

John, Part 15, The Revelation of Jesus Christ – True Worship

John 4:19-26

Jesus went to Samaria with a divine purpose to meet with a Samaritan woman who was in trouble. It was not an accident that Jesus found her at Jacob's well. The Lord always knows where to find hurting people.

During their encounter, Jesus revealed the deep trouble this woman was in. Her life had been flooded with multiple failures. At Jacob's well, Jesus introduced her to the fountain of living water that would spring up into everlasting life. Jesus cannot offer everlasting life without dealing with the issues that draw us into sin and destroy our lives.

At the well, Jesus revealed secrets about her life that she was not willing to discuss. As Jesus began probing into her secret life, He asked her to call her husband. She said, "I have no husband."

In John 4:17-18 NKJV Jesus said: "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

This woman was immediately aware that Jesus knew intimate and secret details about her life. It must have been extremely strange for her to meet a Man she did not know, but He knew all about her.

John 4:19 NKJV The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."

This Man at the well had supernatural knowledge so He must be a prophet. She did not know that He was the Son of God. In her opinion, He knew things that only a prophet of God could know. She knew she was outclassed and was not able to argue with a man of God, much less the Son of God. What Jesus said to her pointed directly to the sin of her life. She immediately began feeling the weight of her sin.

Instead of confessing her sins, she began chatting about religion, worship, and theology. Guilty people often do this. It is easier to talk about your father's religion than to admit personal transgressions. No one can be saved who hides their sins. Instead of admitting her need, she wanted to appear to be spiritual and religious.

John 4:20 NKJV Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

She knew something about the worship of her fathers. She knew how and where her people worshipped and that her people worshipped differently.

Rather than talk about her sinful life and real need, she wanted this Man of God to solve an ancient dispute. You can see her squirming. She felt inadequate. Where should we worship? Which religion is right? What are the differences in the way our fathers and you Jews worship?

The Samaritans said that God's presence was in Mount Gerizim; the Jews said He dwelt in Jerusalem.

Traditionally, Mount Gerisim was where Abraham offered Isaac on the altar before God and where he met Melchizedek. Tradition often sneaks into the way that people worship. Holy places are the emphasis of many people's worship. They make pilgrimages to holy places to worship. Many cities and mountains around the world are considered to be holy to various religions.

Jesus did not avoid her question, but He used it to reveal His purpose for coming to Samaria.

Jesus did not come to Samaria to debate with her about religious preferences and places. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to Samaria for a desperate heart and lost soul. Then Jesus brought her face-to-face with her sins. She needed soul cleansing, satisfaction, and real change. What little religion she had left her empty. She needed what everyone needs. She needed cleansing, forgiveness, and a relationship with God. Everything about her life and lifestyle left her empty. In Jesus' presence, her heart was stirred toward God like never before.

John 4:21 NKJV Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Now Jesus began talking to her about true worship. True worship is more than being on the right mountain or in the place that was accepted by our fathers. Forms and rituals of worship are not enough.

Jesus let her know that the only way to worship God was by knowing the Father. The only way to know the Father is through salvation, and salvation only comes through the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

John 4:22 NIV84 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.

When she perceived that a prophet was standing before her and had seen her inner secrets, piercing conviction gripped her soul. All of a sudden she knew that she needed to worship. Her only reference to worship was what her fathers had done when they worshipped. The depth of her lost condition was gripping her soul. You can almost hear the urging debates flooding her mind.

This man was a man of God or a prophet. Could He help and direct her to God? Down deep she knew that she needed help. That is what the Holy Spirit does to each of us when God starts dealing with our lives. Conviction often makes us want to come before God and bow down and worship. We feel a need to pray.

Now Jesus shows us something about true worship.

John 4:23 NIV84 Yet 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.

Jesus said that an hour was coming that would change the whole nature of worship. Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit would change everything. After the passion of the Christ is fulfilled, worship of God would be radically and completely changed from the forms of Old Testament service. "True worship" means that believers enter God's presence by faith and worship Him. Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit was about to change everything. Jesus was opening up a new and living way into the presence of God and the most holy place through His own blood. The cross and blood of Jesus was going to change the way people approach God. Think about the free access we have to the mercy seat of heaven through the precious blood of Jesus. The veil of the temple was about to be torn and God was coming near. The Holy Spirit was about to descend on all men.

Jesus was telling this woman about a radically new life of worship and relationship with God the Father. Worship as they had known it for centuries was about to be changed. This radical change in worship opens up the possibilities to enter into God's presence in a dungeon, prison, field, or wherever a person may be. In the past, worship had taken on a form and ritual that was not achieving what God had planned. Religion had become a form of carrying out ordinances or traditions of their own invention. Now in Christ, free access

and worship of the Father must be in spirit and truth.

John 4:22 NIV84 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Jesus said: “You worship what you do not know...” She had enough knowledge about God that she could talk about the place of worship and the way her father’s did it. Her fathers had gone to the mountain to worship, but they did not know God.

Many people go to church, but they do not know God. They follow the form and ordinance, but they do not know God. They have not had an encounter with the living God.

Salvation is God’s plan. Through Christ, God was opening up a new way into the presence of God. Jesus promised that people from every nation, kindred, and people would be saved.

Jesus identified with the Jews when He said, “WE.” He was a fully born Jew. God had revealed Himself to the Jews and gave them His plan of salvation. Salvation is of the Jews.

Jesus Christ was telling this woman that a change is coming in the way people worship. With the advent of the Messiah, a new order of worship has been introduced.

True worshippers must worship God in spirit and in truth.

John 4:24 NIV84 God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Before Christ came, men worshipped God at special places, at special times, and in special ways. They worshipped in holy places, temples, and before altars. They made sacrifices of animals and followed prescribed rituals that were defined by the Law. They approached God with many types of washing, burning incense, and with blood and fire. Some had practiced over 4,000 types of washings to cover every thinkable type of problem so they could approach God.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn and a new kind of access to God was introduced. Now, in Christ the place and locality are not the focus. We do not have to travel to Jerusalem or some other holy city to worship God. Christ has opened the door into God’s presence. By Him, everyone can enter into the holy presence of God.

What is the nature of true worship?

John 4:24 NKJV God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

We are to worship God in spirit and in truth. True worship involves the spirit. There are many connotations of “spirit.” Spirit can be “with emotion, with attitude, character, fortitude, and animation.” The highest part of a man is his spirit. Worship is not just a function of the body or the mind. True worship is spiritual worship.

What is this kind of worship that is in spirit and truth?

First, spirit-filled worship must be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. God is seeking such to worship Him.

Second, to worship God in spirit means to worship God with the spiritual drive and ability of one’s “inner most being.” True worship is not just form and ritual, but heart felt and driven by truth. Our worship must be without sham, hypocrisy or pretense. God formed man out of the dust of the ground to be a worshipper. Man became a living soul when God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils.

“Spirit” is a result of the breath of life that proceeds from God. God created man in His image and likeness to worship and relate to God. Man was uniquely created with a spirit to worship God. Man was created to worship from spirit to Spirit. To worship God in spirit

means to worship God with the spiritual drive and the ability of one's innermost being.

I believe true worship involves both of these. True worship is an emotional and vibrant activity, but it is more than that. True worship is spirit to Spirit. Through the spirit we have intimate communion and fellowship with God. The spiritual core of one's life and being must enter into worship. True worship comes as a result of our spirit being inflamed with the power and life of the Holy Spirit.

The question must be answered, "How can man truly worship if their spirit and soul are corrupted by sin?" The fall of man rendered us incapable to true worship. Sin and iniquity take us away from God and hinders worship. True worship can only occur when our spirit is in harmony with the nature and Spirit of God. True spiritual worship is not merely form, ceremony, talent or ability, but spiritual reality.

"God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We cannot do this on our own. Only Jesus can quicken what is dead in us and bring life. The only way true harmony with God can occur in us is by the indwelling Spirit of God. By the power of Christ, the Holy Spirit is sent to quicken us and give us life. The Holy Spirit opens us to the realities of God's kingdom. The Holy Spirit quickens our spirit and takes us into a new realm.

God gave a word to Ezekiel about this. **Ezekiel 37:14 NKJV** I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live...

Jesus is saying this same thing. This woman in Samaria was missing a living relationship with God. Jesus had arrived in her town to give a personal introduction into a new life. What Jesus was offering was no different from what He offered Nicodemus. Jesus the Messiah of God was standing in her presence and was offering the only solution for her life.

Ezekiel prophesied that God would put His Spirit in them and they would live. Oh breath of God come and breathe on us. We must have the true breath of life for us to live.