

# **DISCOVER WORSHIP**

## DISCOVER WORSHIP

May 3, 2015

**Sermon in a sentence:** Discover worship – the ultimate act of submission to God.

**Congregational reading:** 1 Chron. 16:23-34 NKJV

**Scriptures:** 1 Ch. 16:23-34; John 4:23-24; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8; Matthew 15:21-28.

1 Chron. 16:23-34

Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

24 Declare His glory among the nations,  
His wonders among all peoples.

25 For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised;  
He *is* also to be feared above all gods.

26 For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,  
But the LORD made the heavens.

27 Honor and majesty *are* before Him;  
Strength and gladness are in His place.

28 Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,  
Give to the LORD glory and strength.

29 Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;  
Bring an offering, and come before Him.  
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!

30 Tremble before Him, all the earth.  
The world also is firmly established,  
It shall not be moved.

31 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."

32 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;  
Let the field rejoice, and all that *is* in it.

- 33 Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before  
the LORD,  
For He is coming to judge the earth.
- 34 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!*  
For His mercy *endures* forever.
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**John 4:23-24 (NKJV) “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. <sup>24</sup> God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

**Webster’s Dictionary defines worship as: “1. The act or feeling of adoration or homage, the paying of religious reverence as in prayer, praise, etc. 2. The act or feeling of deference, respect or honor toward virtue, power, or the like. 3. Excessive or ardent admiration.”**

**Webster, however, misses a couple of very essential elements of biblical worship – sacrifice and service.**

**The main biblical words used for worship are:**

**“Haawa” (Heb.): to worship, to bow down – e.g. Genesis 22:5**

**“Aabad” (Heb.): to serve, to worship, to work – e.g. Joshua 24:15**

**“Proskyneo” (Gr.): to make obeisance, do reverence to, literally “to kiss forward” – e.g. John 4: 23-24**

**“Sebomai” (Gr.): to revere, to feel awe and devotion toward – e.g. Acts 16:14**

**“Latreuo” (Gr.): to serve, to render religious service or homage – e.g. Romans 12:1**

**“Homologeō” (Gr.): to confess, to acknowledge, to declare – e.g. Matthew 10:32**

**The truth is, people can worship whoever and whatever they want! Most of us have seen “excessive and ardent admiration” from a man to a woman or vice versa. (Some old wedding vows even included the phrase: “With my body I worship thee”; speaking of the free, self-giving sexual relationship between a man and wife as worship!)**

**Some seem to worship their house, their job, their jewelry, an elephant, a crocodile, the sun, a mountain, a political leader, etc. etc. However, when we speak of God’s desire for worship, we must understand that this is not to fulfill an egocentric, emotional need in God’s psyche!**

**He desires worship in the same way our husband, wife, child or friend desires to hear us say: “I love you” in a totally free, willing, and unforced manner. When worship is offered to Him in that way, “in spirit and in truth”, He loves it and cherishes it.**

**One of the things we see from the earliest OT scriptures is that worship involves sacrifice – offering something of value to the one we’re worshipping. Whether it be oxen, sheep, children, money or self, we give our best to the one we worship, saying by our actions: “I freely give you the best I have to offer to do with as you please”. The greater the gift, the greater the expression of worship.**

**Actions speak louder than words. Giving speaks louder than words. The object of our worship will quickly see how important He is to us by what we’re willing to do *for* Him and what we’re willing to give *to* Him. Worship is demonstrated much more by what we do than by what we say.**

**At the same time, words are very important. Worship certainly involves our public declaration of who or what we worship. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!" (Ps. 107:2)**

**Worship is also indicated by our attitude. As we act, give and speak in worship, what is our underlying attitude? If we act simply out of duty, by force, unwillingly, or just to fulfill social or religious obligations, these are not expressions the one we worship will appreciate. The goal is to have *willing* worshipers who worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), full of love, joy and peace. **Christian worship is the total, joyful, giving of ourselves to God in service, sacrifice, praise, reverence, love and adoration.****

**Biblical examples:**

**We learn lessons in life both by precept and by example. Having discussed the precepts of worship, let's look at some examples to help us answer the question - "how should I worship God?"**

**Luke 7:36-50 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." 41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they**

had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." 48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Jesus was the guest of honor in the home of Simon - a Pharisee - (location unspecified - during the first year of His ministry). A notoriously sinful woman, who heard Jesus was in town at the Pharisee's house, came with an alabaster flask of fragrant oil. She stood behind Him, weeping, then knelt to wash His feet with her tears, wipe them with her hair, kiss His feet repeatedly, and anoint them with the oil.

**What were the elements of her worship?** Great love, willingness to bear criticism, willingness to sacrifice her best, humility, and saving faith.

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John 12:1-8 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 There they made Him a supper (*in the house of Simon the leper - Matt. 26:6*); and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those

who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, (*in an alabaster flask - Matt. 26:7*) anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. (*She also anointed His head - Matt. 26:7.*) 4 Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

In the last week of His life, Jesus was the guest of honor at a dinner in the home of another Simon - in this case, Simon the leper, in Bethany. Mary, Lazarus' sister came up to Him with a pound of very expensive fragrance - spikenard, (the essential oil of the nard plant, imported from India where the plant grows high in the Himalayas).

**What were the elements of her worship?** Honouring Jesus - (oil on His head); devotion to Jesus - (oil on His feet); total abasement - (wiping Jesus' feet with her hair - her glory - (1 Cor. 11:15)); costly sacrifice - (spikenard was almost a year's wage).

Jesus said her act was in preparation for His burial, but to Mary, it was simply an act of love and devotion to Jesus. She was just trying to demonstrate her complete submission to Him and her willingness to give Him her very best.

**Others were there who had been blessed by Jesus and held Him in very high regard: Simon - cured of leprosy; and Lazarus - raised from the dead. Yet Mary distinguished**

**herself by her worship. God is seeking worshippers like Mary!**

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**Matthew 15:21-28** Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." 23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." 24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." 27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

A Greek woman living in Canaan came to Jesus and worshiped Him – ("prosekunei" – falling prostrate), saying: "Lord, help me!" Mark's rendering of the story states she "fell at His feet" – Mk. 7:25. (Her daughter was demon possessed.)

**What were the elements of her worship?** Prostration – (complete humility); faith in Jesus – (intercession for her daughter); willingness to accept whatever she received from Him – even "crumbs".

**John 4:23-24** "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."**

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## **Part 2**

**Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

**Every day animals were brought to the priests at the temple in Jerusalem, to be sacrificed to God for various reasons: sin offerings, burnt offerings, peace offerings, trespass offerings and grain offerings.**

**The book of Leviticus details the processes and procedures involved:**

- **The sacrifice being brought was always a "freewill" offering (Lev. 1:3) *Application: We must also give freewill offerings to God. He seeks "true worshipers" who are not being forced or coerced in any way.***
- **It was a perfect sacrifice, without blemish (Lev. 1:3)**
- **The one bringing the sacrifice (male or female), had to identify with it by laying hands on it (Lev. 1:4) *Application: We no longer just identify with the sacrifice - we enter into the sacrifice of Christ - through baptism.)***

- They didn't just give it to the priests and walk away - they had to kill it themselves (Lev. 1:5) *Application: We must die daily and crucify the works of the flesh as often as necessary.*
- The burning of the sacrifice was a "sweet aroma to the Lord" (Lev. 1:9) *Application: Today, the saints are the "fragrance of Christ" unto God (1 Cor. 2:15)!*
- When a worshiper brought a peace offering of thanksgiving, "a sacrifice of thanksgiving" to God, a portion of it was returned to him to have a feast with his family and friends (Lev. 7:15-17; 22:29-30; Jer. 33:11; Heb. 13:15) *Application: This is why praise and thanksgiving to God feels so good to us personally - the Lord returns a blessing to us when we bring Him an offering of thanksgiving!*
- The priest made atonement for the sinner (Lev. 4:20,26,31,35; Lev. 5:6,10,13,16,18) *Application: Through the act of sacrificial worship, we receive forgiveness of sins and atonement with God - through Jesus Christ.*

To reiterate, here's the big difference between OT and NT sacrifices. OT sacrifices were selected and brought to the temple by their owners. They had absolutely no say in the matter - they were just brute beasts. **However, in the NT, the one bringing the sacrifice also becomes the sacrifice!** It began with Jesus and continues with us. We present our bodies as living sacrifices to God, of our own free will. This sacrifice is totally reasonable in light of the fact that Jesus freely offered Himself for us and to us as a living sacrifice

(knowing full well He would soon become a dead sacrifice)!

Would we be willing to become “living sacrifices” if we knew for certain it would lead us to painful, torturous deaths? In our minds, however, we need to live as those who “die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31) and have been “crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). To be true worshipers, we must do this willingly, with thanksgiving, unto our God and High Priest who alone is worthy of our worship.

Of course, this discussion leads us to a horrible conclusion. We quickly see that **our sacrifice is unacceptable unto God due to our imperfections. He requires a perfect, unblemished sacrifice.**

However (God be praised), He has made an exception for us! It is hidden away in Lev. 22:23.

Lev. 22:23 Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short **you may offer as a freewill offering**, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

If a worshiper brought a *freewill peace offering of thanksgiving* to God, He would accept an imperfect sacrifice! *Application: Christ was the perfect sacrifice for sin, substituting Himself for us all, because we were totally imperfect. In our imperfection, however, we are still permitted to bring ourselves to God as sacrifices of thanksgiving.*

We also offer ourselves in “spirit ...” (John 4:23-24). In this context, the spirit is “a part of the human personality”, “the source and seat of insight, feeling and will...as the representative part of the inner life of man”. Worship in spirit is “the pure, inner worship of God, that has nothing to do [with] holy times, places ... or ceremonies” (Walter

**Bauer, *A Greek – English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 675).**

**True worship as a living sacrifice empowers the praise of our lips. Rev. 7:9-10, 13-17 speaks of those gathered around the throne. They are righteous – white robes. They have come to honor Jesus as king – palm branches. They have been through many trials – great tribulation. They’ve been hungry and thirsty and they’ve worked hard through the heat of the day. They’ve had to cry sometimes, so God has to wipe the tears from their eyes. But on that day – the day Jesus is crowned Lord – they are there *with* Him, with loud praise on their lips *to* Him. True worship empowers praise!**

**Am I a living sacrifice? Do I have the attitude and actions of a sacrifice – no negative response or resistance to the activity of the priest on my flesh? Have I upgraded from being a ‘dead’ sacrifice to a ‘living’ sacrifice? A sacrifice who joyfully offers myself to God? A submitted sacrifice who is daily thankful to God for the privilege of being a sacrifice?**

**Let us grasp the significance of the incredible privilege we have of worshiping God, sending a beautiful fragrance up to heaven and receiving His atonement for our sins as we worship Him in spirit and in truth.**



## Appendix:

“An essential oil is a concentrated, **hydrophobic liquid** containing volatile **aroma compounds** from **plants**. Essential oils are also known as volatile or ethereal oils, or simply as the "oil of" the plant from which they were extracted, such as *oil of clove*. An **oil** is "essential" in the sense that it carries a distinctive scent, or essence, of the plant. Essential oils do not as a group need to have any specific chemical properties in common, beyond conveying characteristic fragrances.

Today, most common essential oils, such as lavender, peppermint, and eucalyptus, are distilled. Raw plant material, consisting of the **flowers, leaves, wood, bark, roots, seeds, or peel**, is put into an **alembic** (distillation apparatus) over **water**. As the water is heated the steam passes through the plant material, vaporizing the volatile compounds. The vapors flow through a coil where they condense back to liquid, which is then collected in the receiving vessel.

Prior to the discovery of distillation, all essential oils were extracted by pressing.”

(Wikipedia)