In Spirit and Truth
What is worship?
(Old Testament – Part I)
July 6th, 2014

Introduction

- What is the singular defining aspect of an American church that tends to trump all others?
  - Answer = How do they worship?
  - What does it sound like? What does it look like?
- Worship Series
  - Seven week series = first 2 on “what” and the last 5 on “how” {Paul’s method of doctrine and then practice}
  - Outgrowth of a study that the Elders went through
- Open your Bibles to John 4

Sermon

➢ Standard for Christian Worship
  - John 4:19-24
    19 The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.
    20 Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”
    21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.
    22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.
    23 But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.
    24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- Will and Must = this is what will happen and it is what needs to happen

- Truth = God – His person, His revelation and His Word
  - To worship in truth is to worship according to what God has revealed about Himself and in His Word
Illustration: Jumping out of an airplane with a backpack rather than a parachute {without truth}

- Spirit = The response of our person to His person
  - To worship in spirit is to worship with our being (us through body, soul and spirit) in response to His being
  - Illustration: Driving home unaware of whole portions of the drive {without spirit}

★ In Spirit and Truth are not worship but they are the standard by which true worship is measured

★ Worship must then involve God’s truth and our spirit to be worship that God wants and deserves

★ Let’s look at God’s truth in the Old Testament

➢ Worship in the Old Testament
  - Two main words in the Old Testament
    - Exodus 20:4-5
      4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.
      5 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,
    - We are going to deal with the Body of Christ but the principles are helpful in relationships outside the Body of Christ
    - “worship” (NASB), “bow down” (KJV/NIV) = hw'x' (hawa) = verb is used 170 times in Old Testament including general and divine usage
    - “serve” (NASB/KJV/NIV) = db;e' (abad) = verb is used 262 times in Old Testament mainly general but also divine usage
    - Couple of other words used (we’ll get to them later) but 1 less than 3 dozen times, 1 less than 2 dozen times and 1 less than a dozen times

★ If we are going to understand worship from the Old Testament, we will need to understand how hawa and abad are used
  - hawa (hw'x')
    - Definition: to prostrate oneself (face to the ground)
Near root word, *shaha* (shaw-haw), means to wallow or descend; used 0 times in the Old Testament

Near root word, *shahah* (shaw-hah), means to become low or abased (“to have one’s arrogance knocked out of him”); used 18 times in the Old Testament

- **Common usage**
  - Nehemiah 8:6
    6 Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.
  
    ✓ “bowed low” is further explained by *hawa* which is further explained by “to the ground”

  - Genesis 18:2 = Abraham and three visitors
  - Genesis 42:6 = Joseph’s brothers

- **The common use demonstrates an action but also an attitude – acknowledgement and respect of another person demonstrated in submission to that person**

- **Genesis 47:31; 1 Kings 1:47 = prostrate while on a bed = attitude over action**

- **Divine usage**
  - Exodus 34:8 – Moses
    8 Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

  - Joshua 5:14 – Joshua
  - Job 1:20 – Job

- **Prohibition**
  - Exodus 20:5
    5 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

- **We are prohibited from giving ourselves in submission to another god because we reserve that for God**

- **Command**
  - Psalm 29:2
    2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array.

- **We are commanded to acknowledge the Lord’s greatness and His holiness (separation from sin) which is why He deserves worship and deserves it from us**
Invitation/Expectation

- Psalm 95:6
  6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

  ✓ The people of God are invited and expected to hawa (worship) Him
  ✓ “bow down” is a less used word, kara (kaw-rah), which means to bow or crouch (likes animals crouching; used 32 times in the Old Testament
  ✓ “kneel” is a common word, barak (baw-rak), which normally means bless but is similar to the work for knee (berak) and in several (4) places in the Old Testament carries the idea of bending the knee to receive a blessing

★ Bowed low to the earth, like animals awaiting a blessing from their care-giver, we are invited and expected to approach our God

Conclusion – Worship from the Old Testament

- True worshippers will worship “in spirit and truth”

- Worship, from an OT understanding, is prostrating oneself before another in acknowledgement and in respect of their position and yours.
  ✓ Worship is recognizing the truth of who He is and who you are.
  ✓ Worship is getting the arrogance knocked out of you in the presence of One who is far greater than you.
  ✓ Worship is bending low to receive a blessing because you need it and you acknowledge the one who can give it is greater and able to bless.

- Worship, from an OT understanding, is responding to the position of another with service.
  ✓ Worship is the surrender of your will to the will of another.
  ✓ Worship is the adoption of the spirit of dedication, diligence and obedience in service of one for another.

- If our worship is going to be the worship that God demands and deserves, than it needs to be worship that meets the standard of the Old Testament – bowed low on our faces acknowledging the position of our great God and accepting the responsibility of serving Him.

- This is worship.
Response

- As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to worship God acknowledging His greatness and our responsibility to serve Him.

- If you have never come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, then this morning I would invite you
  ✓ See Jesus and see who you can become if you will follow Him

- As disciples of Jesus Christ
  ✓ Acknowledge Him and Serve Him