towards the living God.
- C) Those who fail to worship the living God, worship that which is created and though this can be anything or anyone, it is more often sex and ourselves that we end up worshipping.
- D) John Calvin tells us, "...every one us, from our mother's womb, comes out inventing idols to worship because the human heart is an idol factory."
- E) Through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to crush our idols and worship only God.
- F) Worship transforms our hearts to move away from the worship that destroys us, into worship of Jesus which causes our hearts to come alive and live differently before Him and others.