

Revival: The Word + Repentance + Worship = Revival

Week 6: Worship Part II

I. Last week we started to reframe our understanding of:

[Slide]: Worship

A. We said that worship isn't an event or something that we go to as if we are passive bystanders. Worship is a lifestyle and encompasses the very essence of who we are. Both non-believers and believers! Worship is an overflow of what our hearts primarily desire. It's an expression of that which we value. We all are worshipping someone or something. If we need help discovering the aim of our worship, we simply consider the direction of our time and money.

1. Let's clear something up from last week. We have a core value that says:

[Slide]: We Inspire Through Grace!

a. I am not trying to shame anyone into giving more time or more money. When we talk about worship in terms of what we value, and our money and time being a reflection of what we value, it could lead us to believe we should always be doing more. Value is not always measured quantitatively. Value is more accurately measured in terms of:

[Slide]: Priority

Jesus's words still ring true:

Matthew 6:33 [Slide]: 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

b. So, what does this mean? It means that we prioritize our schedules around honoring God first! It means that we orient our finances around generosity. God honoring worship is a life that prioritizes God's kingdom. God has an agenda! It's to restore men and women into a right relationship with Him and dwell with them forever. God's kingdom broke forth through the resurrection and is advancing until its full culmination at Christ's return. In Christ, we've been commissioned for that mission! God honoring worship is in pursuit of that mission!

Romans 12:1 [Slide]: Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

c. We orient everything that is physical under the priority of the spiritual. How do I demonstrate the honor I have for God today? In this moment? But so often we have a reverse perspective. We're so busy throughout the week, because we've prioritized all these things, that we have no margin left for God. We (me too) all have Ph.D. level expertise in justifying our decisions.

B. We honor God through our:

[Slide]: Sacrifice

1. We also experience the pleasure of God, the delight of God, through our sacrifice. We engage with a sacrificial lifestyle which is the opposite side of the same coin with:

[Slide]: Worship

2. We trust and obey in God's better way! He loves us! He loves us! He loves us! We miss out on a lifestyle of worship, because we orient the spiritual around the physical and not vice versa. I'll serve God one day we say. Right now, I'm focused on my studies. Right now, I just started a new job. Right now, I've got little kids. Right now, I've got all these things at work. Right now, I've got aging parents. Right now, we don't realize that one day we'll come face to face with the reality we've squandered our life away.

3. It's not that any of those "things" are bad, but there are no exception clauses in Scripture that ever give us a pass on prioritizing God's kingdom first! The natural tendency is to prioritize ourselves and then fit God into our calendar when we can. The natural pull is to spend money on what we want to spend money on first and then we consider being generous with the leftover.

4. Supposedly we're nearing a "recession," but have you seen a Starbucks or Chick-fil-a line recently! Apparently, those folks haven't got the memo on the recession. I'm not throwing shade, but I am saying we need to be honest with ourselves and God.

C. Worship is an outflow of where our priorities lie. We've also said that worship is the proper response that flows out of repentance. When we recognize the pain of our sin, we turn from that sin, and we pursue the

holiness of God. When we order our lives in obedience to the Word of God, we repent, and we experience the grace of God which leads us to worship.

1. These key ingredients:

[Slide]: The Word + Repentance + Worship = Revival

culminate in a spiritual awakening that affirms our passion for God.

a. When we expose our lives to God's Word it cuts. Not like an ax but like a surgeon's knife that reveals the disease of sin. Repentance is our recognition and confession of sin and our turning from that sin to Jesus. Jesus takes our brokenness, and He heals us. This leads us to worship God the Father, Son, and Spirit for who He is!

b. Our worship is anchored in the character of God, fundamentally and fully on display in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Because of our relationship with Jesus, we've been given possession of an eternal inheritance. In the messy middle of those two anchor points, we abide in the living hope of our salvation and future inheritance.

(1) Our living hope is more than wishful thinking. It's like a winch pulling us toward our future inheritance amid the mess of this life. I had a 1988 baby blue Range Rover when I was in high school, and I was notorious for getting it stuck about once a weekend. A friend's winch would be necessary many times to get free and that's a good illustration of our living hope. While we're in the muck of this life, we never lose our orientation between the two anchors of resurrection and future inheritance! We do that through setting our priority on God's kingdom, breaking through on earth as it is in heaven.

(2) While we all fall short of the standard God has set forth, it's not our prerogative to question the standard. God is worthy of our worship today in the way we live our lives as a living sacrifice! We sacrifice for that which we prioritize.

c. Jesus made this principle explicit in Matthew 13:44-46. It's a parable Jesus shared not with the crowd, but with those disciples who were following Jesus in expectation of His coming kingdom. At that time, they were confused on the details of God's kingdom and what was to come, but not on the sacrifice that would be required for the sake of the kingdom.

Matthew 13:44-46 [Slide]: 44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field." 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. 46 When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it."

d. These are the very words of Jesus and he's describing the kingdom of God in terms of value or worth. The priority of the kingdom as it pertains to all else! Worship is our response to the character of God that He is good and gracious. He has saved us, He is guarding us, and He will grant us our eternal inheritance as co-heirs with Christ!

[Slide]: Holding Him, we hold everything!

e. Are we living a lifestyle of worship that expresses this reality? Or do we have one hand on God's kingdom and one hand on our earthly kingdom? We all have those times when our desires are pulled to the things of this world. We're not talking about perfection. But there is nothing that satisfies the desires of our heart like walking in connection with God in step with His Spirit! And we outwardly express this reality through our worship!

2. The kingdom of God is a predominant theme in the gospels and New Testament letters. Few would argue with the definition of God's kingdom which refers to God's authority and rule over creation. The varying opinions arise on the timing of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

a. When Adam sinned, all creation was given over to the dominion of darkness. Romans 8:20 says that all creation was given over to futility. Sin has brought about dysfunction in every aspect of creation, marred by the penalty of death. UNTIL.... Jesus paid the penalty of sin by His death. Death as a penalty for sin had no power over Him. He was tempted in every way yet without sin!

b. Jesus's death was the victory of God and His resurrection was vindication for all creation, both heaven and earth, that final authority was now in the hands of Jesus. I believe that God's kingdom broke forth the moment Jesus arose from the grave!

The full consummation of the kingdom will occur at the 2nd Coming of Christ, but we're advancing God's kingdom one heart at a time under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

- c. Our worship is a lifestyle that is above all else committed to this singular purpose! We're not killing time until we get to heaven. When we're reading through Matthew this week in the Bible reading plan, carefully read the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds (Tares). It's not the wheat that gets removed from the earth, it's the weeds. Blessed are the humble for they will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5).
 - d. We love people into the kingdom by sharing and demonstrating God's truth. We worship not by huddling up and forming a Christian bubble, we worship through our commitment to Jesus as we push against the evil in our world. Not to win a battle or an argument. Certainly not to win a culture war, but to point others to the grace and truth extended through relationship with Jesus!
3. This singular purpose of pursuing Jesus and pointing others to Him is a life saturated in worship. Worship and sacrifice are intertwined, but it's not a sacrifice that leads to drudgery! The end game is for heaven to totally infuse the earth, so what could be more exciting and purposeful than being a conduit now for heaven to meet earth?
- a. The answer to that question is nothing! Jesus is unabashed in His answer! The man who found treasure in the field went and:
[Slide]: in his joy
went and sold everything to obtain that field! When the merchant found the priceless pearl, he went and sold everything to obtain that pearl! There is nothing on earth that can hold a candle to God's kingdom! The only proper response to this treasure and priceless pearl is to worship the One who has given everything to make our participation in the kingdom possible.
- D. There is a decision that needs to be made today, because we should be able to see ourselves in this parable. The first guy found the treasure. He's probably a sharecropper or tenant farmer who is just doing his thing and uncovers this indescribable treasure. Maybe some of you who are listening are simply going through the motions of life focused on taking life as it comes. Maybe that's working and maybe it isn't? But worshiping temporary pleasure will always cost you more in the long run than you really want to pay.
- 1. Today, God is extending the treasure of His kingdom to you. Young person with all your life ahead, I am not going to mislead you. A life that is sold out in worship of Jesus is a life of sacrifice. But there's joy in the sacrifice. Happiness can be manufactured; joy cannot. Joy is found in an all-out pursuit of Jesus. That's what worship is all about.
 - 2. Some of you may be like the merchant. He was looking for something! He was in the process of pursuing something and came across the priceless pearl. Some of us are aiming hard at something today, and if we were honest would say my life is oriented around that desire. That's worship.
 - 3. God is extending the invitation of His kingdom today. Worship Him today. Give Him the ultimate place of priority in your life and maybe that "thing" you were worshiping needs to be completely removed.
 - a. If it's sinful like drunkenness or pornography, submit that to God and pursue His holiness and freedom.
 - b. Maybe it's not a sinful thing, but anything that we've put in a position of worship will eventually suck the life out of us. Trust God that He is worthy of supreme priority in your life and see firsthand that Jesus's command/promise in Matthew 6:33 is in fact true!

Matthew 6:33 [Slide]: Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be provided for you.

- c. Some of us are already saved citizens of heaven, but rather than being conduits of God's kingdom on earth, we're focused more on blending into the world. None of us pursue Christ with perfection. That's not what this is about. But when we take our eye off the One worthy of our worship, we suffer the consequences of our sin, and we miss out on the joy God supplies.
 - (1) The half-in half-out thing doesn't work when it comes to the aim of our worship, because worship is an outflow of what our heart desires most! Whoever or whatever we choose to be our master will eventually determine the course and direction of our lives!
 - (2) Jesus says something startling in Luke 6:62:

Luke 6:62 [Slide]: But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

(3) Kingdom work is a work of sacrifice. Pure and simple! It's much easier to just go with the flow, but there's no joy to be found in that path. To be fit for the kingdom, or to be participants in God's kingdom work, requires an all-out focus of commitment to Jesus!

(4) This isn't implying that if or when we look back, we're out of the kingdom. No, that can't be. We don't maintain our citizenship by good works. However, we're not fit for the kingdom or in position to be used mightily by God when we're half-in and half-out. We can't be kind-of pursuing God and kind-of pursuing the things of this world. Pursuit by de facto is a sold out commitment in a singular direction!

4. Wherever we are today, Jesus is worthy of our worship! He alone was willing to give everything so that we could have everything! The irony of it all is that in the sacrifice, we experience the abundance of the Lord. Jesus, the only One worthy of our worship!

E. May God ignite or reignite our passion for Him! That's when revival will break forth. May it begin with us!