

Worship in the Spirit

by Andrew Murray

True worship is worship in the Spirit and in Truth, which is the highest glory of man and the greatest desire of God.

Scripture: John 4:23

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Worship"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the significance of worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, as highlighted in John 4:23-24. He explains that true worship is the highest expression of our fellowship with God, transcending mere external observances and relying on the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Murray contrasts fleshly worship, which is limited to human effort, with spiritual worship that is empowered by the Holy Spirit. He encourages believers to silence the flesh and yield to the Spirit, recognizing that God seeks true worshippers who reflect His holiness and glory. Ultimately, Murray calls for a deeper understanding and practice of worship that honors God and aligns with His divine purpose.

Transcript

'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.'--John 4: 23, 24.

'We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Phil. 3: 3.

To worship is man's highest glory. He was created for fellowship with God: of that fellowship worship is the sublimest expression. All the exercises of the religious life meditation and prayer, love and faith, surrender and obedience, all culminate in worship. Recognising what God is in His holiness, His glory, and His love, realizing what I am as a sinful creature, and as the Father's redeemed child, in worship I gather up my whole being and present myself to my God, to offer Him the adoration and the glory which is His due. The truest and fullest and nearest approach to God is worship. Every sentiment and every service of the religious life is included in it: to worship is man's highest destiny, because in it God is all.

Jesus tells us that with His coming a new worship would commence. All that heathen or Samaritans had called worship, all even that the Jews had known of worship in accordance with the provisional revelation of God's law, would make way for something entirely and distinctively new--the worship in Spirit and in

Truth. This is the worship He was to inaugurate by the giving of the Holy Spirit. This is the worship which now alone is well pleasing to the Father. It is for this worship specially that we have received the Holy Spirit. Let us, at the very commencement of our study of the work of the Spirit, take in the blessed thought that the great object for which the Holy Spirit is within us is, that we worship in spirit and in truth. 'Such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers,'-for this He sent forth His Son and His Spirit.

In Spirit. When God created man a living soul, that soul, as the seat and organ of his personality and consciousness, was linked, on the one side, through the body, with the outer visible world, on the other side, through the spirit, with the unseen and the Divine. The soul had to decide whether it would yield itself to the spirit, by it to be linked with God and His will, or to the body and the solicitations of the visible. In the fall, the soul refused the rule of the spirit, and became the slave of the body with its appetites. Man became flesh; the spirit lost its destined place of rule, and became little more than a dormant power; it was now no longer the ruling principle, but a struggling captive. And the spirit now stands in opposition to the flesh, the name for the life of soul and body together, in their subjection to sin.

When speaking of the unregenerate man in contrast with the spiritual (1 Cor. 2:14), Paul calls him psychical, soullish, or animal, having only the natural life. The life of the soul comprehends all our moral and intellectual faculties, as they may even be directed towards the things of God, apart from the renewal of the Divine Spirit. Because the soul is under the power of the flesh, man is spoken of as having become flesh, as being flesh. As the body consists of flesh and bone, and the flesh is that part of it which is specially endowed with sensitiveness, and through which we receive our sensations from the outer world, the flesh denotes human nature, as it has become subject to the world of sense. And because the whole soul has thus come under the power of the flesh, the Scripture speaks of all the attributes of the soul as belonging to the flesh, and being under its power. So it contrasts, in reference to religion and worship, the two principles from which they may proceed. There is a fleshly wisdom and a spiritual wisdom (1 Cor.2: 12 ; Col. 1: 9). There is a service of God trusting in the flesh and glorying in the flesh, and a service of God by the spirit (Phil. 3:3, 4; Gal. 6: 13).

There is a fleshly mind and a spiritual mind (Col.2: 18, 1: 9). There is a will of the flesh, and a will which is of God working by His Spirit (John 1:13 ; Phil. 2:13). There is a worship which is a satisfying of the flesh, because it is in the power of what flesh can do (Col.2: 18, 23), and a worship of God which is in the Spirit. It is this worship Jesus came to make possible, and to realize in us, by giving a new spirit in our inmost part, and then, within that, God's Holy Spirit.

'In Spirit and in Truth.' Such a worship in Spirit is worship in Truth. Just as the words in Spirit do not mean internal as contrasted with external observances, but Spiritual, inwrought by God's Spirit, as opposed to what man's natural power can effect, so the words in Truth do not mean hearty, sincere, upright. In all the worship of the Old Testament saints, they knew that God sought Truth in the inward parts; they sought Him with their whole hearts, and most uprightly, and yet they attained not to that worship in Spirit and Truth, which Jesus brought us when He rent the vail of the flesh. Truth here means the substance, the reality, the actual possession of all that the worship of God implies, both in what it demands and what it promises. John speaks of Jesus as 'the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' And he adds, 'For the Law was given by Moses ; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' If we take truth as opposed to falsehood, the law of Moses was just as true as the Gospel of Jesus; they both came from God. But if we understand what it means, that the law gave only a shadow of ' good things to come, and that Christ brought us the things themselves, their very substance, we see how He was full of truth, because He was Himself the Truth, the reality, the very Life and Love and Power of God imparting itself to us. We then also

see how it is only a worship in Spirit that can be a worship in Truth, in the actual enjoyment of that Divine Power, which is Christ's own life and fellowship with the Father, revealed and maintained within us by the Holy Spirit.

'The true worshippers worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.' All worshippers are not true worshippers. There may be a great deal of earnest honest worship without its being worship in Spirit and in Truth. The mind may be intensely occupied, the feelings may be deeply moved, the will may be mightily roused, while yet there is but little of the Spiritual Worship which stands in the Truth of God. There may be great attachment to Bible truth, and yet through the predominating activity of that which cometh not from God's working but from man's effort, it may not be the Christ--given, Spirit-breathed worship which God seeks. There must be accordance, harmony, unity between God, who is a Spirit, and the worshippers drawing near in the Spirit. Such doth the Father seek to worship Him. The Infinite, Perfect, Holy Spirit which God the Father is, must have some reflection in the spirit which is in the child.

And this can only be as the Spirit of God dwells in us. If we would strive to become such worshippers in Spirit and in Truth,-true worshippers,-the first thing we need is a sense of the danger in which we are from the Flesh and its worship. As believers we have in us a double nature-flesh and spirit. The one is the natural part which is ever ready to intrude itself, and to undertake the doing of what is needed in the Worship of God. The other is the Spiritual part, which may still be very weak, and which possibly we do not yet know how to give its full sway. Our mind may delight in the study of God's Word, our feelings may be moved by the wonderful thoughts there revealed, our will may--we see this in Rom.7: 22--delight in the law of God after the inward man, and we may yet be impotent to do that law, to render the obedience and worship we see and approve.

We need the Holy Spirit's indwelling for life and worship alike. And to receive this we need first of all to have the flesh silenced. 'Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord.' 'Let no flesh glory in His presence.' To Peter had already been revealed by the Father that Jesus was the Christ, and yet in his thoughts of the cross he savoured not, his mind was not according to, the things of God, but the things of men. Our own thoughts of Divine things, our own efforts to waken or work the right feelings must be given up, our own power to worship must be brought down and laid low, and every approach to God must take place under a very distinct and very quiet surrender to the Holy Spirit. And as we learn how impossible it is at our will any moment to ensure the Spirit's working, we shall learn that if we would worship in the Spirit we must walk in the Spirit. 'Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' As the Spirit dwells and rules in me, I am in the Spirit, and can worship in the Spirit.

'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. For such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers.' Yes, the Father seeks such worshippers, and what He seeks He finds, because He Himself works it. That we might be such worshippers, He sent His own Son to seek and to save the lost; to save us with this salvation, that we should become His true worshippers, who enter in through the rent veil of the flesh, and worship Him in the Spirit. And then He sent the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of Christ, to be in us the Truth and Reality of what Christ had been, His actual presence, to communicate within us the very life that Christ had lived. Blessed be God! the hour has come, and is now, we are living in it this very moment, that the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. Let us believe it; the Spirit has been given, and dwells within us, for this one reason, because the Father seeks such worshippers. Let us rejoice in the confidence that we can attain to it, we can be true worshippers, because the Holy Spirit has been given.

Let us realize in holy fear and awe that He dwells within us. Let us humbly, in the silence of the flesh, yield ourselves to His leading and teaching. Let us wait in faith before God for His workings. And let us practise this worship. Let every new insight into what the work of the Spirit means, every exercise of faith in His indwelling or experience of His working, terminate in this as its highest glory: the adoring worship of the Father, the giving Him the Praise, the Thanks, the Honour, and Love which are His alone.

O God ! Thou art a Spirit, and they that worship Thee must worship Thee in Spirit and in Truth. Blessed be Thy name! Thou didst send forth Thine Own Son to redeem and prepare us for the worship in the Spirit; and Thou didst send forth Thy Spirit to dwell in us and fit us for it. And now we have access to the Father, as through the Son, so in the Spirit.

Most Holy God! we confess with shame how much our worship has been in the power and the will of the flesh. By this we have dishonoured Thee, and grieved Thy Spirit, and brought infinite loss to our own souls. O God! forgive and save us from this sin. Teach us, we pray Thee, never, never to attempt to worship Thee but in Spirit and in Truth.

Our Father ! Thy Holy Spirit dwells in us. We beseech Thee, according to the riches of Thy glory, to strengthen us with might by Him, that our inner man may indeed be a spiritual temple, where spiritual sacrifices are unceasingly offered. And teach us the blessed art, as often as we enter Thy presence, of yielding self and the flesh to the death, and waiting for and trusting the Spirit who is in us, to work in us a worship, a faith and love, acceptable to Thee through Christ Jesus. And, oh! that throughout the universal Church, a worship in Spirit and in Truth may be sought after, and attained, and rendered to Thee day by day. We ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

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