

Worship in Truth

I. The Lesson

In the previous lesson, we looked at one of the most misquoted scriptures on worship. In this lesson, we will continue where we left off and look at the second of the two requirements Jesus gave for worshipers who are the object of God's seeking:

John 4:23 "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."

The first requirement of worship that the Father seeks is that it is in spirit (worship that is led and inspired by the Holy Spirit). The second requirement is that our worship is in truth. What do you think when you hear this phrase? Maybe, "Of course it's in truth. I really do mean what I'm singing!" If this has been your mentality and belief on "worship in truth," it hurts to say, but you are wrong.

Worshiping in truth means that we worship according to the _____ and through _____.

If we are to be effective worshipers (no matter if you are on the platform or not), we *must* follow the instructions for worship laid out in the Word of God! Putting together a new bicycle or bookshelf may work without using instructions, but not worship. Yes, you can do some things that you can't prove in scripture, but it probably won't cause you to become the kind of worshiper that God *seeks*. That's a big difference.

In this lesson, we will not lay out *every* instruction for worship that is found in Scripture. If we did, we would be here all year! So, we will focus on the explanation of this verse and its application to us as a worship team (and worshipers in general).

"How do you know that this is the correct interpretation of this scripture?" Good question. In order to really understand this, we have to look at the Greek language in which it was originally written:

John 4:23 "...worship in spirit and in **truth**."
The word for "truth" is the Greek word "*alethia*"

John 14:6 "I am the way, the **truth**, and the life..."
The word for "truth" in this scripture (in which Jesus is speaking) is also the Greek word "*alethia*"

So, we see that when Jesus is speaking of Himself in John 14:6, He is speaking about Himself in the same way in which He does in John 4:23 when He

instructs us to worship in “truth.” You could capitalize the “T” in “Truth” and see that we are to worship in spirit and in “Jesus: ‘the way, the truth, and the life.’”

In the Old Testament, worship was brought in the form of various animal, grain, and other _____. This worship was brought to the priests, who would prepare the sacrifice and offer it on the altar. Once a year, the high priest would enter the very presence of God and offer “worship” on behalf of the entire nation of Israel.

As New Testament believers, we offer the sacrifice of _____ (Heb. 13:15). Jesus *is* our _____ (see Hebrews 3:1). Our worship goes to Jesus (the “way”) who then perfects it and offers it to the Father. We will *never* understand this process other than by faith through the Word of God. The bottom line is, if our worship doesn’t come *through* Jesus, it doesn’t get to the Father.

So what about the aspect of worshiping according to the Word?

John 1:14 “And the Word (Jesus) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His (Jesus’) glory, glory as of the only begotten (Jesus) from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**”

And...

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.**”

So, we see that Jesus *is* the Word, “full of grace and truth.” Since we’ve already seen that we are to worship through Jesus, and since He is the Word, we are also to worship according to the Word.

There was a study done where children were given a playground to play in and there were no fences. In this scenario, the children stayed close to the playground. The second phase of the study introduced a fenced boundary around the playground. In this scenario, the children ran and explored to the far reaches of the boundaries provided.

When we worship according to the Word, our worship is not unfairly limited. It is the boundaries that the Word gives that allow us (like the children in the previous example) to explore the far reaches of the boundaries.

_____ in our worship is found when we truly understand the boundaries of the Word of God.

Are you ready to *really* make your brain hurt? Since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same person in different forms, one will never tell you to do something the other two aren’t in agreement with. Why is that important? We are free to _____ the far reaches of worshiping in the Spirit of God because we know He will never move outside the boundaries of the Word of God (Jesus). It is how we keep ourselves from getting weird while in pursuit of the new, fresh thing that God is doing.

“Worshiping in Spirit is like a kite flying way up high in the winds of the Spirit – it is only enabled to fly when the string is grounded in the Word of God (Truth).”

- Bob Sorge

II. Discussion

- 1) What are some of the common hindrances that keep us from consistently digging deep in the Word of God?
- 2) What are some of the boundaries and instructions given in the Word as to how we are to worship? (hint: see 1 Cor. 14, and the entire book of Psalms)
- 3) What would it look like in a service if the congregation never gave any attention to the boundaries given in the Word as to our worship expression? (think about both sides of the spectrum)
Lack of Expression ↔ Crazy!ness!
- 4) What role does “worship in truth” play in the songs that we sing? What are the results of our singing songs that do not align with the Word of God?
- 5) How can we (as a worship ministry) empower our congregation in the aspect of “worshiping in truth?”

III. Prayer Points

- 1) Pray that God would open His Word to us as a team and that we would see things we’ve never seen before.
- 2) Pray for God to give us as a team an increased hunger for His Word in our daily lives.
- 3) Pray that our congregation would really come alive to the true meaning of John 4:23, and that our church would become a collection of worshipers who are the object of God’s seeking – week in, week out.