

Understanding Worship- Part Eight October, 10th, 2010

Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; presented by Jim Robison

John 4:23-24

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

1). Our foundational scripture here in John Chapter 4 comes from a conversation that the Lord has with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well at the sixth hour of the day. The conversation is about living water, husbands and worship. This is a prelude to the Lord spending 2 days with the Samaritans before returning to Galilee on the third day and as such forms part of the type concerning the church during this dispensation.

a). As we have seen God is looking for those who are true worshippers and that those who are the true worshippers and those who will be the Bride of Christ are synonymous.

b). That which is spoken to the Samaritan woman concerning worship then is of paramount importance to us, so that we may understand what is involved in worshipping God that we may be part of the Bride.

c). From our previous studies we have seen that worship and faithful obedience are one and the same thing, and that from a scriptural standpoint worship has nothing to do with music per se.

d). Also, we have seen that worship in Spirit is faithful obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, which comes through the written word -

Ro 8:14

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

e). That which is of the Spirit is without exception antithetical to that which is of the flesh and so faithful obedience in the Spirit can only be accomplished as a result of the death of our flesh -

John 6:63

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

f). This truth is pictured for us in the third day of the Genesis 1- restoration of the earth, the experience of Noah, the Red Sea passage of Israel following the death of the firstborn, and in the ordinance of baptism -

John 3:5

"Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

g). Worship in truth is faithful obedience to that which is truth, which, according to scripture are the scriptures themselves -

John 17:17

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

h). The submission of our will to the truth of scripture not only requires our complete faith in the substance of what God has said about the Kingdom to come and our inheritance as a joint heir with Christ, but also our complete acceptance and practice of the commands He has given us with respect to being found worthy of being a joint heir-

James 1:21-22

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

2). Last time, we closed with the realization that our worship of God in truth, our faithful obedience to His commands cannot be more keenly demonstrated and more positively expressed than in the way we relate to one another. Our worship of God in truth and how we relate to each other cannot be separated.

a). I would even goes as far as to say that I may very well be the key to all.

1John 4:20-21

"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

b). This is NOT an ambiguous statement.

c). And as we also saw last time the love we have for each other is not determined by our own parameters, but by the express definition of scripture.

d). Again, to remind ourselves -

1Corinthians 13:1-

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I

give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 ¶ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 ¶ Love never fails."

e). And this whole perspective is summed up for us in –

Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Romans 13:9-10

"For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.""

f). If you look back to see the commands that God gives to Israel in Exodus and Leviticus, they are all with a view to the relationship they are to have with each other –

Ex 20:16

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

g). And within the context of God's commands to Israel, their neighbor would be their fellow Jews – in fact the Hebrew word 'neighbor' can also be translated as 'brother'.

h). And so, within our context, our neighbor and our brother would be one and the same – fellow believers.

3). Now let's take this one step further –

James 2:8

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well."

a). Do you see how loving our neighbor is described here? 'the royal law'

b). Not only is this the royal law because it is given by the One who is King, but it is also the royal law for it will lead to regality for those who keep it.

c). Those who keep it will be faithfully obedient to 1 Corinthians 13, will be true worshippers, and will comprise the Bride of Christ. Hence, the royal law is relational.
4). And as we continue to pursue this, let us add another dimension to the royal law. Not that this is something completely new as it is already implicit in our definition of love from 1 Corinthians 13. We find this in -

Galatians 6:1-3

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

- a). Let's look at this in some detail.
- b). Our scripture begins with the word 'brethren' clearly indicating that it is addressed to Christians and contextually we are looking at a man, who is also a Christian, a brother, who is overtaken in any trespass, or any sin.
- c). The admonition here is for those who are spiritual to restore this person in a spirit of gentleness.
- d). Please note that restoration for those in sin can only be accomplished through the Spirit, it will never happen out of the flesh - the flesh will want to judge, condemn and exalt itself in superiority. In other words our flesh will want to use someone's sin as a justification for our thinking that we are so much better than them because we have not committed that sin.
- e). Our admonition continues with a challenge for those doing the restoration to consider themselves lest they also be tempted.
- f). Now we might at first think that this would be tempted by the same sin, but this would be a misconception - we should consider ourselves unless we are tempted into any sin and therefore ourselves need restoring.
- g). Sin from God's perspective is sin, which is anything contrary to His word. It is the outworking of a fallen nature that wants to classify sin into degrees of seriousness - all for the purpose of finding an excuse for our 'small sin' because it is not a 'big sin' - rather we should understand sin in the way described in -

James 2:10-11

"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law."

h). Verse 2 then tells us to bear one another's burdens so as to fulfill the law of Christ - which must be a reference to the royal law, the first and greatest commandment.

- i). The word translated 'burdens' is the Greek word - baros = probably from the same as 939 (through the notion of going down; compare 899); weight; in the New Testament only, figuratively, a load, abundance, authority:--burden(-some), weight.
- j). The burden we are to bear for one another is then a burdensome weight that would drag us down, and contextually this weight would be the sin that overtakes us.
- k). The idea of the word 'bear' is to lift the weight - literally then we are to lift the weight of each other's sin.
- l). So what would that look like?
- 5). Well, let's trace this back a little to where we have already been realizing that sin against God is also going to be relational with regards to each other. Our sin will of necessity impact each other and sometimes quite dramatically.
 - a). If we commit adultery (even looking lustfully at another person) this is not just a sin against God but also a sin against the one who is a fellow heir of the grace of life - our spouse.
 - b). If we are grumbling, complaining or divisive, this must impact those we grumble against, complain about and divide ourselves from.
 - c). If we have outbursts of anger, or think evil we will wound and condemn those around us.
 - d) I think we can see how this works.
 - e). For those, however, realizing their sin with a repentant heart, there is an enormous weight of guilt and shame.
 - f). And that weight can only be lifted in one way - through forgiveness. -

1John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- g). This is a fabulous and comforting promise, but just as our sin is relational so must be our forgiveness -

Mark 11:25

**"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.
26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."**

- h). Do we realize then that in order for 1 John 1:9 to be a reality we must comply with Mark 11:25? If not then v.26 will be our reality, not only in the present, but also in that day when we stand at His Judgment Seat.

6). And let us consider Peter -

Matthew 18:21-22

"Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

a). Clearly, as we look at the numbers the Lord uses we realize that we are to continually forgive our brother, regardless of how many times he sins against us – even if it is the same sin over and over again – and each time it must be as if it is the first time. We do not keep score or make a list to use later.

b). We should understand this as described in –

1Peter 4:8

"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

c). Now think of this in the same way as the blood in the OT – the blood would cover the sins of the people therefore when God looked He saw the blood not the sin and therefore the person was not condemned. In the same way if we love each other according to 1 Corinthians 13 then we will not look on each other's sin – our love for one another will cover it and we will not sit in judgment upon one another or condemn one another, rather we will have compassion on one another as we call to mind the sin in our own life that is no less significant than anyone else's.

d). Now we are to forgive one another even if the person who has sinned against us has not asked for forgiveness. This does not condone or excuse the sin and scripture speaks very clearly about how unconfessed sin is to be dealt with.

e). James talks about it –

James 5:20

"Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

f). But for our purposes today, we are concentrating on our part as the one who gives forgiveness.

7). Following the interchange between the Lord and Peter in Matthew 18:21-22 the Lord immediately continues in v23 with a parable, as follows –

Matthew 18:23-35

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 "But as he was not

able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 27 "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 30 "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

- a). The subject of the parable is clear, it is 'the kingdom of heaven' – and as such is another of the parables that deals with entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom with respect to the eternally saved – we will notice that those involved are all servants of the King.
- b). And of course the teaching within the parable is not difficult – we have all been in debt to God to such a degree that we could never have even begun to repay Him. We were eternally lost and our redemption from that condition could only be provided by God – we could never do anything to earn our eternal salvation.
- c). God forgave us that debt and gave us the free gift of eternal life.
- d). Whatever sin our brother has committed against us is as nothing compared with that we had committed against God.
- e). Before we were eternally saved we had automatically rejected the purpose for our creation, thereby rejecting God's plans and purposes for the ages and had rejected the One who had provided the redemption necessary for us to receive our heavenly calling.
- f). Now this is not to minimize the sin that may have been committed against us. Anyone who has been a witness to the sin of adultery, for example, will understand the enormity of the devastation that brings – but if you put this sin alongside the enormity of the sin we had committed against God, it is a small thing by comparison.
- g). We should understand this in the same way as "our afflictions" are described in –

2Corinthians 4:17

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"

- i/ Forgiveness can only be granted out of the Spirit – remember that God is Spirit and forgiveness is one of His characteristics.
 - ii/ In the example we have used, the flesh could never begin to forgive such a betrayal.
 - h). In our parable the unforgiving servant is handed over to the torturers until he has paid the entire debt to the King – something he could never do.
 - i). And our parable concludes with this chilling warning - "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."
 - j). Being handed over to the torturers is another facet of the picture of exclusion from the Kingdom, the loss of inheritance and the loss of the soul. And the final verse of the parable is unequivocal.
- 8). The apostle, Paul describes forgiveness as a garment we should wear -

Colossians 3:12-13

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

a).

Ephesians 4:31-32

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."

- b). Now we have two scriptures here from the companion books of Ephesians and Colossians which essentially say to us the same as that found in our parable – we are to forgive one another.
- c). Notice the phrases, ‘even as Christ forgave you’ and ‘just as God in Christ forgave you’. Have you ever thought about exactly what this means? How did God in Christ forgive us?
- d). You see, we normally jump ahead to the conclusion rather than thinking about the process.
- e). Sin and death have always gone hand in hand. And in order to pay the price for sin and provide eternal life, Christ on the cross took our sin upon Himself and poured out His life in His blood in exchange for our death –

Hebrews 9:22

"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." (forgiveness)

- f). This is the way it has been from the Garden of Eden onwards.

- g). In other words, Christ took the pain, humiliation and shame of our sin upon Himself and then laid down His life that we might be forgiven by God in Him.
- h). And our scriptures from Ephesians and Colossians tell us that we must forgive each other in the same way.
- i). What this means for us, then, is that we must be prepared to receive the pain, the hurt, the humiliation, the shame of the sin that is committed against us – the hurt is real, the shame is real – we are not to deny it or minimize it. We can do nothing else but accept it.
- j). Then in order to forgive that which has been done to us, we will have to lay down our life – die to our flesh and make the choice to forgive in the power of the Spirit.
- 9). Christ after His resurrection still bore the scars from the cross and some of us may have to bear the scars of the hurts that have been done to us our whole life. But that has nothing to do with our choice to forgive.
- a). We may also have come to believe that if we have forgiven someone we forget what they have done to us – forgive and forget – this is not scriptural. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting.
- b). Rather it means **choosing** never to bring up that sin again and apply it to a new circumstance.
- c). Our sins we have asked God to forgive, will not be brought up by Him at the Judgment Seat – has God forgotten them? Well, His being all knowing, would make such a thing impossible. Instead He chooses not to bring them to His remembrance –

Heb 10:17

“Then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

- d). This is the way that we are to follow. This is part of how we experience the sufferings of Christ. This is not easy, nor is it what our flesh wants to do, but God would not have given us the command to forgive if it were not possible and would not have made such strong statements about it if it were not of the utmost importance with regards to the Kingdom.
- e) We must remember –

2Peter 1:3

“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,”

- f). And remember our scripture from –

Hebrews 12:15

“looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;”

g). God has given us the grace to be able to forgive. Let's not fall short of that grace by believing that it is not sufficient to enable us to do so. God's grace is sufficient if we will look with the eyes of the spirit and not the eyes of the flesh.

10). Also many times we believe that forgiveness can only have taken place if we no longer have the pain associated with the hurt that was done to us - remember, we forgive as a matter of choice, as a choice to be faithfully obedient, not as a matter of feeling.

a). We are still in the body of this death and it may be a long time before our emotions catch up with our decision - but eventually they will.

b). If, however, we keep a mental list to go back and draw from, so as to engender that same emotion into the present for the purpose of punishing the one in sin, then we really never had any intention to forgive in the first place.

Galatians 5:15

"If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

c). Our exercising of forgiveness is not a matter of words but of action.

d). And what a privilege to practice an attribute of God that has provided us with eternal security.

11). If we are going to worship God in spirit and truth then we must have fervent love for one another - if we have fervent love for one another then we will choose to forgive one another seventy times seven.

a). The entrance way to the Kingdom may very well hinge on how we respond to God's command.

b). In closing, let us consider Peter's words -

2Peter 1:1-12

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent

to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 ¶ For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.”