

GOD, CENTER OF WORSHIP

TEXT: Jn. 4:23-24

THESIS: God is the center of worship and we should never forget it.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The center of worship must be God.
 - A. Man is involved in all kinds of activities in fulfilling the religious aspects of his life, but there are no substitutes for God as the focus of man's worship.
2. Responsible worship acknowledges God.
 - A. It originates in the fact that one senses that there is a reality beyond self.
 - B. It grows in the gifted appreciation of who God is.
3. Responsible worship results from an understanding of who God is.

DISCUSSION:

- I. SINCE GOD IS THE CENTER OF WORSHIP, WE MUST GET TO KNOW HIM
 - A. The Bible emphasizes the importance of knowing God.
 1. It is essential to man's relationship with God.
 - a. "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:" (Jer. 9:23).
 2. It is essential to man's acceptance by God.
 - a. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (Jn. 17:3).
 - b. Because, one day he will come, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (2 Thess. 1:8).
 - B. Now, the Bible refers to attitudes and circumstances that can hinder the worship that man offers to God.
 1. There is the problem of attitude toward wealth.
 - a. Because, "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." (Mk. 4:19).
 2. There is the problem of emphasizing the created or creature over the Creator (Rom. 1:18-25).
 3. There is the problem of greed.
 - a. So, man is told to, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:" (Col. 3:5).
 4. There is the problem of self-glorification.
 - a. We are told by Paul that there are, "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).
 5. There is the problem of idolizing others.
 - a. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the

grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1 Pet. 3:7).

6. There is the problem of poor relationships with others
 7. There is the problem of other activities drawing away man’s attention.
- C. The Bible refers to facts, attitudes, and circumstances that can help the worship that man offers to center upon God.
1. For example, the nature and power of God are veiled through His creation.
 - a. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:” (Rom. 1:20).
 - b. His eternal power and divine nature can be clearly seen.
 1. The heavens declare His handiwork (Psalm 19:1).
 - c. And so, the great works of man will never compare to the wondrous works of God.
 2. The Scriptures also reveal the many facets of God’s nature.
 - a. He moves in the affairs of men.
 - b. He is matchless in power, love, grace, and mercy.
 - c. He is equally matchless in His hatred of all disruptive and destructive evil.
 1. And so, the lives of godly people allow others to see Christ and God in them as they live for Him.
 3. Another circumstance that can help our worship is to know the moral and spiritual principles, God has given that reveals His nature.
 - a. His righteousness and moral goodness should lead me to worship properly.
 1. “I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.” (Psa. 7:17).
 - b. When men fail to imitate the characteristics of the true and living God, they fall into all kinds of immoral and chaotic behavior.
 4. Another circumstance that can help our worship is to realize the providential care of God.
 - a. He demonstrates providential care in His creation each and every day.
 1. “Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:17).
 - b. He demonstrates providential care in the goodness and joy He provides each person in the experience of life, especially to those who love and serve Him.
 1. For we are told, “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt. 5:45)
 2. “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4).
 3. We are also told that, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9).
 5. The obedience of man and the fulfilling of God’s will reveals the qualities of His

nature.

- a. Man learns who God is through his efforts to be like Him in love, longsuffering, mercy, forgiveness and so on.
- b. And so, those who do not obey God cannot claim to know Him.
 1. For, "hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." (1 Jn. 2:3-5).
6. Another circumstance that can help our worship is to know that the life of Jesus revealed most clearly the nature of God.
 - a. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (Jn. 1:18).
 - b. And, it is through Jesus that man understands the depth of God's love, mercy, grace, and goodness.
 1. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:28).
 - c. It is through Jesus that man understands the fullness of God's nature (Phil. 2:1-10).
 - d. It is through Jesus that man understands the meaning of being obedient to the Father, serving His will over men.

II. GOD IS THE CENTER OF WORSHIP BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS

- A. Man's worship should be governed by the fact that God is Spirit.
 1. He is not as some picture Him, an old man with long gray hair.
 2. God cannot not be seen by man nor has He ever been seen by man.
 - a. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1 Tim. 6:16).
 - b. "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father." (Jn. 6:46).
 3. And so, man should not in worship envision God as having physical substance.
 4. But, man can see God in a spiritual sense.
 - a. He can see God in the things He has made (His power, majesty, etc.) (Romans 1:20).
 - b. He can see God in the life of Christ, "He that has seen Me, has seen the Father."
 5. And so, because God is spirit, He can be everywhere, even observing all the worship that is given at anytime and anywhere.
- B. Man's worship should be governed by the fact that God is Creator of all that is good.
 1. He is God over all.
 2. He is more powerful than the entire universe since He brought it all into being.
 3. He is the greatest and above all; therefore, He deserves our greatest respect.
 - a. And also, our worship should never be a worship of comfort!
- C. Man's worship should be governed by the fact that God is supreme in intelligence.
 1. His wisdom, knowledge, and might are far superior to all of mankind.

2. His “foolishness” is wiser than the greatest and highest of the wisdom of all men (1 Cor. 1:25).
- D. Man’s worship should be governed by the fact that God is all-knowing (omniscient).
1. Every person is fully known by God (Psalm 139:1-12).
 2. He knows our every strength and weakness.
 3. He knows what we need before we ask.
 4. Nothing escapes His notice.
 - a. For, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:13).
 5. He knows and understands what is in the heart of each worshiper.
- E. Man’s worship should be governed therefore, by the fact that God is omnipresent.
1. This says that man cannot hide from God.
 2. This implies that man can worship God anywhere.
 3. This implies that God is with us when we worship and when we are not worshipping.
- F. Man’s worship should be governed by the fact that God is love, holiness, goodness, righteousness, kindness, and graciousness.
1. He loves righteousness and hates lawlessness (James 1:17).
 2. He expresses that loving kindness and goodness towards man even though he does not deserve it.
 3. This fact motivates man to express thanksgiving in worship to God.
- G. Man’s worship should be governed by the fact that God is a God of wrath and anger, and He is One who abhors evil.
1. For, “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Heb. 1:9).
 2. And like Heb. 10:25-30 states, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.”
 3. Man should be careful that his worship conforms to the will of God and His nature.
 4. Man should investigate the pages of scripture to find God’s will regarding the manner in which He wants to be worshiped.

CONCLUSION:

1. God is the center of worship because of what God does.
 - A. Man should worship for not only who He is, but also for what He has done, is doing, and will do.

1. This includes His lovingkindness that is everlasting.
2. This includes His goodness that man experiences each day (Psalm 106:1-2).
3. This includes His hearing the cry of those who are in distress (Psalm 106:44-45).
- B. Man should respond by giving praise to the Lord.
 1. "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD." (Psa. 106:48).
- C. Man's focus on God is the basis of all worship.
2. You know, God loves the praise of His people and more important than anything in your life is to exalt him (Psa. 96:95), "that in all things God may be glorified (1 Pet. 4: 11).
 - A. Has your worship today acknowledged God's greatness?
 - B. Has your worship today been a privilege and the highlight of your week, loving him and being assembled together?
3. If not, how can you be a faithful child of God?
 - A. How can you be a faithful Christian?
 - B. Have you forgotten about God's goodness?
 - C. Have you forgotten about His Son on the cross for you?
4. If you have not surrendered to Christ, consider surrendering to Him today.