

Wednesday, November 8, 2017 - Not All of Life is Worship

In John 4:23-24, we are told we are to "worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (v.23). Furthermore, we are told that we "must worship him in spirit and in truth" (v.24). Notice the elements for proper worship: "spirit" and "truth." To worship in spirit means that we must have the right attitude in worshipping the Father. God does not want our worship to be vain or insincere. Spiritual worship is that which is done from a pure heart, and in accordance with God's will (this is not to be confused with emotion).

Where has the false doctrine that "All Life Is Worship" originated from? The false doctrine that all of life is worship derives from a misunderstanding of Romans 12:1, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Some versions and paraphrases like the NASV and NIV translate this passage incorrectly. For example, the NASV reads, "which is your spiritual service of worship," and that is quite an unfortunate translation. Other translations say "which is your reasonable service" (KJV, NKJV) or "which is your spiritual service" (ASV). The Greek word for worship is NOT even found in this verse and was supplied by translators, just like the word "Unknown" in 1 Corinthians 14:2, which has caused lots of false doctrines as well. The Greek word they translated as service is "latreian," which means service, and can mean spiritual service. And the Greek word for worship is "proskenuo" which, again, is not found in Rom. 12:1. Both of these words or variations of them are found in Matthew 4:10, where there the Bible says, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." This passage clearly demonstrates a distinction between worship and spiritual service.

Beyond the meaning of the Greek words, scripture provides us a number of examples that prove worship has intent, thus a beginning and an end. Everything that we do is not worship to God. The danger of this position is that there is no prescribed way for worshipping him. There would be no difference in playing basketball to the glory of God than singing psalms and hymns. Such thinking has lead to brethren setting aside the acts of worship and believing they are still pleasing in his sight. The Bible clearly teaches that worship has a beginning point (Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9,17; Mark 5:6; John 9:38; Hebrews 11:21) and an ending point (Luke 24:52) and that worship does involve a "when" and a "where" (John 12:20; Acts 8:27; 24:11). Everything we do is not worship.

Please study these examples:

Abraham, said, "... I and the lad will go yonder and worship . . ." (Genesis 22:5). Abraham was not worshipping when God commanded him to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22:1). Nor was Abraham worshipping as he traveled the road to the land of Moriah.

David was not worshipping God when he was mourning for his dying child. But when word came of the child's death, David changed his clothes and went "... into the house of the Lord, and worshipped" (2 Sam. 12:20).

Philip was charged to go down unto Gaza where he found a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Queen Candace. He had come to Jerusalem, according to Acts 8:27, to worship. The verb in this verse "had come" is from the Greek word elelethai, which is in the third person singular pluperfect tense. The pluperfect expresses the same action as the past perfect tense, and thus expresses action completed before a stated or known time in the

past. Sometime prior to Philip's joining himself to the Ethiopian, the proselyte had traveled to Jerusalem where he entered into worship, and ceased that worship before returning home.

We must worship in Spirit. True worship comes from the heart. You must be an active participant, not just an onlooker. New Testament worship is spiritual. When we understand that acceptable worship comes from the heart, materialism and irreverent distractions (being late, laughing, talking, whispering, writing notes, clock watching, etc) will automatically be eliminated from services. Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they gave external, word-only worship without heartfelt motivation. We need to cultivate a deep awareness of God in our services.

We must worship in truth. We are not permitted to do anything we wish and call it worship unto God. That has been true from the beginning as seen in Gen. 4:2-5 with the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Jesus shows us in John 17:17, as he is praying to God, that God's word is the truth. How would one transgress the truth in regards to worship? By adding to or subtracting from what God has prescribed in the New Testament.

Brethren, some preachers are trying to affect radical change in the church as we know it today. The "all of life is worship" concept is a step in that direction. This concept, however, lacks divine foundation and must to be rejected.

God helps us to worship him with hearts that are filled with sincerity, and with deep sense of humility and gratitude. May we always stay focused upon worshipping him in accordance with his revealed will.