

Sermon Notes for February 20, 2005

Sermon Series on Worship
“Jesus’ View of Worship”
John 4:1-26

A woman entered a Haagen-Dazs store on the Kansas City Plaza for an ice-cream cone. After making her selection, she turned and found herself face to face with **Paul Newman**. He was in town filming the movie Mr. And Mrs. Bridge. Newman’s blue eyes caused her knees to buckle. She managed to pay for her cone, then left the shop, heart pounding. When she gained her composure, she realized she didn’t have her cone. She started back to the store to get it and met Newman at the door. **“Are you looking for your ice-cream cone?”** he asked. She nodded, unable to speak. **“You put it in your purse with your change.”** Now, that was worship.

Introduction

A. We Are In The Middle Of A WORSHIP REFORMATION.

1. **My own background** (and probably yours).
 - a. we sang only hymns FROM THE HYMN BOOK
 1. you NEVER would sing a chorus
 2. you only sang “those kinds of songs” at church camp
 - b. there would usually be three hymns from the hymnbook, a special by the choir and then the message
 - c. I have to admit, even today when I go to a church that sings only hymns:
 1. I don’t think about what I am singing
 2. and . . . I begin to yawn a lot
2. **My own growth personally.**
 - a. I had experienced this style of worship until I came to Knoxville.
 1. I was exposed to all types of churches and all styles of worship.
 - a. totally traditional
 - b. totally contemporary
 1. drums, electric guitars
 2. drama
 - c. and those, like us, who blend
 2. I have to admit it has been an “interesting ride” since we started Christ Covenant.
 - b. but I still ask myself, is what we are seeing in churches today what God wants? What God desires?
 1. there is a battle
 2. look at some current books
 - a. **Putting an End to Worship Wars** – Elmer Towns
 - b. **Contemporary Worship Music** – John Frame
 - c. but, let me say publicly that Gabe Loving, our worship leader, has graciously and successfully led us to a good, blended worship style
3. **Our growth as a church.**
 - a. I am so excited about moving into our new home
 1. we will go from a room that has the worst acoustics I have ever “not” heard

2. to a room that could have some of the best acoustics that I will ever hear
- b. but . . .
 1. I am somewhat concerned that we may think that we will be able to worship more “effectively” . . .
 2. that we can “really worship” now that we are in a building
- c. in his book Worship, **A.P. Gibbs** describes the false, heavily ritualistic worship of many contemporary churches:

“Much of the so-called “public worship” in Christendom, is merely a form of **Christianized Judaism**, and, in some cases, **thinly veiled paganism** . . . In Judaism there was a separate priestly caste who **alone** could conduct the worship of Israel. In Christendom a manmade priesthood called “**the clergy**,” is essential to its worship, in spite of the plain teaching of the New Testament **that all believers are priests**. These priests of Judaism wore a distinctive dress, as also does the clergy. Judaism emphasized **an earthly sanctuary, or building**. In like manner, Christendom makes much of its consecrated “**places of worship**,” and miscalls the edifice “**a church**,” and refers to it as “**the house of God**.” Jewish priests had an altar on which were offered sacrifices to God. Christendom has erected “altars” in these ornate buildings, before which candles burn and incense is offered and, in many cases, on which a wafer is kept, which is looked upon as the body of Christ! **It is hardly necessary to say that all this copying of Judaism is absolutely foreign to the teaching of the New Testament.**”

B. We Are In Danger Of WORSHIP MISINFORMATION.

1. **NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE DO WE FIND A MODEL OF WHAT WE OFTEN SEE IN CHURCHES TODAY.**
 - a. from the extreme liturgical and traditional church
 - b. to the more contemporary churches
2. So, without a doubt, **NO ONE** can rightfully say that **THEIRS IS** the Biblical model.
 - a. because if the truth be known, the only real model that we have of a worship service is in **I Corinthians 12-14**
 - b. if you want a model, **THERE IS YOUR MODEL!**
3. I like these definitions of worship:

Worship is a broad term. Some have said that it defies explanation. **Merriam-Webster** defines worship as, “**to honor or reverence as a divine being or supernatural power**” or “**to regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion**” following up with “to perform or take part in worship or an act of worship.” Three **Thesaurus** entries for worship include: **revere, adore and love**. **Rick Warren** in The Purpose-Driven Life says, “**Anything you do that brings pleasure to God is an act of worship.**” **Ralph Martin** states, “**Worship is the dramatic celebration of God in His supreme worth in such a manner that His worthiness becomes the norm and inspiration of human living.**” **William Temples** says, “**Worship is the submission of all our nature to God.**”

4. Why don't we go back to Scripture and allow Jesus to define what true worship is.
 - a. **BECAUSE – worship is the MOST important thing that we can do on this earth:**
 1. **Karl Barth – “Christian worship is the most momentous, urgent, the most glorious action that can take place in human life.”**
 2. **ALSO . . . LOOK AT WHAT MUST HAPPEN IN WORSHIP**
 - a. **John 3:7** – “You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You **must** be born again.’”
 - b. **John 3:14** – “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man **must** be lifted up.”
 - c. **John 4:24** – “God is spirit, and his worshipers **must** worship in spirit and in truth.”
 - d. **must**
 1. Greek dei
 2. **it is necessary; right and proper; a decree of God**
 - e. what God is saying is that **WORSHIP IS NOT OPTIONAL!**
 2. now, if worship is the most important thing that we must do, don't you want to know:
 - a. what worship is
 - b. and how to do it for more than one hour a week?
 - b. and we will learn what worship is from a most unlikely source
 - c. Jesus will define for us worship through an ungodly, immoral woman

I. The ENCOUNTER With The Samaritan Woman.

A. The Woman Was SURPRISED.

1. The HISTORY of the Samaritans.

- a. in **721 B.C.**, the **Northern Kingdom**, Israel, was taken off into captivity by the **Assyrians**
 1. they would not only be conquered by them, but the Jews as well would intermarry and take on some of their pagan practices
 2. those who remained in Israel would begin to practice a different kind of Judaism
- b. in **587 B.C.** **Babylon** likewise conquered the **Southern Kingdom** of Judah and took them off into captivity for 70 years
 1. however, these Jews did not lose their Jewishness; they remained consistent with their view of Jehovah God
 2. in 450 B.C. when the Southern Kingdom returned from Babylon, they began to restore the sacrificial system in Jerusalem
 - a. upon their return, Jews from the Assyria - conquered north, came down to attempt to rejoin with the Southern Jews
 - b. however, the Southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin would not associate with this “adulterated” Northern Kingdom of Israel

- c. so, with no place to worship, the Northern Kingdom created their own place of worship – Mt. Gerazim, located in Samaria
 - 1. during the time of Alexander the Great, the Samaritans built their own Temple because they thought that this was the place that Adam was formed and the place he built his first altar
 - 2. there were three routes from Galilee to Jerusalem
 - a. by the sea
 - b. across the country to avoid Samaria
 - c. through Samaria – the shortest route – this was the one Jesus took
 - 3. Jews did not even recognize Samaritans
 - a. **“Let no man eat the bread of the Samaritans, for he who eats this bread is as he who eats swine’s flesh.”**
 - b. **a popular prayer – “And Lord, do not remember the Samaritans in the resurrection.”**
- d. as a result, the Jews hated the Samaritans

2. The HURT of women.

- a. not only was she a Samaritan, she also was a woman
- b. the practice of Orthodox Jews was to give no opportunity to even consider another woman
 - 1. strict rabbis were forbidden to greet women in public
 - 2. some were called “bruised and bleeding” Pharisees because when they saw a woman, they would close their eyes, and then bump into walls and houses as they walked about
 - 3. a strict rabbi would not even speak to his own wife, daughter or sister in public

B. Jesus Was SPIRITUAL.

- 1. Notice what **Jesus asked the woman - Vs. 7 – “Will you give me a drink?”**
 - a. it is 12:00 noon – the heat of the day
 - 1. MOST women would come early in the morning to avoid the heat of the sun
 - 2. by coming at high noon, this woman wanted to avoid anyone else at the well
 - 3. she was looked on as an immoral woman and probably chose her times carefully to get this water
 - b. **JESUS ASKS HER A QUESTION!**
 - 1. **He engages her** in conversation
 - 2. He asks her for a drink **FROM HER BUCKET!**
- 2. Notice what the woman says to Jesus – **vs. 9 – “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink.?”**
 - a. The woman is stunned. A Jewish man was asking a Samaritan woman for a drink.
 - b. Jesus has definitely gotten her attention

II. The EVASIVENESS Of The Samaritan Woman.

A. She Was STARTLED.

- 1. Jesus asks about her husband.
 - a. Jesus is loving but direct – **vs. 16 – “Go, call your husband and come back.”**

1. before Jesus can talk to her about her spiritual life, He must talk to her about her sin
2. but notice **HOW** Jesus does this – **LOOK AT HIS GRACE!**
 - a. **HE DOESN'T START PREACHING AT HER ABOUT HER ADULTERY**
 1. He knew that she had 5 husbands and was currently living with a man
 2. He allows her to see her own sin, but doesn't dwell on her sin
 - b. Jesus does this in other situations:
 1. He asks the **man at the pool** – “**Do you want to get well?**”
 2. before feeding the 5,000, **Jesus asks Philip**, “**Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?**”
 3. after **washing the disciples' feet** in the Upper room He asked, “**Do you understand what I have done for you?**”
 4. on the **road to Emmaus** after His crucifixion, He asked the men “**What are you discussing together as you walk along?**”
 - c. His love for this lost woman was overwhelming
 1. there was no judgment
 2. He knew that her problem was not the number of husbands, but the need for a new heart!
2. She finally admits that she is guilty of adultery.
 - a. how can she not!
 - b. but notice what she does next! **Vs. 19-20** – “Sir,” the woman said, “**I can see that you are a prophet.** Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”
 1. she has been “cornered” and runs like a rabbit
 2. **SHE CHANGES THE SUBJECT!**

B. Jesus Was SECURE.

1. You must notice here the difference in the way that Jesus dealt with Nicodemus and the woman at the well.
 - a. with **Nicodemus He was direct** – allowing no detours at all
 1. in fact, when Nicodemus attempts to use words to flatter Jesus, Jesus immediately calls him on it and confronts him
 2. Nicodemus had no excuse - he had been steeped in the Scriptures and should have known better
 - b. but the **woman at the well had “no clue”**
 1. so Jesus allows the “run down the rabbit trail”
 2. He will “take whatever this lost woman will give Him”
 3. Jesus deals with her in love
 - a. John Stott – “Our failures in evangelism are so often failures in love.”

b. “People want to know that we care before they care about what we know.”

2. But also notice her question – **It is a question about WORSHIP!**

a. now, was this merely a red herring?

b. or had she seen her sin so much that she realized that she would have to make a sacrifice for it. Had she simply been exposed by Jesus?

III. The EXPLANATION To The Samaritan Woman.

A. The Woman Was CONFUSED About Worship.

1. Whatever the reason was as to why the Samaritan woman asked Jesus about worship:

a. she was the **most unlikely person to even care about worship**

b. but now the immoral woman was about to hear from Jesus what true worship was

1. why would Jesus talk to an immoral woman about worship?

2. where were the:

a. pastors

b. worship leaders

c. musicians

d. those who would want to hear what He had to say about worship?

e. why waste such good information on a sinner?

2. Not only was the woman confused about worship, so are we.

B. Jesus Was CLEAR About Worship.

1. **Worship IS NOT about a BUILDING. Vs. 21** – Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father **neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.**”

a. Jesus is telling the Samaritan woman that **TIMES ARE GOING TO CHANGE**

1. up to now, people had worshipped in particular places – especially the Jews

2. but that was going to change

3. **after Jesus’ death on the cross, IT WOULDN’T MATTER WHERE YOU WORSHIP!**

b. the Temple was God’s ordained place of worship

1. there the sacrifices **HAD** to take place

a. but that was the need of the Temple

b. sacrifices had to be made **UNTIL . . .**

2. until **THE SACRIFICE** was to be made

a. and after that, **IT DIDN’T MATTER WHERE YOU WORSHIPPED!**

b. in fact, God allowed the Romans to level the Temple in 70 A.D.

c. **JESUS IS DESTROYING THE CONCEPT THAT WORSHIP CAN ONLY OCCUR IN A CERTAIN PLACE.**

1. He is **REDEFINING** worship

a. it doesn’t have to take place in a building

b. you don’t have to be in a church sanctuary

2. we have **MISSED THIS POINT!**

- a. **if we can only worship in a building, then MOST OF OUR LIFE WILL NOT BE ONE OF WORSHIP!**
 - b. EVEN if you are very consistent in coming to church, you will worship **ONLY ONCE A WEEK!**
 - c. **Pastor Don Jaques** rightly said: “I have felt God’s presence **sitting silently in a monastery chapel**. I have experienced him while **listening to contemporary worship music in my car**. I have encountered unbelievable joy while **standing amidst a throng of worshipers in a loud concert setting**. I have connected with God **singing ancient hymns with a pipe organ**. I have heard God speak to me through **speakers both dynamic and not so dynamic**. The place and the forms of worship are **not** what determines if true worship happens. **True worship happens when you declare the greatness of God and your submission to Him with your inner being without any falseness.”**
 - d. history has GREATLY missed Jesus’ point
 1. until 323 A.D., it was illegal to be a Christian
 - a. Christians met in homes, in caves, in the catacombs
 - b. **BUT THEY WORSHIPPED!**
 2. after 323 A.D., we saw for the first time the building of cathedrals and places of worship
 3. which continues until today
 - a. some are ornate – Rome
 - b. some are very plain – Romania
 - c. some have worshipped in both – M. Luther in Wittenberg, Germany
 4. but Jesus is CLEARLY saying that **IT DOESN’T MATTER WHERE OR HOW YOU WORSHIP! – AND ALLOW OTHERS THIS FREEDOM!**
2. Worship **IS all about BALANCE.**
- a. “True worshippers will worship the Father in **SPIRIT.**”
 1. notice here that in the Greek there is no definite article; **the** spirit
 - a. if a the were in front of spirit, it would probably refer to the Holy Spirit
 - b. without the article the, it simply refers to a person’s spirit
 - c. **in other words, Jesus is saying that true worship is done WITHIN A PERSON’S SPIRIT**
 2. we must realize that we are **Trinitarian - I Thess. 5:23** – “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - a. **our true self**
 1. **body** – our physical **flesh**
 2. **soul** – our individual personalities

3. **spirit** – the **spiritual side of EVERYONE!**
 - a. **EVERY HUMAN BEING HAS A SPIRITUAL SIDE**
 - b. **THUS . . . THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN ATHEIST**
 1. an atheist may have “unlearned” his spirituality
 2. but at one time he was a – theist
- b. **our true worship**
 1. Jesus is saying here that **our “spiritual side” must be engaged**
 - a. our spirits **must** be engaged in order to worship
 - b. **Pastor Jeffrey Anselmi** rightly said: “This does not mean that we have to know EVERYTHING about God before we can truly worship **Him, but it means that we cannot properly worship whom we do not know.”**
 2. there is always a danger that:
 - a. while our bodies are present in worship
 - b. and our personalities may be engaged in worship
 - c. our inner spirit may be disengaged
 - d. **THIS** is exactly what Paul prayed for in **Ephesians 3:14-17** – “For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit **in your inner being**, so that Christ may **dwell in your hearts** through faith.”
3. what does this say about **how most of us come to worship?**
 - a. we walk into a worship service expecting that something **EXTERNAL** must lead me into worship
 - b. and that if this external experience doesn’t happen, then I won’t worship
 - c. thus, the pressure is on the worship team and musicians to “help you worship”
 - d. **it may be entirely possible that one of the hardest places to worship is a church building!!!**
 1. we are so conscious of the performers that we do not focus on God
 - a. was the music good?
 - b. did I like the selection?
 - c. did I enjoy the sermon?

2. **one has said: “I wonder sometimes if the very fact of the existence of churches doesn’t block the spiritual reality of what the Bible teaches?”**
- e. **C.S. Lewis** – “As long as you **notice**, and have to count the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. **A good shoe is a shoe you don’t notice.** Good reading becomes possible when you need **not consciously think about eyes, or light, or print, or spelling.** The perfect church service would be the one we were almost unaware of; **our attention would have been on God.**”
- f. **A.W. Pink** – “The **more spiritual** is our worship, the **less formal and less attractive to the flesh will it be.** Modern “worship” is chiefly designed to render it pleasing to the **flesh!** – a bright and attractive service, with beautiful surroundings, sensuous music, and entertaining talks.”
4. folks, let me tell you what I believe **MUST HAPPEN** to truly worship in your spirit
 - a. **FIRST of all, your heart must be filled with the Holy Spirit BEFORE you enter any worship service**
 1. BECAUSE you have dealt with your sin all week long – because you have confessed your sin – you enter the sanctuary as clean
 2. so that when you enter the worship area, you are **ALREADY** in a place of worship; you simply will be worshipping with other believers who **ALSO** are Spirit-filled
 3. basically, you have dealt with the Lordship of **SELF BEFORE YOU CAME IN THE SERVICE!**
 - a. when **SELF** is the judge and focus on how worship is going,
 - b. you will never see the Lord
 - c. **John McArthur** – “No one can worship in spirit until he dies to the flesh. **We must set self aside – die to self and be lost in worshipping God.**”
 - b. **SECOND of all, you have spent the ENTIRE WEEK in GOD’S PRESENCE**
 1. in His Word, mediating
 2. in His Word, **WORSHIPPING**
 3. don’t expect to worship on Sunday, if you haven’t worshipped Monday – Saturday
 - c. and **THIRD, you must move from an entertainment model to an engaging model**

1. don't expect the worship leader to create your worship
 2. you must engage your own heart with what is being offered in the service
 3. in some ways, you must become more "proactive" than "reactive" in our worship (Burchette)
- d. **FOURTH and finally, realize that you are NOT the audience in worship, God is!**
1. when you say, "I didn't worship," you are saying more about yourself than true worship itself
 2. notice that Jesus says, true worshippers worship the **FATHER . . .**
 - a. unless you have been focused on the Father, you have not worshipped
 - b. unless you are more in awe and in love with Him, you have not worshipped
 - c. unless you are singing His praise AS YOU LEAVE, you have not worshipped. You have simply been to a presentation
- b. "True worshippers must worship the Father both in spirit and **TRUTH.**"
1. there is an inherent danger in many churches today
 - a. with such an emphasis on emotional worship, there has been a lack of emphasis on truth
 - b. we must see here that Jesus says true (good, balanced) worshippers worship the Father BOTH . . . in spirit and in truth!
 2. and I want Christ Covenant to be that church – How do we do that?
 - a. **FIRST, we are committed to the inerrant Word of God**
 1. **THAT IS OUR TRUTH;** not books, articles; emotions of people or what has worked in other churches
 2. the Word of God must guide us and feed us
 - b. **SECOND, we as individuals are to LIVE IN THAT WORD ALL THROUGH THE WEEK**
 1. **don't expect to gain a great deal in the service when you have not been spending personal time in God's Word each day**
 2. it is as if your heart is hard and no matter what seeds I put out, they may not find a fertile ground
 3. **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** asked, "Why is it that some people are often in a **place of worship** and **yet they're not holy? It is because they neglect their closets.** They love

the wheat but they do not grind it; they would have the corn but they will not go forth into the field to gather it; the fruit hangs on the tree but they will not pluck it; **and the water flows at their feet but they'll not stoop to drink it."**

- c. **THIRD, we are as a corporate body to teach and preach THAT WORD!**
 - 1. **styles of preaching**
 - a. topical sermons
 - b. textural sermons
 - c. expository sermons
 - 2. **results of preaching**
 - a. Biblical preaching
 - b. **Stott – "Our worship is poor because our knowledge of God is poor, and our knowledge of God is poor because our preaching is poor."**
- d. **FOURTH, we are to worship "truthfully"**
 - 1. honestly, without "airs," **but with complete candor about how we are truly doing**
 - 2. do not lift up hands in worship that are covered in the blood when you are "murdering" others

Conclusion:

- 1. Are you seeing it? **Corporate worship is the CULMINATION of the personal worship that you do throughout the week.**
 - a. much like a race is the culmination of training all week
 - b. you can't just turn worship on and off on your whims
- 2. **No amount** of music and preaching can touch a heart that does not **enter** the worship area **ALREADY worshipping.**
- 3. Worship is **not** about a **place**. It is about a **person** who has:
 - a. **been touched in his deepest soul with the worship of God** – a God he has seen in:
 - 1. nature
 - 2. his grace through salvation
 - 3. his blessings
 - 4. in personal prayer
 - b. **who has been taught and directed in a daily mediation and study of God's Word**
 - 1. as he has lived out the Word of God in his own life
 - 2. only to hear it confirmed and further explained in the service
- 4. Corporate worship is not the beginning of worship; it is the CULUMINATION of worship.

5. “A number of years ago there was a newspaper account of a **christening party in a wealthy Boston suburb**. The parents had opened their palatial home to friends and relatives, who had come to celebrate the wonderful event. As the party was moving along and the people were having a wonderful time eating and drinking and celebrating and enjoying one another, somebody said, **“By the way, where is the baby?”**

The heart of that mother jumped, and she instantly left the room and rushed into the master bedroom, where she had left the baby asleep in the middle of the massive bed. **The baby was dead, smothered by the coats of the guests.**

I've often thought about that in reference to how the Lord Jesus is treated in His own church. We are busy supposedly celebrating Him, while He is smothered by the coats of the guests.

1. What was your experience in worship when you were growing up? (Was it formal, informal, etc.)
2. Considering all of the variety of ways that churches worship. Which do you believe is the most Biblical?
3. Is it easier or harder for you to worship in a church building? What may help or hinder you to worship when you attend church services?
4. What do the two words “spirit and truth” mean relative to worship?
5. What could happen in a church that is totally focused on “spirit” to the exclusion of “truth?” What about a church that is focused on “truth” to the exclusion of spirit?
6. Is Jesus talking about corporate (church) or personal worship when He speaks of worship?
7. Does worship take place only on Sunday? If not, how should we worship during the week? How will your Sunday worship be affected if you do not worship during the week?