

BACK TO THE BASICS: Worship

John 4:19-30ⁱ

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you this morning. For those of you that are guests with us today, whether you are in the room or joining us online, we say a very special welcome to you. My name is Chris Wigley, I have the privilege of serving as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. And on behalf of our church family, and our staff team, we welcome you.

We would love the opportunity to be able to connect with you. You can let us know you are here in a couple ways. You can text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you do that, a reply text will be sent with a link you can click on. That will direct you to a form that will then provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you.

Or you can stop by the information center in the lobby area. We have a gift we'd like to give you there. Again, we look forward to connecting with you.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are working our way, this summer, through a teaching series we have called, "Back to the Basics." We are taking a biblical look at foundational aspects of The Church and Christianity. Today our subject is Worship. So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn with me to The Gospel of John, chapter 4 as we will be in verses 19-30 this morning.

ILLUSTRATION: Worship Fail

How many of you, by a show of hands, have ever seen what is called a worship fail video? Okay. For those of you that do not know what that is, a worship fail is something that has gone wrong in the middle of a worship service and has been recorded on video. Whether that is a keyboard falling, a guitar out of tune, or the drum cage caving in, it is a worship fail. I've even seen videos where a saxophone player is playing a different song. Some are humorous and others are painful to watch. There is an Instagram account dedicated to worship fails. In your free time today, search worship fails on YouTube and you'll find them.

I have a friend that served as a worship pastor for many years. But when he was 17 years old, he started leading worship at revivals. He would go with a

preacher and spend a week at a church holding nightly worship meetings. My friend is a talented vocalist and guitar player, but that is the extent of his instrumental ability. That's important to know. So, he would work with other musicians in the host church to plan and execute worship services.

Well, at one revival he was a part of, on the last night of the meetings, you know, the most important night, where the pastor gives people an opportunity to respond to the Gospel, the piano player informed my friend that, due to a family emergency they would have to duck out after musical worship. He said that was fine, but to let the pastor know so he would be aware. She said that she would do that.

Well, come to the end of the message that night, the pastor asked everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes. He was drawing the net, inviting people to respond to Jesus. He then announced that my friend would be playing softly on the piano as people had opportunity to respond to Jesus. Remember, my friend didn't know how to play the piano. In fact, the only song my friend knew on the piano was "Home Sweet Home" by Motley Crew.

So, you guessed it, he approached the piano, begging The Lord not to kill him, and began to slowly and softly play that pagan song on the piano. All while people are giving their lives to Jesus.ⁱⁱ That, my friends, is a worship fail.

In that moment, from the outside looking in, what my friend was doing looked a lot like worship. But we all know that it wasn't. And while we laugh at that story, and it is funny, and to hear him tell it is even better, if we're honest, there are times that what we do looks a lot like worship, but it really isn't true worship.

And here's the deal. Apart from salvation, worship might be the most important thing a believer does. Our understanding of worship is important. Because when we get worship right, other issues, priorities, and things in our life find their rightful place.ⁱⁱⁱ

Jesus says that is the case in Matthew 6:33, *"³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness [that's worship], and all these things will be added to you."* I know it's true of me, but we often find ourselves focusing on the "all these things" part of that verse that we lose sight of seeking God's kingdom first and foremost. And what happens when we do that is that small things become big things because we've taken our eyes off the main thing. Worship is vitally

important and as believers, we have to get this right. Apart from salvation, worship is the most important issue.

BACKGROUND:

So, let's look at John 4, this morning, as we seek to fully understand worship. This is a familiar story for those of you that have been in church for a while. John 4 is the story of the woman at the well.

Jesus and His disciples are traveling from Judea to Galilee. He lead His disciples through Samaria on the way. When they came to the town of Sychar, they rested at a well. Jesus instructed His disciples to go into town to buy food.

We learn that at noon, a woman came to the well where Jesus was resting. It was an odd time of the day for people to draw water from the well. By noon, it was like the surface of the sun. But Jesus had a divine appointment with this woman.

Jesus struck up a conversation with this woman and the conversation quickly revealed that Jesus was not an ordinary man. He read her like a book which led this woman to come to the realization that He was a prophet. This is where we pick up the story. John, chapter 4, beginning in verse 19. You follow along in your copy of God's Word.

¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." ²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him.

In this passage, the word translated as "worship" is mentioned 10 times. And Jesus places a qualifier on worship in verse 23. He says that God is looking for TRUE worshipers. What is true worship? That is where I want to focus this morning, and I believe Jesus gives us at least three identifiers of what is true worship.

MESSAGE:

First, true worship is...

1) More than a service.

Often, we associate worship with a worship service. And many times, we specify worship as the musical part of the service. But worship is more than a worship service. We often confuse worship with music because we don't have a clear definition of what worship is.

Author, Ronald Allen, defined worship in his book entitled, "Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel." His definition is a great place to begin in understanding worship. He defines worship as, "Worship is an active response to God, whereby we turn our minds attention and our hearts affection upon The Lord in declaration of His great worth."^{iv} According to this definition, worship is not confined to a church worship service. The same is true for Jesus' definition.

Look at verses 19-21 again. Notice the woman at the well is confusing worship with a service and Jesus is trying to explain that it is so much more than that.

¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain [time and place], but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship [again]. [time and place]."

²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. Worship is not bound my time and place.

We understand worship to exist in two forms: private and corporate. Private worship is what you and I do in our own time with The Lord. Corporate worship is what we do together on Sundays. There is a tendency to confuse the two. There is also a tendency to ignore private worship at the expense of corporate worship. But what Jesus is teaching us here is that worship is not bound by time and place and that both forms of worship are vitally important.

Jesus says, in verse 24, *“**24**God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in **spirit and truth**.”* Worshiping God in spirit and truth is something we do privately and corporately. For worship to be true worship, it must be two things: spirit and truth.^v

Now, I want you to notice something about the word, “spirit.” It is a lower case “s.” That’s because the spirit that Jesus is talking about is not the Holy Spirit but rather our spirit. He is referring to the human spirit. The very core of who we are is our spirit. For true worship to be done in spirit means that the deepest part of who we are must be engaged in the object of worship, Almighty God. For something to be done in spirit, it has to be real, authentic. In other words, worship of God is not something that can be faked.

It is possible to spend time in worship and not truly worship. At that point, worship is just going through the motions that we think we have to go through. Isaiah 29:13 says, *“...people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me...”* If we are going to be true worshippers, the kind God is seeking, it must be something we do in spirit.

But Jesus also says that it is something that must be done in truth. True worship is more than being sincere. It is aligning our lives to The Truth of the Word of God. It is possible to be sincere and be wrong. That is being sincerely wrong. But true worship of Almighty God is sincere and in accord to The Word of The Lord.

So, worship is more than a service. People might ask, “What time does worship begin?” To which we would say, “9:30 or 11am on Sundays.” But, beloved, a true understand of worship would say, “Worship begins when you are saved and never ends.” We begin worship the moment we bow the knee to Jesus, and we will continue in worship when we get to glory.

Worship is so much more than a serve. Secondly, true worship is...

2) An encounter with Jesus.

The woman at the well had an encounter with Jesus, the King of kings! Look at verses 25 and 26. *“**25**The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” **26**Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”*

How can you tell if you’ve truly worshiped? If you’ve encountered the living, Lord Jesus. And you can tell if you’ve encountered The Lord if you have been transformed.

I want to take you to another passage of Scripture. If you would, hold your place there in John 4 and flip over to Revelation 1. In the first chapter of Revelation, John, Jesus’ best friend on earth, has an encounter with the living, Lord Jesus, and it changes him. Read with me, Revelation 1:17. *“**17** When I saw **him** [Jesus], **I fell at his feet as though dead**. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last...”*

What did Jesus’ best friend on earth do when he encountered the glorified Jesus? He didn’t fist bump Him. He didn’t high five Jesus. He didn’t chest bump Him. No, when John encountered Jesus, he was forever changed. Fell at His feet as though dead.

When we truly worship God, it allows us to see God more clearly, and to see ourselves more clearly, and that leads to a treasuring of Jesus. Listen to me, when our view of God increases, our understanding of our sinfulness increases. But sinful humanity is so loved by a holy God. And only by the blood of Jesus, broken people can enter into a relationship with this amazing God. The truth is, you and I are unworthy of a relationship with God. But because of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross, we can be welcomed into the presence of God. And this is the motivation by which we worship God wholeheartedly.

The word we get for “worship,” comes from the old English word, “woerthwhip.” So, when we worship God, we are proclaiming His worth.^{vi} We are ascribing worth to the highest being in the universe.^{vii} God is worthy of our worship because of what He has done for us. And when we encounter Jesus, we understand His worth even more.

Worship is more than a service and it is an encounter with Jesus. Thirdly, true worship...

3) Produces something.

When we have worshiped in spirit and truth, there is a work that is done inside of us. Look with me at John 4, again, verses 28-30.

28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.

Notice what the woman left – her water jar. Her whole purpose for coming to the well was to get water. Now, she leaves the very thing she came to get. Why? Because she encountered Jesus, and something was produced within her. She was no longer occupied by the things she was before she met Jesus.

In a way, the water jar was a symbol of her sin and shame. It's why she came at noon, to avoid judgment. But she left her sin and shame and pursued a mission. When we worship in spirit and truth, we leave changed and we leave with a mission. Like the woman at the well, we can leave our sin and shame at the feet of Jesus, welcomed into the presence of God, and then sent out on a mission.

Look what she did. She ran into the town, to face the very people casting judgment on her, and started talking about her life-changing encounter with Jesus. The change in her produced an interest, so much so that people left the town and headed out to meet this Jesus that changed her life.

When we have truly worshiped, we want everyone to know the Jesus we've encountered, the forgiveness we've found, and the relationship with God that has been restored. And that has always been the case throughout the Scriptures.

Moses, when he encountered God, only His back, realized he was on holy ground. An action was produced. Jacob wrestled with God at Peniel and had a permanent limp following his encounter. And the woman at the well encountered Jesus and left changed. She came a sinner, filled with shame that led her to the well at noon that day, but she left with a mission.

What's more is that there is a sense of urgency with this lady. She not only has a mission but demonstrates an urgency by which she is to execute the mission. She left everything. And her urgency was caught by the people.

Listen, the enemy would have you and I believe that the very thing that causes sin and shame in our lives makes us unable to communicate the Gospel. But that that couldn't be further from the truth. The very thing that cast judgment

upon us, when surrendered to Jesus, when laid and left at His feet, is the very thing that strengthens your testimony.

Another thing that I see in this woman is the effectiveness of an unrehearsed testimony. She didn't know what to say. This woman didn't lay out the gospel with perfection. She didn't use the latest apologetics book to make a case for Jesus. She just wanted people to experience what she experienced. Come see a man who knows my sin yet loves me anyway. The very thing I was thirsting for is satisfied in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

And here's the thing I want us to understand. The mission that the woman at the well was carrying out was just as much worship as anything else. Obedience is an act of worship. It is a surrender to Jesus and the call He has placed on our lives.

CONCLUSION: As we close this morning, I want to ask the band to come back and lead us in a time of response.

For some of you, this is your well moment. You've been steeped in sin and shame. You are carrying a jar looking for fulfillment. And you've come this morning hoping to go unnoticed. But Jesus has met you today. He has revealed Himself to you. And while you may be convicted to the core of your sin and shame, He wants you to know Him.

If you're here today and you have never surrendered to Jesus as Lord, today is the day. Remember, we are not talking about lip service and head knowledge. I'm talking about in your spirit, the deepest core of who you are, have you yielded to Jesus as Lord. If not, or if you have questions about that, our Elders will be here at the front and would love to visit with you about what it means to make Jesus The Lord and Savior of your life.

Others of you here this morning have come to the realization that worship for you has become a check the box kind of thing. In this time of response, I want to encourage you to worship in spirit and truth. Making much of Jesus in this place.

Others of you are hearing from The Lord and being sent out on mission. Perhaps your response this morning is to surrender, with urgency, to whatever it is that God has placed on your heart. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: Wayne Grudem, "Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith," Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1999; John MacArthur, "The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11," Moody Press: Chicago, 2006; Roger L. Fredrikson, "The Communicator's Commentary: John," Word Books: Waco, 1985; Gary M. Burge, "The NIV Application Commentary: John," Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000; Chris Wigley: Consulted previous sermons preached on the subject of Worship; Skip Heitzig, Various sermons, "Expound: John 4:19-54, We Pursue God... Through Worship, Fact-Checking Your Worship," Accessed online at: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/>; Matt Darby, "Worship In Spirit And Truth," sermon accessed: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5394615>.

ⁱⁱ Story of my friend, Matt Darby.

ⁱⁱⁱ Statement taken from Matt Darby, "Worship In Spirit And Truth," sermon accessed: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5394615>.

^{iv} Ronald Allen, "Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel," Wilmoth Press: Portland, 1978, page 16.

^v Inspired by Pastor Skip Heitzig in his message, "Expound: John 4:19-54."

^{vi} Stacey Gleddiesmith, "Worship Theology 101: What's in a Word?," article published by Thinking Worship, April 25, 2011, accessed: <https://thinkingworship.com/tag/worth-ship/>.

^{vii} Heitzig, "We Pursue God... Through Worship."