

Fil-Am Community Church

18 April 2010

What Worship is All About?

The Lord is **Risen!**
He is Risen Indeed!

Let me give you some advice on how to stay safe in the world today:

1. Avoid riding in automobiles because they are responsible for 20 % of all fatal accidents.
2. Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks because 14 % of all accidents occur to pedestrians.
3. Avoid traveling by air, rail or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.
4. Do not stay at home because 17% of all accidents occur in the home.
5. Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals, so above all else avoid hospitals.
6. You will be pleased to learn that only .001 % of all deaths occur in worship services at church, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders.

Therefore logic tells us the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is the CHURCH, gathering for worship!

So I'm really glad you're here with us this afternoon, the safest place on earth.

This is the second in a series of messages focusing on Worship out theme is Made to Worship, Last week we shared what it is meant to Worship in Spirit and Truth Today we will talk about what worship is.

I'd like to talk about the 5 W's and one H of worship, that is the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of worship.

Some of you may think 6 points but have no fear we will save the last 2 for next week when I talk about Worship as a Lifestyle.

1 Chronicles 16:29

"...Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness."

What does it mean to worship God? Let us start with the definition of Worship.

Worship is reverent devotion, honor and service to God.

I know it may sound a little generic but it gets across the main function of worship which is **HONOR, DEVOTION, and SERVICE to GOD!**

What does the Bible say about Worship to God?

1. WHO DO WE WORSHIP

The San Jose Mercury News once included the following item in their "News of the Weird" column.

"James Kelley of Washington D.C., is one of a small group at his local church who are esthetically Episcopalians, but who also do not believe in God."

"We all love the incense, the stained glass windows, the organ music, the vestments and all of that. Its drama, its aesthetics, its ritual, that's neat stuff I don't want to give all that up just because I don't believe in God."

While James Kelley obviously has a strange perspective, it's strange that some Christians follow this pattern for worship. Its not that they disbelieve in God, but somehow in worship we can disengage ourselves from the God that we believe in, and simply go thorough the motions.

Let's look at some Biblical examples of Worship.

Revelations 4:11

¹¹"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

The apostle John is saying that we worship God the CREATOR!

Romans 11:33

*³³Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*

The Apostle Paul is saying that we worship God who is GREAT and WONDERFUL!

Ephesians 3:20

*²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to his power that is at work within us,*

The Apostle Paul is saying we worship God who is MIGHTY and POWERFUL!

I could go on and give you hundreds of verses saying but I want to get to the main point.

Here it is- when we worship God, whether it be together on Sunday afternoon, or on our quiet time, or with some friends in a small group, we will not be able to fully worship until we stop to consider that God is **WOTRHY**, that he is the **CREATOR**, that's he is **SAVIOR**, that he is **POWERFUL** and that he is the one who loved us and sheltered us and secured for us a place in his **KINGDOM!**

So when we worship we are actually saying **GOD YOU ARE WIORTHY!**

We need to move beyond going through the motions of worship, we need to fully understand who it is we are worshiping!

Do you honestly think God is going to be pleased if I sing on key, or clap to the right beat, or raise my hands in the air id I don't fully understand who he is?

Am I going to be just like James Kelley, the enthusiastic Episcopalian who does not believe in God?

There are many times in my life when I've sung the words to a song, and not focused my mind and opened my heart upon the one I claimed to be singing it to.

So what do we think about? I think we are each responsible to take the time prior to worship to focus our minds and hearts on the one we are going to worship. This might mean spending some time in prayer before you leave the house on Sunday afternoon, or going over a list of the qualities of God, or whatever helps you to remain **FOCUSSED.**

One thing is for sure God will not accept worship that s not directed to him!
Jesus said, "You must worship the Lord your God: serve him only." *Luke 4:8*

2. WHY DO WE WORSHIP

We worship God because we are compelled to worship him. It is part of our spiritual DNA, its something that has been instilled into us.

Augustine said, "*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rest in you.*"

Exodus 20:3-5

³ "You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

God is telling Moses and us in no uncertain terms that he has created us to worship him.

Until our relationship with God and our worship life is meeting the core needs in our lives, we will not be able to truly find happiness or fulfillment in anything else.

Why do you think the father sent the Son to die on the cross? Was it for salvation? Was it so your life would be better?

I think the main point or reason God saves us is so we can worship him for all eternity. In the book of Revelations it tells us about four creatures that looked like different animals and they are gathered around God's throne.

Revelations 4:8

⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Revelations 4:11

¹¹"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

And you know what? All of us who have trusted in Jesus as Lord will join them in worshiping God forever and ever, because we too believe that he is **WORTHY**. I am sure when the angels blow their trumpets to signal the start of worship; all of us will rush the temple just to bask in the glory of God as we sing praises to him.

Unlike some churches and maybe here to when the worship leader starts to call people for worship, some continue to chat, some are busy doing personal stuff, some have not even arrived yet, and some remain in the back not ready to come in yet. ***Saints if that is our attitude when we get to heaven I am sure the temple doors will be shut in our face.***

So if we come to worship, let's take it seriously because the Bible says God is not mocked.

3. HOW DO WE WORSHIP

When it comes to worship I find that many Christians to be like a woman on a Lexus TV Commercial some years back.

On Christmas morning, she comes in to find a full sized luxury SUV in her living room. The vehicle is topped with a gigantic red ribbon. Taking the whole picture in she turns to her husband and asks, "Where did you get such a huge bow?"

She has a fully equipped SUV in her living room, yet she is transfixed by an ornament, a decoration has distracted her from the real mystery.

Is it possible that we can become focused on incidentals when we gather to worship?

Is it possible that we miss God? I believe we can and it has nothing to do with style or personal preferences, but the **STATE OF OUR HEARTS AND MINDS.**

The issue addressed last week was in **John 4:23-24;**

²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

If I am seeking to worship God in a manner that is pleasing to Him, I must worship him in Spirit and Truth.

We are to worship in Spirit- which means that our spirit will work in cooperation with his spirit as we pour out our hearts in praise to him.

Genuine worship does not consist in coming to a certain place or going through a certain ritual or liturgy, since God is spirit we worship him without the aid of visual aids, no images, pictures.

Sometimes we worship what we do not know because we don't worship in spirit

To worship God in truth only happens when I know **HIM** who is **TRUTH.** The only way to do this is by studying his word that tells me the **TRUTH** about him.

It is my job in worship to take those wonderful truths about God and praise him for them all.

4. WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF WORSHIP?

Now we worship God because he is worthy, we worship him because he expects us to, we worship because it is our prime duty as his children. We should have no other agenda when we worship him!

It should not be to gain anything for ourselves but it should be all about HIM!

I have found that as we draw close to him, he draws close to us. I will give you an example.

When I was training as a missionary in Hawaii, it became my practice to wake up at five in the morning and head up into the hills, not very far from our training site where I commune with God through worship and prayer and Bible reading. I try and do this for about an hour.

So one morning I was alone on the hill, doing my quiet time and then as it ended, I became quiet and listened to the Lord. It was during that quietness that the Lord led me to the verse **in James 3:13**, which says, “

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

I meditated on this verse, thinking about how I can serve others, what good deeds could I do for others? I realized that there were times that someone would leave a glass or a cup on the table or top of furniture, so I told myself that I can show humility by picking them up and washing them myself.

The mental picture of washing the dishes remained me of that fact that I was assigned as dishwasher that morning. I looked at my watch and saw that it was already 0630 so I went as fast as I could. When I approached the training site I saw the people putting their utensils in the big container as they finished their breakfast.

I came just in time to do the dishes!

That is one practical benefit for worship-**GUIDANCE**. When we truly worship we become so in tune with God that we are able to hear him when he speaks. We become sensitive to his leading.

God is always speaking to us; it is us that are not always listening!

It says in **Psalms 32:8**, *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”*

In short when you don't know what to do, **WORSHIP** the Lord and wait for him to respond.

Remember when Paul and Silas were imprisoned in the middle of the night they worshipped God and he responded by causing an Earth Quake to open the prison doors for them.

Another example I can think of is a story I read about a pastor that had an affair with his secretary and was asked to step down as pastor. He left but of course that brought a lot of pain to him, his family and his church. After months the pastor felt condemned because of the guilt of his sin.

He knew that God had forgiven him but still he felt that dark clouds of shame and embarrassment covering him. He felt as if God had withdrawn from him, he felt as if God withdrew his blessings and revoked his calling. He became depressed and went from church to church waiting for God's healing.

He decided to attend a worship service from the church he served before. He was warmly welcomed but didn't feel the joy of the Lord. He stood with the other people at the start of the praise and worship, but still felt so alone. As the moments passed, he began to sense the presence of God. As he began to sing "Healing Grace" his body began to feel warm. Then waves of peace and joy filled him, tears started to stream down his face and he heard God speaking to him saying, "Son I love you with an everlasting love, I have not stopped loving you. You will always be special to me, no matter what you have done." I finally realized that God really has forgiven me and restored me. I kept crying but this time not out of despair or loneliness but out of pure joy.

From that point on I became a free man again!

Saints you too can experience healing as you worship God, and that another practical benefit –healing. There are many more but I gave you two major ones, Guidance and Healing.

Do you need guidance this afternoon?

Do you desire healing?

Is there anything you need for the Lord?

Remember what it says in Psalms 37:4, ***"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart."***

