

## Tuesday, March 6, 2018 – Worship, in Spirit and in Truth

**"God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).**

The complaints associated with Sunday's sermon on worship were expected. Of all the topics preached about, worship hits a hot button with people; especially when it comes to singing in worship. I heard that instruments weren't wrong, humming wasn't wrong, clapping wasn't wrong, etc. My response to them was simple: please provide me book, chapter and verse for your argument. If you can provide instructions from God's word, then let's sit down and discuss. If you are basing your response on feelings, preference, etc., then you have no argument. Where God speaks, that is the end of the discussion.

What seemed to be clearly understood regarding the object and acts of worship authorized by the New Testament fifty years ago has suddenly become muddled and unintelligible for some brethren to comprehend. Practices such as humming, praise teams, partaking of the Lord's Supper on a day other than the first day of the week, celebrating "Christ's birthday", using unauthorized elements as emblems on the Lord's table, mechanical instruments of music, preaching the social gospel, women leading corporate worship, and yard sales to supplement the contribution (to name a few) are becoming accepted in many places.

There seems to be a movement in the Lord's church today to make worship more "meaningful." I recently read of a preacher for one of the congregations in Abilene who said that he would "stand on his head" or do anything else (in the area of theatrics, I suppose) in order to make worship more "meaningful" for members of the church. According to scripture, "meaningful" worship is worship done according to God's will! There is nothing we have to do (either in adding to or taking away from) in order to improve worship. If worship is somehow boring or uninteresting to us then perhaps it's us who need to change, not our methods for worshipping God! It's up to us to find meaning in simple, God-authorized, New Testament worship! It's not difficult: we worship through prayer, taking the Lord's supper, giving of our means (contributing), singing, and hearing the word preached. How can this be made more meaningful?

Some brethren, and even some congregations, have lost sight of the true object of our worship. Our worship to God is a serious matter. Our personal likes and dislikes do not determine how we worship or what we do in worship. God's Word (**John 4:24; Col. 3:17**) determines what we do in worship to God. For our worship to be acceptable to God we must worship in the proper way with the proper motive (**John 4:24**).

Rather than try to conform worship to our tastes, let us conform our hearts to God's divine will (**Rom. 12:2**)!

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. Just because worship "feels good" doesn't mean it's spiritual)! To worship in truth means we must worship in a manner that is pleasing to God, doing only the things which he has prescribed! Why is this important? Because we worship a God of truth (**John 17:17**), a God whom we can know (**John 4:22**) and whose commandments we can understand (**John 8:31-32**).

The Bible speaks of ignorant worship (**Acts 17:23**), vain worship (**Mark 7:7**), creature worship (**Romans 1:25**) and other types of false worship. When men choose through various innovations or tactics to sensationalize the worship in order to appeal to the participants' emotions, does this not make "emotionalism" the object of worship? And when man moves away from the authorized pattern by changing the acts of worship to bring about these "feelings", does he not violate the command to worship as Jesus said in **John 4:24**?

There needs to be a restoration within the Lord's church; a return by some, to the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice.

## 1. Some Misconceptions Concerning Worship

1.1. Worship is some magical ceremonial ritual to insure eternal reward. **WRONG!**

1.1.1. The children of Israel, during the days of Jeremiah, were committing adultery, telling lies, and even offering sacrifices to other gods, thinking they could do these things and not incur the wrath of God; because they were coming before God and his house, from time to time, and paying homage to him. Likewise today, there are men living like the sons of the Devil during the week, then lifting their voices to God on Sunday singing, "Oh, How I Love Jesus."

1.1.2. Numerous examples in **1 Corinthians**.

1.1.3. Worship is not a bargaining item to obtain the blessing of God. He cannot be bribed.

1.2. Worship is placing our loyalty in a body of believers or adoring the building and grounds where the saints meet. **WRONG!** This is a form of idolatry.

1.2.1. Jeremiah was also faced with this kind of attitude among the children of Israel. They believed that as long as the temple of the Lord stood before them in Jerusalem, all was well, and God would be pleased. They kept it maintained and took great pride in her treasure. But Jeremiah said, "Trust not in lying words, saying the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these" (**Jeremiah 7:4**). But they refused to heed the warning, and in verse 8 he proclaimed, "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit." I wonder, how many in the Lord's church believe that as long as they can identify with the congregation in their area and point out the building to some passerby, they feel secure, while true worship and faithfulness are neglected.

1.3. Worship is something we do every minute of every day. **WRONG!** 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 led to brethren setting aside the acts of worship and believing they are still pleasing in his sight. Everything we do is not worship.

1.3.1. 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.

1.3.2. Nor was Abraham worshipping as he traveled the road to the land of Moriah.

1.3.3. 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**).

1.3.4. 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 *elelethei*, 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.

1.4. Worship is for our entertainment, or amusement. **WRONG!** It's commanded by God and designed for our edification (**1 Cor. 14:26**).

- 1.4.1. The chief complaint of most change agents is that worship services have become stale and lifeless. They long for spontaneity. They argue that adding of instrumental music, more charismatic type actions will enliven the service and allow all to enjoy worship.
- 1.4.2. I agree with the premise that there needs to be some changes in the worship service to our Lord, but not by introducing unscriptural and unauthorized acts. The change needs to be in the attitudes of those who come to worship God. Could it be that people don't properly prepare themselves for worship? Think about it. Saturday night, often a night out for many, late to bed. Sunday morning, hard to get up, rushed; with kids even more rushed. When have we had time to center our minds on God? We should hunger and thirst after righteousness (**Matt 5:6**).
- 1.4.3. Christians must be careful lest they fall into the error of substituting entertainment for worship. Do we determine the success of the worship period by an entertainment standard? If the song director does not perform to our liking -- if the preacher's sermon is not entertaining -- many are likely to be disappointed in worship because we expect to be "entertained." Christians do not assemble to be entertained. Christians come together to worship the Lord our God and bring glory and honor to His name through His son Jesus Christ. We should stop "going to church" and begin "going to worship!" When we worship God "in spirit and in truth" then we will be well pleasing to the Lord. This should be our primary concern. Let's consider carefully and cultivate an appreciation for what God has taught us to do in worship according to His Holy Word. Then worship will be given the priority in our life that supersedes any kind of entertainment.
- 1.5. Any kind of worship is pleasing to God. **WRONG!** Only worship, which he has authorized, is pleasing to God!
  - 1.5.1. In the books of the New Testament, we find instructions involving worship.
    - 1.5.1.1. Use bread and fruit of the vine to keep the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11).
    - 1.5.1.2. Sing in the assembly (Col. 3:16, 1 Cor. 14).
    - 1.5.1.3. The question is: How do we apply these instructions?
      - 1.5.1.3.1. Are they just information?
        - 1.5.1.3.1.1. We may **omit** them.
        - 1.5.1.3.1.2. We may **add** other acts.
      - 1.5.1.3.2. Are they requirements but do not set limits on what we can do?
        - 1.5.1.3.2.1. We **must do** them.
        - 1.5.1.3.2.2. We may **add** other acts.
      - 1.5.1.3.3. Are they a pattern to follow?
        - 1.5.1.3.3.1. We **must do** them.
        - 1.5.1.3.3.2. We **must NOT add** other acts.
        - 1.5.1.3.3.3. We **follow them** as God has written them
    - 1.5.1.3.4. How do we know that is the way God expects His instructions to be followed?
      - 1.5.1.3.4.1. We have a passage where God explains how to follow His instructions.
        - 1.5.1.3.4.1.1. It is in Exodus 30 (under Law of Moses).
        - 1.5.1.3.4.1.2. In Exodus 30:1-6, God gives instructions on how to construct the Altar of Incense.
        - 1.5.1.3.4.1.3. In Exodus 30:7-8, He calls for what to offer on that altar: one specific kind of incense (described in verses 34-36).
      - 1.5.1.3.4.2. After saying what He wanted, God explained: (**Exo 30:9 KJV**) ***Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.***
        - 1.5.1.3.4.2.1. Do not offer other **types** of offerings (burnt, meat, drink).
        - 1.5.1.3.4.2.2. Do not offer other **forms** of the **same type** of offering ("strange" incense).

1.5.1.3.4.3. God has explained the way we must follow His instructions: **IF GOD HAS NOT CALLED FOR IT, MAN MUST NOT ADD IT.**

1.5.2. In **Leviticus 10**, Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, violated the instructions, which the Lord had just given to the Israelites regarding the proper way to offer the sacrifice (**see Lev. 9**). Their intentions may very well have been good! Perhaps they wanted to make the worship more "meaningful." But it didn't matter. God had told them what to do in order to offer the sacrifice in a manner pleasing to him. Instead, they "offered strange (or unauthorized) fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (v.1). Did God say they could not offer "strange fire?" No, rather he had clearly dictated how the offering was to be done. Anything more or less than that was unauthorized and unacceptable! What happened to Nadab and Abihu on account of their innovation? "And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (v.2).

1.5.3. Compare Moses' actions in **Exodus 17** and **Numbers 20** versus the instructions he received and how God reacted.

1.5.3.1. Read carefully. Moses **did not do exactly** what God called for on this occasion even though it had been authorized before.

1.5.4. Other examples found in **1 Corinthians**.

1.6. There is nothing unscriptural about Youth Worship, Junior Worship, Children's Bible Hour, or whatever it may be called. **WRONG!** The controversy over split assemblies does not deal with the actions that take place within the worship service, though in some instances it could and should; but with the very nature of the assembly itself. The controversy is: **WHAT IS THE ASSEMBLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?** The very essence, the very being of the assembly is the controversy. Split assemblies is the removal of all or part of the children (or any other group) from the worship service of the Lord's church to another part of the building for a separate service for either part or the entire duration of the service.

1.6.1. When the question of the assembly and its necessity is brought up, the first passage that comes to mind is **Hebrew 10:23-25**.

1.6.1.1. Paul shows the central position of the assembly to the Christian life. It is not to be forsaken; there is not to be a choice made not to attend. To forsake the assembly is to forsake the church, which is to forsake Christ.

1.6.1.2. This passage contains a direct command: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."

1.6.1.3. The word assemble comes from one Greek word, **episunagoge**. It means to assemble together. It occurs only twice in the New Testament, **Hebrews 10:25** and **2 Thessalonians 2:1**. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines it "a gathering together in one place." The direct command of the Scriptures is for each congregation to assemble together in one place.

1.6.1.4. Not only do we have the direct command, we have examples illustrating the command. The most common word in describing the assembly of the saints is **sunerchomai**. This word means to come together and is used 34 times in the New Testament (**1 Cor. 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:23, 26**). It is interesting to note that the same word translated "come together" in reference to the local church assembling is the same word translated "come together" of conjugal cohabitation in reference to a husband and wife in a marriage. It is not possible for a husband and wife to "come together" if they are not both in the same place at the same time. The uses and definitions of **sunerchomai** should be sufficient to establish the fact that in accordance with the command to assemble together, the early church assembled itself together in one place as one group. We have a direct command for the local church to assemble itself together in one place as one group, and an approved apostolic example illustrating compliance with the command of the local congregation assembling itself together in one place as one group.

- 1.6.1.5. **James 2:2** makes reference to the assembly of Christians. The word translated assembly here is **sunagoge**. This word occurs 57 times in the New Testament, once as “assembly”, once as “congregation”, and 55 times as synagogue. It means, “an assembling together”. The assembly of which James spoke was the meeting of the church. It was the gathering together of the members of the local congregation.
- 1.6.1.6. The basic concept or principle of our worship to God is revealed in the scriptures. The five avenues of worship are specified in their basic nature and will be discussed in detail in the next section. It would be strange if every avenue of worship contained in the assembly was specified, and yet the very nature of the assembly itself was not. However, even as every avenue of worship is specified, so is the assembly itself. The assembly of the saints was, and is, the coming together of the members of the local congregation into one place as one group in order to provoke one another unto love and good works, offering praise and thanksgiving unto God.
- 1.6.2. Are split assemblies unscriptural
- 1.6.2.1. To be unscriptural, they would have to add to the command and/or example or subtract from those commands and/or examples, or it would have to violate a negative command. Split assemblies shall be simply our original premise – the separation of some of those in attendance of a congregation for the assembly, and placing them in a separate worship group, meeting, or assembly, for all or part of the time of the main assembly.
- 1.6.2.1.1. Does the Bible directly command split assemblies? **NO**
- 1.6.2.1.2. Does the Bible contain an explicit approved example of split assemblies?  
**NO**
- 1.6.2.1.3. Does the Bible by expedient implication allow for split assemblies? **NO**
- 1.6.2.1.3.1. Assemble together (**Heb. 10:25**)
- 1.6.2.1.3.2. Assemble in one place (**1 Cor. 11:20**)
- 1.6.2.1.3.3. The separation of some individuals is a disassembling, not an assembling together. It violates the example of assembling together by dividing by two.
- 1.6.2.1.3.4. It is an addition to the command by making two assemblies out of one, and a subtraction from the command by removing some of the individuals from the assembly.
- 1.6.2.1.3.5. Where does the scriptures ever authorize the removal from the assembly of some adults to oversee or teach children? **It doesn't!**
- 1.6.2.1.4. **James 2:1-6**, James rebukes the saints for showing partiality in the assembly by separating the rich and poor. If such a separation of rich and poor was condemned, can separation between young and old, or any other groups be pleasing to God?
- 1.6.2.2. The opposition to split assemblies is not based upon matters of judgement, opinion, custom or tradition, but because they violate the nature of the assembly as revealed in the New Testament.
- 1.6.3. What some will argue to justify split assemblies
- 1.6.3.1. “It is used to teach children how to behave in worship.” What better place to teach children the proper spirit and demeanor than in the assembly where they can observe mature Christians worshipping their Creator. Also, who is given the responsibility for teaching children? (**Prov. 22:6, Eph. 6:4**)
- 1.6.3.2. “Children can and will learn more on their own level than with the adults.” Worship is not just about learning; it is a time of pouring out the heart and soul in adoration and thanksgiving unto God. Worship is an act that is directed toward God, not man.

1.6.3.3. "If split assemblies are wrong, so are Bible classes." Bible classes are not, and never have been the assembly; they are expedient to carry out the command to teach (**Matt. 28:20**).

2. **Instruction in Worship** - For our worship to be acceptable to the Creator, not only is he to be the object of our reverence, but it must be according to a prescribed avenue. God has always given man a method to approach him. There was a method in the Patriarchal age, a prescribed way to worship him in the Mosaic age, and he has not left us to aimlessly wander about, following our own feelings, as to how we approach him today. When Jesus said to worship the Father in truth, he meant to worship according to his word. In **John 17:17** we learn that we are sanctified through truth and that the word is the truth that accomplishes the sanctification. Worshipping in truth means worshipping only as the word dictates or authorizes. If we are to please God, then those acts of worship, which we engage in, must be commanded or authorized by God

2.1. We must worship God. We don't worship the building, each other, clothes. True worship is paying honor to God and grows out of the proper reverence and respect for him.

2.1.1. God does not accept performance worship that seeks the favor of people. Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of those who performed acts of worship "to be seen of men." Performance worship can come in the form of a musical concert, dramatic performance, a special contribution, a testimony, a praise team, a charismatic prayer or even a pious look designed to gain the approval of others. Worship that seeks the honor and praise of people is not acceptable worship (**Matt 6:1-18**).

2.1.2. God does not accept arrogant worship. The very nature of worship is awesome, humble submission. Pride hinders worship. Jesus condemned the religious pride of the Pharisees and exposed their self-centeredness (**Matt. 23:5-7**). We find an example of this type of arrogant worship in **Luke 18:11-14**.

2.1.3. **Romans 1:21-23**

2.1.3.1. In every person exists an emptiness that only God can fill. People who do not fill this void with devotion to God will fill it with delusions, which explains the origin and practice of idolatry. Paul noted the four steps leading away from the true worship of God into pagan idolatry

2.1.3.1.1. Neglect of the worship of the true God

2.1.3.1.2. Neglect led to foolish speculation arising from their own deluded minds

2.1.3.1.3. Those speculations took on forms of all kinds of idolatry

2.1.3.1.4. God gave them over to impure lusts, degrading passions and a depraved mind

2.1.3.2. Such a process accounts for the foolish, irrational and even evil things done in the name of religion

2.1.3.3. Although the desire for worship dwells in the heart of every person, the devil seeks to compromise and pervert it with his lies (**Matthew 4:8-10**).

2.1.3.3.1. Jesus' response to the devil showed that he understood the silence of the scriptures to be prohibitive. The scriptures do not say, "Thou shalt not worship the devil." It doesn't have to! It does affirm who is to be worshipped (**Deut. 6:13**).

2.1.3.3.2. The devil is the author of perverted worship. He makes it appear attractive and rewarding. Jesus rejected the dishonest offer made by the devil because it lacked the authorization of Scripture.

2.2. 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.

2.3. 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.

2.4. As we search the New Testament, there are five acts or avenues that God has commanded us to engage in; singing, praying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, preaching and giving. And while we look at the scriptural basis for each of these items, keep in mind that we must avoid merely going through the motions of participating while our heart is not in it. **1 Cor. 11:28**, while speaking of the Lord's Supper, shows we have personal responsibility in our worship to God.

#### 2.4.1. **SINGING**

2.4.1.1. Thirteen New Testament passages deal with singing. Two of them quote text from the Old Testament (**Rom. 15:9; Hebrews 2: 12**). Three are from apocalyptic literature (**Revelations 5:9; 14:3; 15:3**). Three are incidental references (**Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25**).

2.4.1.2. Five passages relate to how we are to worship in song

2.4.1.2.1. In the first two passages, **1 Cor. 14:15, 26**, Paul corrects worship abuse at Corinth. Two points stand out in these passages – both spirit and mind are involved in worship in song, and everyone should understand and benefit from the songs in the assembly.

2.4.1.2.2. The third passage, **Eph. 5:18-19**, contrasts the irrational worship of one drunk with wine, with Christian worship in song. Singing is edification. It involves "speaking to one another." Singing is heartfelt praise to the Lord.

2.4.1.2.3. The fourth passage, **Col. 3:16**, discusses the attributes a Christian should put on as a new self. One attribute is gratitude to God. The passage also shows that singing can help us teach and admonish each other. It further shows that singing arises from a thankful heart.

2.4.1.2.4. A fifth passage, **James 5:13**, is brief and expresses that singing praises is the natural expression of a cheerful heart.

2.4.1.2.5. Note from these passages that singing was done as personal praise to express joy, as edification to one another and as praise to the Lord

2.4.1.3. No New Testament scripture authorizes anything other than singing. Not choirs, praise teams, humming, or instruments. We each are to sing from our heart, speak to another in songs and hymns. Through this act alone we can express joy, glorify God, focus our mind on the sacrifice made for us, teach and even admonish (warn) those who hear. Everyone is to sing not just a group of people. In following the Bible, we sing, not hum, not sing and clap, not sing and play. Those who try to justify instrumental music, praise teams, clapping, etc, use the excuse "that it sounds so much better." To who? Humans? **Does God judge our singing the same as humans do?** We are not worshipping to please humans; we are worshipping to please God! The scriptures say that scriptural singing comes from each of our hearts to the Lord!

2.4.1.4. Suggestions for worship in song

2.4.1.4.1. Singing is not a performance, a duty, a mindless ritual or a meaningless mumble. It should be understood as praise to the holy Father and edification to brothers and sisters we love.

2.4.1.4.2. The congregation should all participate with both the spirit and understanding. This can be learned. A devout heart, an understanding mind and a willing spirit will seek to make the words of the mouth sincere and acceptable to God.

2.4.1.4.3. Singers should not focus on the musical sounds so much as on the worship-taking place in everyone's heart.

- 2.4.1.4.4. The song leader should thoughtfully select songs in advance to ensure praise and edification. Both the content and the tempo of the songs can fit the sermon or a theme reflecting the needs of the congregation. He should avoid calling attention to himself, the music or other things, which might distract from worship.
- 2.4.1.5. Not all songs are scriptural. The song “Jesus is coming Soon” was written by someone who believed in premillennialism. Not only did he believe this false doctrine but he also taught it in this song. The title of this song itself states something that the Bible says know one knows (**Matt. 24:36**). There are other songs in our songbooks that are unscriptural and we should not sing them.
- 2.4.2. **PRAYING**
- 2.4.2.1. Scripture mentions many teaching and examples of prayer, the expression of deep feelings to God.
- 2.4.2.1.1. James affirmed the privilege of prayer in times of need (**James 5:13-18**).
- 2.4.2.1.2. Prayer can also be an expression of praise and devotion. It can be thanksgiving for his care. We can pray about everything (**Phil. 4:6**).
- 2.4.2.1.3. Prayers can be a petition for one’s needs and desires. It can be for wisdom to know how to respond to life’s situations (**James 1:5**). It can be for rulers and those in authority. It can be for blessings for beloved. It can even be for enemies (**Matt. 5:44**). Paul encouraged Christians to pray for everyone (**1 Tim. 2:1-8**).
- 2.4.2.1.4. All divinity is involved in prayer. We address prayers to God the father in the name of Jesus (**Matt. 6:9; John 14:13-14**). The Holy Spirit helps when we do not know how to pray as we ought (**Rom. 8:26**).
- 2.4.2.1.5. We offer prayers in the name of Jesus Christ. He is the one who became flesh and dwelt among men. He understands our plight, our temptations, our suffering and our fear of death. He sits on the right hand of God and is able to mediate for us (**Heb. 4:15-16**).
- 2.4.2.1.6. We offer prayers with the help of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught that the spirit of God knows the mind of God (**1 Cor, 2:11**). It is this same Holy Spirit that we receive when we are baptized for the remissions of sins (**Acts 2:38**). The Holy Spirit becomes the communication connector when we pray. This is the work of the Holy Spirit that transcends what he does through the word of **God (Rom. 8:26-27)**.
- 2.4.2.1.7. **1 Cor. 14:15** tells us that we should pray with the spirit. The word spirit here refers to the correct attitude: sincerity, humility. The thoughts must come from a real sense of longing and need in one’s heart, not from a prayer book, memorized and meaningless phrases. A strong temptation in public prayer is to be more concerned with the approval of man rather than God. Humility and sincerity in prayer involve a strong sense of our own sins and unworthiness. We must pray with the understanding. Our prayers should be scriptural in character, reverent. It is as easy to pray a false doctrine, as it is to preach a false doctrine. We must be certain that the substance of our prayers is in keeping with the teaching of God’s Holy Word.
- 2.4.2.2. Ineffective Prayer
- 2.4.2.2.1. Proud Prayer – Jesus condemned the Pharisees who prayed this way (**Luke 18:11-12**).
- 2.4.2.2.2. Ritual Prayer – We might say religious words with a godly voice and in a religious place, but if they do not come from our heart, they will not please God (**Matt. 15:8-9**).
- 2.4.2.2.3. Performance Prayer – It is done to be seen by others. Jesus called such “hypocrites” (**Matt 6:5**).



- 2.4.2.2.4. Doubter's Prayer – To ask God for something that we do not believe he will answer is an exercise in futility (**James 1:6-7**).
- 2.4.2.2.5. Selfish Prayer – Instead of asking for things to make me happy, try asking for help to be happy with the things we have (**James 4:3**). We should also thank God (**Phil. 1:3-11**).
- 2.4.2.2.6. Willful Prayer – It is significant that when Jesus prayed in the garden (**Luke 22**), while he desired the cup to pass from him, his first priority was that the will of God be done. John reiterated this point in **1 John 5:14-15**.
- 2.4.2.2.7. Prayer from disobedient person – (**John 9:31**) God hears and knows everything. Certainly God is responsive to pious people like Cornelius. Understand, however, that God does not respond to the prayers of those who disobey him in the same way he does to those who obey him (**1 John 3:22**). Acceptable prayer is not a substitute for the Christian's obligation to serve God, but a reinforcement of his worthy endeavors
- 2.4.3. **LORD'S SUPPER** – The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the supreme sacrifice given to us, the death of our savior.
- 2.4.3.1. It was instituted by Christ, in **Matt. 26:26-29**.
- 2.4.3.2. **Mark 14:22-24** tells us the bread and drink represent, symbolically, the body and blood of Jesus.
- 2.4.3.3. Unlike singing and praying, this memorial has a specific time and place it is to be observed, on the first day of the week and in the assembly of Christians. Paul showed in **1 Cor. 10:16, 21** that worshipping in the Lord's Supper is an exclusive communion with the Lord. Communion is common-union with Christ. Paul's instructions in **1 Cor. 11:17-34** gives the fullest teaching in the Scriptures on worshipping in the Lord's Supper. Paul implies in verses **17, 18** and **20** that the Corinthians should come together to observe the Lord's Supper, which they had not been doing. Later in **1 Cor 16:1-2**, he talks of when they come together. It clearly shows they came together upon the first day of the week. The New Testament church observed the Lord's Supper every time they came together. The churches are commanded to observe it, **1 Cor 11:23-29**. **Acts 20:7** shows us that the church at Troas came together on the first day of the week. Scholar's concedes this. There are a large number of letters and writings on file from men that lived in the first three centuries or more of the church that tell of the church observing the first day of the week as worship and partaking of the Lord's Supper. Enough of these letters are of proven authenticity to establish this point beyond a doubt. Even of the "churches" that don't observe every Sunday, their top scholar's will generally concede that this was the practice of the early church. All this laid out for us, yet we have change agents taking part in denominational services, serving the Lord's Supper on days of the week other than Sunday.
- 2.4.3.4. We are to observe it together. Factions and divisions existed in the Corinthian church, so much so that the Christians were worshipping in different groups when they took of the Lord's Supper. Paul instructed them regarding this in **1 Corinthians 11:33**.
- 2.4.3.5. Defining the Lord's Supper
- 2.4.3.5.1. The Lord's Supper is a sacred tradition. Paul delivered this tradition to them (**1 Cor. 11:23**). This verse shows this tradition was apostolic and came from the Lord.
- 2.4.3.5.2. The Lord's Supper is a messianic banquet. Jesus promised his disciples when he instituted the Lord's Supper that he would eat and drink it with them in his kingdom (**Luke 22:18**). Every first day of the week, the citizens of his kingdom gather around the table to join in sacred communion with Jesus. We share the memory of his death and the promise of his coming.. It is a set time of remembering the sacrificial body and blood of Jesus on the cross.

- 2.4.3.5.3. The Lord's Supper is a thanksgiving feast. Both in Paul's descriptions of the Lord's Supper and in Matthew and Luke's accounts, the text says that Jesus gave thanks. His disciples can give thanksgiving to God for sending his Son and to Jesus for giving his life.
- 2.4.3.5.4. The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal. When Jesus died upon the cross, the Old covenant was nullified. With the shedding of his blood, the New Covenant was put in force (**Matt. 26:28**).
- 2.4.3.5.5. The Lord's Supper is a proclamation to celebrate the victory Jesus had over the devil in his resurrection (**1 Cor. 11:26**).
- 2.4.3.5.6. The Lord's Supper is a family fellowship. It is probably this aspect of the Lord's Supper that Paul wanted to emphasize to the Corinthians. All of God's children are brothers and sisters and should be treated as such. Exclusiveness in observing the Lord's Supper was playing havoc with the Corinthian fellowship.

#### 2.4.4. **GIVING**

- 2.4.4.1. Giving is a part of worship because it involves the threefold purposes of worship
  - 2.4.4.1.1. Worship is the expression of the inner, spiritual man. Giving fits this purpose. Paul commended the Macedonians for their spirit of generosity (**2 Cor. 8:3, 5**). The giving involved an act of the will and the expression of generosity of the inner man. Paul focused on this aspect of giving in motivating the Corinthians to give from the heart (**2 Cor. 9:7**).
  - 2.4.4.1.2. Worship is directed. The Macedonians directed their giving to God. They "gave themselves to the Lord." Jesus taught that giving to needy children of God, his brothers, was in reality giving to him (**Matt. 25:40**). Giving to those in need is motivated by more than sympathy, it is an act of mercy which is given to the Lord for the benefit of his brothers and his sisters. Helping a needy Christian cannot be separated from love for God (**1 John 3:16-17**).
  - 2.4.4.1.3. Worship in community should edify others. The giving of the Macedonians was for the benefit of the poor in Jerusalem. Paul spoke of their gift in his letter to Rome (**Rom. 15:26**). The gift was from the heart, to God and for needy saints at Jerusalem. Giving involves a personal commitment to the Lord to give as we prosper and "purpose in our heart" to perform acts of benevolence and preach the Gospel to the lost.
  - 2.4.4.1.4. Giving is a command of God and was a practice of the early church (**1 Cor 16:1-2**).
  - 2.4.4.1.5. The inner motives of the heart must be right before God accepts our worship. Giving, as worship, is more than dropping a check or cash in the collection plate. Giving is far more than a duty. It must be an expression of devotion, compassion and love arising from inner spirit of a person. Paul focused on the generosity of giving in **II Cor. 9:7** when he states: **Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.**
- 2.4.4.2. **2 Cor. 8:7-9** shows us the importance and purpose of giving. First, learning to give is part of Christian maturity. Second, their giving was proof of their love. Love by its very nature wants to give. Third, their giving was a response to the grace of Jesus Christ, who was rich, but became poor for our benefit.
- 2.4.4.3. Giving is not for show (**Matt. 6:1-2**).
- 2.4.4.4. God does reward those who give according to his will, but not necessarily by making them rich, wise and powerful. Often, the best givers are physically poor, such as the widow.
- 2.4.4.5. Notice four details in **1 Cor. 16:1-2** that serve as a model for raising funds to support the work of the church

- 2.4.4.5.1. Each was to participate in the giving.
- 2.4.4.5.2. The giving was to be done on the first day of the week.
- 2.4.4.5.3. It was to be done every first day of the week.
- 2.4.4.5.4. What one gave was guided by prosperity.
- 2.4.4.6. Luke gave an account of the contribution the Antioch church sent to the Judeans, providing a snapshot of early church giving. From this text we gain five very important points about giving in the first century church (**Acts 11:28-30**).
  - 2.4.4.6.1. There was a need.
  - 2.4.4.6.2. There was a total response from the church.
  - 2.4.4.6.3. The Christians wanted to give.
  - 2.4.4.6.4. They did what they determined to do.
  - 2.4.4.6.5. They sent the funds to the elders. The money was given to responsible people. No extra benevolent institutions were involved.
- 2.4.5. **PREACHING – Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7**
  - 2.4.5.1. Some 30 years ago, some in the church felt we spent too much time on the “basics” if you will, that we needed to move on to more advanced subject matter. This cry and the fallout from it have led to simplistic sermons, with little or no scriptural content, being preached. Lessons more socially centered than God centered; sermon’s designed to sooth egos and entertain, and even the abandonment of an invitation to come to Christ at the end of the lesson. This explains why so many have grown up in the church not learning the most fundamental doctrine of faith.
  - 2.4.5.2. In **Hebrews 5:12**, the writer says: **For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.** Those who espouse apostasy have forgotten the first principles, the fundamental principles spoken of in **Hebrews 5:12**. Brethren have generally recognized these first principles to encompass such things as
    - 2.4.5.2.1. Inspiration and authority of the scriptures
    - 2.4.5.2.2. The virgin birth, deity and resurrection of Jesus
    - 2.4.5.2.3. The miraculous phenomena recorded in the scriptures
    - 2.4.5.2.4. The plan of salvation
    - 2.4.5.2.5. The establishment and identifying marks of the church
  - 2.4.5.3. While the writer in the context of this scripture chastised the brethren for not progressing beyond these principles, he certainly never advised forgetting them. There are people that would say preaching has lost its effectiveness and that it no longer relates to man’s needs. Let’s look at the basis for preaching (**I Cor. 2:1-3:23**).
    - 2.4.5.3.1. Preacher must begin with a fundamental faith in the word of God. Declare the wisdom of God, scriptures as inspired by God, and that it is infallible.
    - 2.4.5.3.2. He must also believe that Jesus was the heaven sent virgin born Son of God.
    - 2.4.5.3.3. Central purpose of preaching is to save souls, not to entertain (**I Tim. 4:16**).
    - 2.4.5.3.4. To accomplish this, preaching should be directed to teach and motivate. Ideally, the sermon will instruct in the word of God and, on the basis of that instruction, motivate one to live and act accordingly.
  - 2.4.5.4. Kind of preaching - Great preaching examples: **Acts 2:14-47, 3:1-4:4, 17:22-34, 22:1-24**
  - 2.4.5.5. Preach the word: **Mark 16:15, 2 Tim 4:1-5, 1 Tim 4:4-6**
  - 2.4.5.6. Doctrinal preaching – proclaiming the fundamental conviction of the faith. **II John 9**. As we have seen with the decay of morality in this world, there is a distinct need to instruct people in the doctrine about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the word, heaven, hell, the resurrection, the judgement, the church and many other matters.

2.4.5.7. It is to exhort, rebuke, and admonish - **2 Tim 4:2, 1 Tim 5:20**, and encourage – **Heb. 6:9-12**

## 2.5. Concerning men who lead in worship

- 2.5.1. God has always expected those who lead in worship and service to be faithful to Him. Sadly, that is not always the case and some are even advocating and encouraging those that are unfaithful to be leaders. Those that advocate such argue that if we give responsibility to the unfaithful, they will become faithful. They say if we get them to teach a Bible class, lead a prayer, or serve on the Lord's Table that will get them to attend. Again, we turn to the scriptures for our direction.
- 2.5.2. Paul's purpose in writing his first letter to Timothy was "that thou may know how thou ought to behave thyself in the house of God" (**1 Tim. 3:15**). These words do not apply just to Timothy but to all fellow workers in the household of faith. Paul wanted Timothy to know how Christians ought to behave in the church so that he could instruct the church in these matters.
- 2.5.3. Concerning men who lead in worship, Paul writes, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (**1 Tim. 2:8**). There are three specific conditions placed upon men who lead in prayer or more generally worship.
- 2.5.3.1. The first of these conditions is that men pray, "lifting up holy hands." What is being stressed here is not the posture of prayer. "Lifting up holy hands" is a figure of speech denoting moral purity and holy living. The person doing the leading of our worship is to be the kind of person whose life is a reflection of holy living. The prayer of a person who persists in sin is not heard (**Isaiah 59:1-2; Micah 3:4; 1 Peter 3:12**). Brethren, let us be sure. A person who willfully sins by forsaking the assemblies (**Hebrews 10:25-26**) persists in sin and God does not hear his prayers.
- 2.5.3.2. The second condition is that man pray "without wrath." This denotes a disposition of the mind. A man that leads in worship should not have such a disposition that displays anger towards God, His provisions, nor His commandments. Further, he should not exhibit anger towards his fellow Christian or his fellow man. The reason for such is found in **James 1:20** which says, "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."
- 2.5.3.3. The third condition is that men pray without "doubting." The one leading us in worship ought to do so believing that his worship will come before the throne of God. In this way, his worship is offered in faith (**James 1:6**). Jesus taught, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (**Mark 11:24**).
- 2.5.4. The principle that God expects those who lead in worship and service to be faithful is clearly demonstrated in scripture. Concerning the training of men to preach, Paul writes, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (**2 Tim. 2:2**). The gospel is to be deposited in "faithful men" who will not betray the charge to "preach the word" (**2 Tim. 4:2**) and who will deposit the same truths in other faithful men. In this way the succession of teachers would be sustained. However, if the deposit were made in the unfaithful hoping that they will become faithful, the succession of teachers would likely fail.

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.