

Sermon Series: "Worship that goes beyond the 'warm and fuzzy'"—Lord of Life Lutheran—4/22/2001

Title: "Basic Worship"

Text: John 4: 10-24

Introduction: *Illus.: Whose worship is it, anyway?*

Theme: Getting back to the fundamentals of worship will keep us from being distracted by useless wrangling over worship and will help us to offer worship that is truly given in *'spirit and truth.'*

### ***Worship is receiving a gift (vs. 10-12)***

- Often we consciously/subconsciously come with a "you owe me" worship attitude
  1. Actually at times we affront God with our attitudes(vs. 11) and with our demands for the worship experience
  2. **ILLUS.: Worship that God wants**
- Worship is about the Giver not the receivers
  1. The word for *worship* in this text is *proskuneo*—literally means "to throw oneself down at the mercy of the king"
  2. *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*
  3. God doesn't give us what we deserve but He gives us what we need
  4. Our response as a gracious receiver is to acknowledge and thank Him for His gracious giving

### ***Worship is moving from being a consumer to being a producer (vs. 13-15)***

- Often we come to worship with our own agendas to quench our *'thirsts'*
  1. Thirsts for pleasure and entertainment
  2. Thirsts for self-worth and self-help models to imitate
  3. Thirsts for belonging---club or support groups
  4. **ILLUS.: QUENCHING OUR THIRST ON 'LIVING WATER'**
- Jesus comes in our worship to quench our thirst once and for all
  1. Living water of forgiveness, peace, purpose, hope which you can't buy anywhere else
    - *"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Isaiah 55:1*
  2. He wants to create a *'gusher of life'* within us which can't be stopped up but overflows to others
    - *Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" John 7: 37-38*

### ***Worship is stripping off the masks and being 'honest to God' (vs. 16-22)***

- When you come to worship God, be prepared for something you did not expect
  1. When we come face to face with Jesus in worship we are confronted by his holiness and our sinfulness
  2. The women became defensive when Jesus confronted a portion of her life/heart she not ready to lay at God's feet
  3. Worship in the presence of God will confront areas of my life which are still my little "Buddhas," causing discomfort
- With that discomfort we can react in one or more ways with our worship
  1. **Reaction**—getting distracted on side issues of church and worship—style, shortcomings, imperfection
  2. **Rejection**—stop coming altogether
  3. **Resistance**—denial and false facades which only raises the discomfort in our participation and our eventual fall out
  4. **Repentance**—which leads to godly sorrow, confession, release, and powerful living and worship

### ***Worship is being Spirit-led and authentic (vs. 23-24)***

- Focusing the *'authenticity'* on the right object
  1. **Illus.: True Worship Experience**
  2. God-pleasing worship responds to God's gracious leading to His truths for our lives which frees us to respond more
  3. **ILLUS.:** The Latin root of "authority" and "authentic" means "that which allows growth and life."
  4. Giving each other the right to worship in the manner the Spirit leads us as long as it celebrates God for Christ's sake
- Authentic worship generates from the Truth
  1. **ILLUS.:** "Our emotions become worship when, in response to a truth about God, we give something back to God."
  2. It starts with being Christ-centered and Word empowered in our worship
    - *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. John 14: 6*
    - *"If you abide in My word...you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31-32*
  3. It involves being led by the Spirit to offer a humble spirit before the Lord, our God.

- *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. James 4: 8, 10*

### **Whose Worship Is it, Anyway?**

DURING a readiness exercise, my friend Jim and I, Air Force security policemen, were guarding entry to a bunker-like structure where aircraft were kept. When a pilot about to do a preflight check approached without his identification in plain view, Jim asked him for it. "I don't see why I have to show you my ID," the pilot snapped. "After all, it is my plane." "Sir, with all due respect, it may be your plane," replied Jim, "but it's sitting in my garage!" --Contributed to "Humor In Uniform" by Sgt. David J. Cox, Readers' Digest

### **Worship that God wants**

Early in our marriage I gave my wife a terrific anniversary gift: a rain gauge. At least *I* thought it was a great gift. Susan, after all, is a farmer's daughter and keeps close watch on the weather. I envisioned her delight and nostalgia while tracking our back yard precipitation. I congratulated myself on my creativity. Guess what? Susan was not impressed: "A rain gauge—for our anniversary?!" The rain gauge is now a family joke, a classic example of a gift enjoyed by the giver but not the receiver. One word I hear a lot these days is *authentic*, as in "we seek authentic worship." Usually this means we're trying to create an experience that helps worshipers feel something. Nothing wrong with that, but if our focus is only on our experience, we may be giving God a rain gauge. Are we offering in worship a gift we enjoy and figuring God will like it? A real gift, real worship, means knowing what's important to The Receiver.

*Citation: Marshall Shelley*

### **Quenching our thirst on 'living water'**

In his book *Sahara Unveiled*, William Langewiesche tells the story of an Algerian named Lag Lag and a companion whose truck broke down while crossing the desert: They nearly died of thirst during the three weeks they waited before being rescued. As their bodies dehydrated, they became willing to drink anything in hopes of quenching their terrible thirst. The sun forced them into the shade under the truck, where they dug a shallow trench. Day after day they lay there. They had food, but did not eat, fearing it would magnify their thirst. Dehydration, not starvation, kills wanderers in the desert, and thirst is the most terrible of all human sufferings. In Lag Lag's case, they might say he progressed from *eudipsia*, "ordinary thirst," through bouts of *hyperdipsia*, meaning "temporary intense thirst," to *polydipsia*, "sustained excessive thirst." The lexicon has not kept up with technology. Radiator water is what Lag Lag and his assistant started into when good drinking water was gone. In order to survive, they were willing to drink, in effect, poison. Many people do something similar in the spiritual realm. They depend on things like money, sex, and power to quench spiritual thirst. Unfortunately, such "thirst quenchers" are in reality spiritual poison, a dangerous substitute for the "living water" Jesus promised.

### **True Worship Experience**

I am dismayed by the popular phrase "worship experience" and "authentic worship" to describe the church's corporate worship. Worship has the capacity to transform us, because it focuses our hearts and minds on God--God seen in one another, in ourselves and in the world around us. However, the phrases "worship experience" and "authentic worship" suggests that worship is important because it induces feelings or personal response. In this context worship is focused more on the worshiper than on the One worshiped.... We need to ask ourselves what a true worship experience is so that if we had one, we could recognize it. *Citation: Mark Horst*

### **John 4:10-24**

Jesus replied to her, "If you only knew what God's gift is and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him for a drink. He would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, you don't have anything to use to get water, and the well is deep. So where are you going to get this living water?" <sup>12</sup>You're not more important than our ancestor Jacob, are you? He gave us this well. He and his sons and his animals drank water from it."

<sup>13</sup>Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks this water will become thirsty again. <sup>14</sup>But those who drink the water that I will give them will never become thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give them will become in them a spring that gushes up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup>The woman told Jesus, "Sir, give me this water! Then I won't get thirsty or have to come here to get water."

<sup>16</sup>Jesus told her, "Go to your husband, and bring him here." <sup>17</sup>The woman replied, "I don't have a husband." Jesus told her, "You're right when you say that you don't have a husband. <sup>18</sup>You've had five husbands, and the man you have now isn't your husband. You've told the truth." <sup>19</sup>The woman said to Jesus, "I see that you're a prophet! <sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews say that people must worship in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup>Jesus told her, "Believe me. A time is coming when you Samaritans won't be worshiping the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You don't know what you're worshiping. We Jews know what we're worshiping, because salvation comes from the Jews.

<sup>23</sup>Indeed, the time is coming, and it is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. The Father is looking for people like that to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is a spirit. Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." [GW]