

What Is Worship?

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon emphasizes that true worship is a heartfelt surrender to God, rooted in understanding His nature and seeking to worship Him in spirit and truth.

Duration: 39:42

Scripture: Psalm 95:6-7, Isaiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, John 4:20-24, Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 12:28-29

Topics: "Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of true worship. He highlights that true worship is not just going through the motions or worshipping a God of our own imagination, but rather worshipping God according to his true nature and character. The preacher emphasizes that God seeks true worshipers who worship him in spirit and in truth. He also mentions the desire for revival, where God's people can experience the reality of who God is in their lives. The sermon references John 4:23-24 and Genesis 22 to support these points.

Transcript

Well, I'm very grateful to be here this morning. I greet you in the name, the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I come from a different place and a different culture.

But I want to let you know that I'm not Amish. Someone asked me that already. But I'm not Amish.

That's how you say it here, Amish. We say Amish on our side. But I'm not Amish, but I live among Amish people.

And we've had the privilege of leading many of the Amish people to the Lord. You may be surprised, but they're not Christians. They're not.

As soon as they get born again, they are thrown out of their fellowship. But I live in the midst of the Amish people. And though they are not Christians, I would have to say that I've learned a few things from them.

And I trust that I can also learn from you. And you can learn from me as we all seek God together. Amen? Can we just have a word of prayer? Can we do that? Oh, Lord.

Yes, great is our God. You are great, Lord. And this morning we do acknowledge that we worship you, Lord.

We bring the sacrifice of our lives to you, God, with joy, with gladness here this morning, God. We thank you for your spirit, and we ask you, dear God, that you would just guide us. Oh, Father, that's all we want.

We just want to be a vessel in your hand. Lord, would you reach down and touch us all and bring us on, Lord, in the Christian life. We ask it in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen. All right. Looking at a text here this morning, I want you to turn to John chapter 4. I want to speak a bit about worship.

I don't know, I don't remember when I was in a service that so fit what I'm going to say as this one. So we are trusting God. That's always encouraging to a preacher.

When you see God working behind the scenes in many different ways to affirm and confirm what you're going to say. So I want to speak a bit about worship. And if I can give a title to my message, it is this.

True worship, true worship is glad surrender. And we want to read out of John chapter 4 in verse 20 through 24. But I want to give you a bit of a definition of the word worship before we read that word worship here in the text.

Because I think it helps us to understand the depths of what the word worship means. I don't know how it is in your country, but in my country, the word worship, which is a very high and exalted word, has been brought down and lowered and lowered and lowered to where it is now just a word that is used to describe a bit of an emotional experience while people sing songs. And if you look into the Scriptures, worship is so much more than that.

It's so much higher than that. It's so much deeper than that. I don't believe that we'll even begin to touch the reality of what true worship is all about until we get on the other side.

But until we get there, we can be guided by the Scriptures in the heart of God to know just exactly what God's heart is and what His desire is in worship. And so we want to lift that word back up here a bit this morning because it's coming down. And it may be that way in your country also.

Worship. I studied this word for about two hours and I'm going to give you my little definition. You can skip the two hours and just take the little definition this morning.

This is what worship means. It means to kiss toward with bowed, obedient reverence. To kiss toward with bowed, obedient reverence.

These words that we find here in John chapter 4 speak about worship. We're breaking into the middle here of a discussion that Jesus was having with the woman at the well. And she speaks out in verse 20 and says, Our fathers worshiped in this mountain and ye say that in Jerusalem it is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither worship. Ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what we worship.

We know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is. And now is.

And now is. When the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

God is a spirit. And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Now these words indicate that there are worshipers that are true.

But obviously if there are true worshipers then there are also the opposite of that. There are worshipers that are not true. And that's if you begin to consider the awesomeness of who God is to be a worshiper who is not a true worshiper is a very dangerous thing.

Worship. Think about these words. The glorious God, our Father whose name is Holy whose very nature is Holy and righteous and just that God, our Father seeketh.

Seeketh. The Father seeketh such to worship Him. You know many times we think that this whole worship matter is a matter of us and it's our initiation.

But in reality the Father seeketh such to worship Him. He's seeking true worshipers to worship Him who worship Him in spirit and in truth. The God of the universe seeketh this morning brothers and sisters, true worshipers.

He seeketh such to worship Him. Those who worship Him in spirit. Those who worship Him in truth.

I studied this word truth in our text and I don't know how it reads in your translations. I'm sure you have different translations than me but I was a bit shocked by the modern commentaries and this word truth. You know the Father seeketh us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

And that word in some of the modern commentators has been changed from truth to reality. And okay, reality, that's a good word as long as that reality is defined but if that reality is not defined it can mean anything. It can mean whatever you want it to mean.

It can mean whatever your experience is. It can mean an emotional experience without any depth or reality to it at all. But the text here says that God seeks to, He seeks worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.

And may I say this morning, yes, the reality of truth or truth in reality in my heart and my life. The Father seeketh such to worship Him in this way. This word reality means truth in the heart.

It means a true and a sincere and an honest heart. And God requires that of each one of us. We know that in our minds.

I'm not sure how much we know it in our hearts. The word reality or the word truth means according to the true nature of God and who He is. I mean we must worship God according to the true nature of God and who He is.

And brothers and sisters, if you stop for a moment and think about what that really means, just that statement that we must worship God in truth and the reality of who God is and the character of God. How else then could we worship God except in utter abandonment every moment of our day if you think about who God is. You see, God is not an idol that we bow to and praise once a week on Sunday morning.

He is not a name that we say over and over again. He is the most high and holy person in the entire universe. And He seeketh such to worship Him.

He calleth such to worship Him. Yea, He goes to and fro throughout the whole world seeking such to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Yes, this high and holy God.

How can it be? He seeketh me to worship Him. Aren't we glad this morning that there's blood on the mercy seat and He's made a way, He's made a new and a living way that we, in all of our undone-ness, can come and worship Him. But oh, fool of fools, to take for granted the blood that is on the mercy seat and to come presumptuously before a holy God.

For the Father seeketh such to worship Him. He is the most high and holy person in the entire universe. Yes, when we begin to get a glimpse of who God is, we begin to understand what that word means.

To kiss toward with bowed, obedient reverence. We begin to grasp what that means and that takes worship into way deeper realms. It takes worship out of the Sunday morning service and it makes worship, it turns worship into something that we do all through our lives.

You see, our whole very lives should be a worship of this God, this awesome God who is the greatest and highest and holiest being in all of the universe. And for some reason that I don't understand, He called me and gave me the opportunity 36 years ago to bow my knee to Him for the first time in reverence and in praise. Amen? I mean, it's that way for every one of us if we're here this morning and we've been born again by the Spirit of God, we have to say that we don't understand how this could be that this high and holy God that we can't even fathom or begin to understand who He is would seek such as me to worship Him.

And again, we have to just bless God that there's blood sprinkled on the mercy seat this morning and that blood is powerful blood to make a way for you and I to come and we can talk to God and we could sing and worship Him this morning as we did so beautifully. Thank you so much for that. Yes, to worship this God in pretense without the reality of truth in my heart, in my life is a very dangerous thing.

I think you know as well as I do there is a plague of this in Christendom today. A plague. And again, I know nothing of your country at all so I'm totally innocent.

I don't know what to preach about in your country but in my country, millions of people live selfish lives all week long and come together on Sunday morning and worship. Worship. My question is, do they really worship? Or do they not just come and sing some songs and feel good in their heart about the songs they sang and go their way again after the service is over to live their life however they wish.

Brothers and sisters, that's not worship. That's not worship. Jeremiah says and Ezekiel says eight times in those two books God complaining through the prophet Jeremiah and the prophet Ezekiel that my people are worshiping a God after their own imagination.

You see, we can do that. We can imagine what God is like and we can imagine what God accepts and what God doesn't accept and we can go through all the motions of worshiping just like Israel did back in those days but in reality we're only worshiping a God after our own imagination. It's not the true God.

And thus the Father seeketh such to worship Him, those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. True worshipers is what God is after. I think of the whole subject of revival and the revival conference, you know that's really what we're after.

That's what we're after. We're after God's people getting to such a place that God can come and be who He is in reality in our lives again. I'm gonna do what I've never done before preach in 45 minutes or 40.

We'll skip that page, Razor. I want us at this time to go to the book of Genesis chapter 22. The pastor warned me that you're not used to hearing somebody preach for an hour and a half so I'm not gonna do that to you this morning.

Turn with me to Genesis chapter 22 as we get a glimpse into a worship service and I don't know how much you understand about biblical interpretation but in biblical interpretation there is a law of interpretation which is called the law of first mention. And if you wanna understand a word in the Bible the first place you go is not to a dictionary but you go to the first place in the Bible where that word shows up and you'll get a tremendous insight into what that word means and here in Genesis chapter 22 is the first place in the Bible that you find the word worship. So we're going to go to a worship service.

One of the first ones. Now there were others, I know. Noah, he worshipped God there after the flood and all this but here we have a beautiful worship service.

Abraham is who we're going to look at. He was a man who had a true heart, didn't he? He was a worshipper in spirit and in truth. He had a true heart.

He had a surrendered heart. He had a heart for God's will and purpose. He had a heart of trust and yieldedness to God.

He had a heart that loved God. He was a true worshipper. Let us see how he worships in chapter 22 reading from verse 1. And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt or test Abraham and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Behold, here am I. You see, Abraham knew the voice of God.

He knew. He knew that voice. And he, God said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Now the Bible doesn't tell us what he did from here. It doesn't seem like he went to seek any counsel. I don't know if he went to ask Sarah what she thought about this word that God gave to him.

Take your son, your only son, the son whom you love, and go and offer him for a burnt sacrifice on Mount Moriah, which by the way is where the temple was built. But the Bible says in verse 3 that Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ox and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son and claimed the wood for the burnt offering and rose up and went unto the place from which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.

And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with us and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you. I want you to notice the faith in that statement. I'm going to go offer my son for a burnt offering and me and my son will return to you is what he said.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son and took the fire that in his hand and a knife and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said, My father. And he said, Here I am son.

And he said, Behold the fire and the wood but where is the lamb? Where is the lamb for a burnt offering? What a powerful prophetic word that was coming out of Isaac's mouth. Where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together and they came to the place which God had told him of and Abraham built an altar there.

I wonder how long it took him to build that altar. I wonder what he was thinking about while he was building it. I wonder the depth of what was going on inside of that father's heart as he built an altar there knowing that he's going to sacrifice his son on that altar.

It's good for us to go there and get inside of Abraham's heart to see what must have been going on because remember brothers and sisters we are looking at the word worship. And this is the depth of what needs to be inside the heart of man who is a true worshiper of God. And so here he is building an altar that he's going to put his son on and sacrifice him there.

He came to the place which God had told him of and Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood. Now again the scripture doesn't say but I don't believe that he had to wrestle Isaac to the ground and tie him up and put him on the altar. I believe he explained to Isaac and Isaac was an obedient son who revered his father and he said to his son, my son, God has told me that I'm to offer you as a burnt offering, as a sacrifice on this altar.

Now son, lay down so I can tie your hands. And I believe that that boy just like the picture or the type that he was of the Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life there and allowed his father Abraham to tie him and put him on that altar. So I just want you to see into the heart of these two true worshippers.

Father and son. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. Now we know because we read the rest of those verses that God stopped him in mid-air but I guarantee you God didn't stop him until in his own heart the knife had already gone into his son.

Because God said, I want you to offer your son. And Abraham offered his son that day. God gave him back but Abraham offered his son.

God gave Isaac back his life but Isaac laid down his life. These are two true worshippers. This is the first place where the word worship appears in the Bible.

So we're talking about worshipping God. You say, well that's Abraham and that was Isaac and that was just a nice type of things to come. I don't think so brothers and sisters.

I think that's the kind of heart that God wants all of his people to have toward him. You see again, if we can grasp the character of who God really is how could we do anything less? I think many times we do less than that because we do not understand who God really is. May God open the eyes of our understanding that we may behold him and understand who he is.

That we might give him his rightful place which is the only place in our hearts with nothing else coming anywhere near to him. For he is God, isn't that right? He is God. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham.

He said it twice. He used his word, his name twice there. And he said, here am I. And he, the angel said, lay not thine hand upon the lad neither do thou anything unto him for now I know that thou fearest God

seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. I want us to just stop there again.

Now they just started their worship, the sacrifice. But I want us to look into the heart of these two men again. This man and his son.

And look at the depth of what took place there. I mean, they had a worship service that day. They worshipped God.

God gave Abraham back his son. God gave Isaac back his life. His dreams, his plans, his future.

God gave them back. And those two men worshipped. They worshipped God.

Notice the depth of Abraham's surrender here. Thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest. Abraham must surrender his intellect.

It doesn't make any sense to do what God is telling him to do right now. There are times when we also must surrender our intellect. It doesn't make sense what God is telling us to do.

But we do it anyway. We trust Him. That's what surrender is all about.

He must trust in the Lord with all of his heart and lean not unto his own understanding. He must in all of his ways acknowledge God. Notice the depth of his surrender.

He must surrender his affections, his emotions. This is the son that he loves. This is his only son.

He must surrender all of that. And he must surrender his will to do the will of God. He must gladly surrender his whole heart and life to God.

And brothers and sisters, it is the same for every one of us. It is the same for every one of us. And oh by the way, that's not something that you do one time at an altar here or here.

That's something that should be taking place continually in our lives as we go through our everyday life. You see, Christianity is everyday. It's an everyday Christianity.

It's not a Sunday morning Christianity. And I know you know that here. It's an everyday Christianity.

It's a surrender that takes place moment by moment, moment to moment. And sad to say, but many times our surrenders are, you know, I gotta surrender my job, or I need to surrender this car, or I need to surrender this girlfriend, or you know, many times our surrenders are only things. But you know, those are very, very shallow issues.

You know, God is not after things. God is after our hearts. That's what God wants.

He wants our hearts. And the problem is that many times he finds other things in there that have set themselves up against him. And to come to worship God with something set up in there, an image of jealousy set up inside of our heart, and to come with that image of jealousy and to worship God and sing and all those things that we do is presumption.

And by the way, it's a dangerous thing to do. Amen? Amen? He must gladly surrender his whole heart and life to God. His plans are in his son.

His future, they're in his son. Even his perception of God and God's will, even that he has to surrender because God said, sacrifice your son. But I want us to notice that his response was immediate.

Unquestioning obedience. And I believe the reason why it was so immediate and unquestioning is two reasons. One, Abraham knew the voice of God.

So he didn't have to wonder, was that God or me? He knew who it was because he knew that voice. He knew it was God. And number two, he was already surrendered.

That man was already given up to God. And when you're totally given up to God, God can steer you this way and that way and go this way and that way. And Abraham was ready for that command.

And God knew that Abraham was ready for that command when he said, I want you to take your son, thine only son whom thou lovest and offer him for a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. And he rose up early in the morning and went. Praise God.

His surrender was in obedience to the will of God. His surrender was a worship to God. His surrender was in faith and his surrender was continue on brothers and sisters.

That is the true Christian life, is it not? For each and every one of us. And you study that man's life. He didn't surrender one time.

God asked him many times, many times. And it's that way with us also. We know that.

Some time ago, I was meditating on some of those verses there in Philippians chapter two, verse nine through 11. You know, those are the ones that follow those verses where it talks about Christ emptying himself. You know, the great self emptying of Christ and ending in the agonizing death on the cross.

And after it explains those beautiful verses, it says, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. Why? Because he was willing to die. Because he was willing to surrender his life and live a surrendered life which ended in a gruesome death on the cross because he was willing to do that.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We know those verses. But I was meditating upon those verses some time ago and it dawned on me one day, you know.

Everyone is going to do that. I mean the wickedest, most vile sinner in this world, the strongest king, the most arrogant Hitler or whoever you want it to be, the day is going to come when they will all bow their knee down before the Lord Jesus Christ and confess that he is the Lord. And I was meditating and reflecting upon that and I thought to myself, you know, when that day comes there won't be any angel standing there telling Hitler, bow the knee.

This is the Lord Jesus Christ. No one will need to tell anyone to bow their knee nor to say, Lord. No one will need to say that to anyone.

Because you see, in that day, in that beautiful day, that glorious day, we will not be bowing before some name. We will be bowing before the Lord Jesus Christ in all his glory and his presence. And all the character of God will be emanating forth out of his being.

And all you'll be able to do is bow down. I mean you won't have to have somebody to tell you this is the proper thing to do. You're in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Get on your knees and acknowledge he's the Lord. Every wicked sinner will bow down on their knees and acknowledge that he is the Lord. And I thought about it, you know.

We can make that surrender now and it's a glad surrender or we can make that surrender someday in the future but it'll be a sad surrender then. But everyone will surrender and acknowledge who he is. And as I pondered all of that, I thought, Oh God, that's what we want.

We want our life to be a glad surrender. We want our life to be a worship to God. You see, when our heart and our life is a glad surrender and it's a continual surrender, that's worship.

Praise God we get to gather together like this on a Sunday morning and sing and lift our hearts in praise and adoration to God and that's worship. But oh, that we would bring such a worship to God that flows outside of this church building and reaches out into our everyday life and into the workplace where we are where our hearts are so surrendered to God, gladly, joyously surrendered to God that our life just becomes a worship. And we find ourselves in all the different ways of life kissing toward the sun with bowed, obedient reverence.

That's what true worship is. And we all know that. I'm not telling you something new here this morning.

Most of you, dear people, you know what I'm saying. It's not new to you. But maybe I'm just another voice to come along and remind you or to affirm and confirm what your pastor's already been saying to you that God is after our lives.

He's after our lives. That's what he wants. I don't know how you understand it, but in my understanding, Jesus did not go to the cross so that you could go to heaven.

Oh, praise God, yes. When this is all said and done, we get to go to heaven. But He didn't go to the cross just so you could get a ticket to go to heaven.

He went to the cross that He might sanctify unto Himself a people, that He might possess a people, that He might bring a people back into a right relationship with Him, that they might love Him, that they might serve Him, that they might worship Him all of their day and all the days of their life, and thus their lives bringing honor and glory to Him by the way they live and by the way they love Him. That's why Jesus went to the cross. And I wonder this morning if we're willing for Him to possess us like that.

You know, it's a pretty exciting thing when you think about God getting possessive with me. That's a pretty exciting thing. But it can have some discipline in it also.

When God gets possessive with me, it can have some discipline in it. All right, I think I'll say these words and then I'll be done. Not new words to any of us, but hear them again this morning out of the heart of the Apostle Paul who walked with God so beautifully all the days of his life.

He said these words, I beseech you therefore, I beg you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, because of the mercies of God that you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Oh, and by the way, be not conformed to this world. Don't let the world stamp you into its mold, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

You see what God is after. He needs a body. Will you give him your body? In order for him to have your body, he must have your heart every moment of every day.

And if he gets your heart and your body, then he's got hands that he can work through. He's got feet that he can lead. He's got eyes who can look out and bless the world.

He's got a mouth that he can use to speak to a hurting world around you. He's got a body. God's looking for a body.

Amen. He has in his wisdom tied his own hands and limited himself that he would reach out to this world around us through us. He has done that in his wisdom.

I don't understand. He could do anything he wants. He could reach the world around us in any way that he wanted, but God needs a body.

And he won't get a body 24-7 until he gets a heart that says, okay, Lord, I'm giving you my life. I kiss toward you with a bowed, open reverence. Lord, you can have my life in such a way that you can use it two hours from now as you lead me by your spirit.

May God help us to fine tune our life by the spirit and by the blood that we are, in fact, true worshippers who have gladly surrendered with joy and enthusiasm, gladly surrendered to God. You know, how could we think that God would expect anything less since he's God? How could we expect that he would think anything less than that because he is God? God bless you. Thank you.

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