

## Identity #4 - Worship

March 31, 2019

Today we are going to talk about worship.

I don't wonder if you worship. We all worship. We cannot decide to start or stop worshiping. All people worship all the time.

"There is no such thing as not worshiping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship."  
David Foster Wallace

You were created to worship.

- Birds have wings because they were made to fly.
- Fish have gills and because they were made to swim.
- Squirrels have tails and claws because they were made to climb trees.
- Bats have sonar because they were made to hunt insects at night.
- Men and women have minds because we were made to worship God.

We were created to worship—today we need to be reminded to worship God. And not lesser things.

We need DO NOT need to be taught to worship,  
rather we need to be taught WHO to worship. AND  
HOW to worship.

Otherwise,

- A beleaguered mom might worship the quiet moments before the first streaks of the sun leak into the dark sky.
- A graveyard shift worker might worship.
- A musician might worship the perfect riff.
- An athlete might worship an adoring crowd.
- A student might worship the clang of the bell on Friday.
- A tired pastor will worship a finally tuned turn of phrase.
- A cancer patient will worship a clean bill of health.

There is no such thing as not worshipping. We all worship.

We MUST be a church that understands the WHO and HOW of worship. Otherwise we could be a church who sings but does not worship.

For the past few weeks we've been asking—who are we called to be? And so far we have found that we are not just a gathering of Christians but the body of

Christ. We have found that our God and others deserve our love.

We all worship—we need to ensure that we are worshipping God.

Our call: Worship God constantly.

PROP: Worship God with all your words and actions.

“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. <sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” Hebrews 13:15—16

PRAY

Harold Best defines worship this way—

“[Worship is] acknowledging that someone or something else is greater – worth more – and by consequence, to be obeyed, feared, and adored...Worship is the sign that in giving myself completely to someone or something, [and saying] I want to be mastered by it.” Harold Best

Worship is more than Sunday mornings but it is not less.

4 thoughts about worship—

1. We Worship God only always through Jesus.

Two little words in verse 15 tell us this—“through him.”

Through who?

Through Jesus. We do not and cannot approach God on our own. The only way to be able to offer worship to God is through Jesus Christ his son.

Look up at verse 12,

‘So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.” Hebrews 13:12

We could make no advance toward God and have no hope of worshiping him if it were not for Jesus. We could not come to God so Jesus came to us. He came to pay the price on our heads.

Mankind was a helpless slave to the power of sin. We were broken and dirty and unworthy. And he

'sanctified' us which means to make us holy by the shedding of his blood.

What does that mean?

Jesus was scorned by God so we might be sanctified at his death. He died to make us holy.

Do you see what that means?

Jesus has made Christians holy at the cost of his life. And here is the miracle. Are you holy? Are you perfect? Review your thoughts in the last day or two.

Was every thought holy?

Was every act of yours righteous?

Was every word of yours blameless?

No. Certainly not.

If we are honest with ourselves we have no business approaching God in worship. We are completely compromised.

That is why we approach God, "Through him."

What difference does that make?

Let's say your week was unholy.

- You got angry at the kids and shouted and threw a plate—and scared the kids.
- You had too much to drink, too much to eat, too much sleep.
- Your eyes lingered in the wrong places.
- You lied to make yourself look good.
- You put someone down in front of the whole office.

We can't pretend that stuff isn't wrong. Its unholy.

You have a week like that and you come to Sunday and you think—there is no way that God wants to hear from me.

No.

We come to God by way of Christ. It is only through Jesus that we can offer worship to God. Jesus has not changed.

He never had an unholy week.

- No sinful anger.
- No drinking, gluttony, laziness.
- No wandering eyes.
- No lying.
- No put-downs.

And so through him our worship is always acceptable.  
God always wants to hear from us.

We are always welcome not because we are holy but  
because Jesus is.

Do you feel unworthy?

Sing louder because you have great reason to  
rejoice—the message has come from God that he will  
not treat us the way we deserve.

Open your ears to the word of God and shut out  
those doubts that whisper—I'm not good enough.  
You aren't but Jesus is.

We need to be reminded—

That suffering is not a sign of God's punishment.  
That God loves us and will not treat us as we deserve.  
That we are washed of our sin.  
That the power of sin is broken.

That Jesus has triumphed—not just generally—but for  
you.

Do you ever wonder why we focus so on Jesus during  
our Sunday gatherings?

One reason is to remind us that we know—our worthiness is not the point. His is.

If Jesus did not die and rise again for us—there would be no point in gathering because nothing we could do would be good enough.

We come on the merits of Jesus. We all need to remember this.

We Worship God only always through Jesus.

2. We must worship God all the time.

Did you see where I got that? Verse 15 again,

**“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,**

Continually offer up.

We are called to continually offer worship to God.

Before we get to what, ‘sacrifice of praise’ means, we need to just note continually. Worship is not just a Sunday morning event.



As important as Sunday is, we Christians are made to be a people who continually worship. In every moment in all of life. Worship is to be a constant preoccupation.

We offer praises continually. Praise and worship to God befits any situation.

We continually praise him—

Good times

Hard times

With others

Alone

At home

At school

At work

When we feel like it

When we don't feel like it

Continually.

How is that even possible?

It becomes a bit clearer when we understand what the author is telling us to do. To offer a sacrifice of praise continually—what is that?

In the Old Testament—people were mandated to offer animal sacrifices or grain sacrifices as an offering to please God.

We need bring no animal because Jesus' blood has cleansed us from all unrighteousness. That does not mean that there is no room for sacrifices today.

We are commanded to continually offer the sacrifice of praise. In other words, we are to continually offer praise to God.

Instead of offering an animal as a sacrifice in payment for sin—we are called here to continually offer ourselves to God in thanksgiving.

Continually.

This means that worship is not just something that happens Sundays. The only thing different about Sunday is that we are all worshiping together. Monday through Saturday you worship just the same.

Your life is meant to be a 'sacrifice of praise.'

How?

“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”

Acknowledge carries with it the idea of mere mental assent. I acknowledge his name.

That’s not the idea.

The way we offer ourselves as a sacrifice of praise is by what we say. The words we use.

We are told that the testimony of our lives is one of grateful words for God and who he is.

### 3. Worship God with our Words

By my count there are at least three ways we use words.

We sing words

Here, I am mostly thinking of Sunday morning. The reason we sing is not because it is a good to mix things up and have some groovy tunes.

We sing words to be reminded about what is true.

“We are what we sing.” Gordon Fee

That’s right.

We don’t just pick songs randomly—each song is designed to teach. For example, the last song we sang today was 10000 reasons.

*Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul*

*I'll worship Your Holy name  
The sun comes up  
It's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass  
And whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing  
When the evening comes*

*I'll worship Your Holy name*

*You're rich in love  
And You're slow to anger  
Your name is great  
And Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness  
I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons  
For my heart to find  
Bless the Lord oh my soul*

*I'll worship Your Holy name  
Bless You Lord  
And on that day  
When my strength is failing  
The end draws near  
And my time has come  
Still my soul will  
Sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years  
And then forevermore  
Forevermore*

That song is reminding us why we have reasons to praise the Lord. That song reminds us of how much God is not prone to anger but is patient. That song tells us that God is good. All the time.

That song is preparing us to die.

It is a weighty matter to put words in your mouth. You will remember what you sing far more than what I say.

"The duty of singing praises to God seems to be given wholly to excite and express religious affections. There is no other reason why we should express ourselves to God in verse rather than in prose and with music, except that these things have a tendency to move our affections." Jonathan Edwards

We say words

How often in a day do your words express thanksgiving or gratefulness to God.

We are all a people who are much more aware of our troubles, trials and temptations. Our memories don't linger long on our blessings from God.

Daily worship means that our words are praise to God and for the building up of others.

We think words

I'll let you know how I'm trying to do this. This year has been a difficult one for me on many levels and I'm one of those people whose mind never stops. My mind's natural state is constantly sifting through things I've done, I should have done, could have done or should one day do. It never rests and if I don't watch it, I can enter the land of discouragement and walk on the borders of despair.

I have to press other thoughts in by force. "We interrupt the regularly scheduled program to remember other things."

I read a Psalm a day and I pressed this in from Psalm 42 yesterday—

[5] Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you in turmoil within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my salvation." Psalm 42:5

Hope in God.

What reason do I have to hope in God?

He knows me and still loves me. By all rights he should reject me because I'm too much trouble. I'm not trustworthy. And yet he has set his love on me never to remove it.

It is not just that he forgives me due to some contractual arrangement. He loves me. I can hope in what God will do for me when I remember he loves me.

And from there, it is much easier to offer praise. Its more natural.

#### 4. Worship God with our deeds.

Worship is not just a matter of saying or singing the right words. Look at verse 16,

**<sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**