

(Worship) Session 1: Introduction

by Joseph Carroll

The sermon emphasizes the importance of worship and the need to submit to God and surrender our lives to Him in order to experience the conscious presence of Christ and to be strengthened and quickened by the spirit.

Duration: 51:13

Scripture: John 4:19

Topics: "Worship", "Spiritual Reality"

Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the essence of true worship, drawing from John 4:19-24 and Revelation 4. He explains that worship is not confined to a location but is a spiritual act of attributing worth to God, requiring total submission and the desire to glorify Him. Carroll shares personal anecdotes illustrating how worship can transform one's relationship with Christ, making Him a tangible reality in their lives. He stresses that worship must precede service, as true worship leads to a deeper connection with God and empowers believers to serve effectively. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to worship that is genuine and heartfelt, enabling believers to experience the presence of Christ in their daily lives.

Transcript

I'm reading from the Gospel of John chapter 4, verse 19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

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

We know what we worship. For salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers 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 let us turn to the book of the Revelation chapter 4. Revelation chapter 4, reading from verse 6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.

And in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man. And the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him. And they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever.

And cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power. For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. It was in the mid-1950s, whilst ministering at a conference for missionaries in the Philippine Islands, that a teenage daughter of one of the missionaries came to me.

I can still see her youthful but troubled countenance. And she said to me, Brother Carroll, I believe that I love my Lord. I never miss my quiet time.

I have a consistent prayer life. And I am returning to the United States to attend a Bible college. But the Lord Jesus is not real to me.

He's not a reality. How can he become real to me? I want to love him more devotedly. I desire to serve him more effectively.

But I cannot, unless he becomes real to me. I read of the great giants of the faith, how they were conscious of his presence. And I want that experience.

Tell me, what shall I do? We chatted for some considerable time. And a few days later, I met this young lady again. This time, not with a troubled countenance, but joyous face.

A joyous face. And I can still see that joy written all over her countenance. And she said, Mr. Carroll, he's real.

For the first time in my Christian experience, the Lord Jesus Christ is real to me. I returned home one Monday evening from our Bible class. And I was rather tired.

Sat down to relax. When my wife called that deadly word, telephone. I said, who is it? She said, well, I don't know.

But he says he is a preacher in Chicago. He's rather excited. And he said, you changed his life.

So I thought I'd better talk to this man whose life I'd changed. Hoping, of course, that the Lord had changed it. But I answered the call.

He said, are you Brother Carroll? I said, yes. He said, you've changed my life. I said, well, I hope the Lord did it.

He said, no, no. He said, yes, of course the Lord did it. But he said it was those messages.

I said, which messages? He said, those messages you gave in Memphis. Those tapes, he said, they were sent to me. They changed my life.

I said, well, thank God. And then we chatted together and rejoiced together in the Lord. What changed his life? Jesus Christ had become a reality to him.

That's what changed him. Now he was in love with a person. Not somebody merely in the Bible, but Jesus Christ had come out of that book and become a reality to him.

Is he that to you this morning? Is Jesus Christ merely somebody in this book? Somebody you read about? Somebody you know about? Somebody you pray to? Somebody you desire to serve? But is he real? Do you walk with him? Do you know him? Is he real? It was in the early 1950s that I was invited to a certain Midwestern city for a series of meetings. The last meeting was for pastors. We gathered together in the basement of the Lutheran church in that city for the final message.

I spoke very simply on the same message that I had shared with the teenager in the Philippines and also that that dear man in Chicago had heard on the tapes. A year later I returned to the same city and I was met this time at the airport by the pastor of the Lutheran church. A delightful man.

He said to me, Do you recall your last meeting in the city a year ago? I said, Yes. He said, Do you recall the message you gave? I said, Yes. He said, Well, since then my church has had a new pastor and I have a new congregation.

What was the message I gave? To those preachers, to the Chicago pastor and to the young lady in the Philippines. It was a simple message on worship. The worship of Jesus Christ.

If somebody asked you, How may I worship Jesus Christ? What would you say? What would you say? Or if the person said, How may I worship God? I read in the Bible, God is a spirit. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth for the father seeketh such to worship him. I know from the word of God that he is seeking me to worship him.

I also know that one seldom reads in the word of God of his seeking for an individual to do a certain thing. But now I know he wants me to worship him. What does that mean? What does it mean? What would you say? What would your answer be? I want to worship God.

I know he's seeking me to worship him. How? Let me read from the experience of one of the great servants of the Lord of this century. C.S. Lewis.

Clive Staples Lewis is renowned in the evangelical world for his incisive thinking. A man who for many years taught at Oxford University and finally was given a chair at Cambridge University. But he made an incomparable contribution to evangelical thought by his fresh and stimulating approach to the scriptures.

During the Second World War he became quite a famous man in Great Britain by his broadcast talks when he answered in his own incomparable way the modern objections to Christianity. Clive Staples Lewis. A man who came out of atheism.

A brilliant English intellectual. Let me share with you a word from this truly great Christian. And you will notice the honesty of the man and his search for truth.

A true scholar. When I first began to draw near to belief in God and even for some time after it had been given to me I found a stumbling block in the demand so clamorously made by all religious people that we should praise God. Everybody was telling him that he had to praise God.

But to him it was a clamor. Still more in the suggestion that God himself demanded it. We all despise the man who demands continued assurance of his own virtue intelligence or delightfulness.

We despise still more the crowd of people round every dictator, every millionaire, every celebrity who gratify that demand. Thus a picture at once ludicrous and horrible both of God and his worshippers threatened to appear to my mind. The Psalms were especially troublesome in this way.

Praise the Lord. O praise the Lord with me. Praise him.

It was hideously like saying what I most want is to be told that I am good and great. And mere quantity of praise seemed to count. Seven times a day do I praise thee.

It was extremely distressing. It made one think what one least wanted to think. Gratitude to God, reverence to him, obedience to him I thought I could understand.

But this perpetual eulogy nor were matters mended by a modern author who talked of God's right to be praised. So here is his dilemma. He is a young Christian and he is searching with an open honest heart.

And this is becoming a great stumbling block to him. Why does God want to be praised? Why does he always want to be eulogized? Why does he always want to be the center of affection and attention and praise and worship? Then he got his answer. I want you to listen carefully.

I did not see that it is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates his presence to men. It's a very important statement. I did not see that it is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates his presence to men.

Even in Judaism the essence of the sacrifice was not really that men gave bulls and goats to God but that by their so doing God gave himself to men. That's the point to note. God gave himself to men.

God communicated his presence to men. His conscious presence. In other words, it was in that act of worship that he became a reality to them.

In the central act of our own worship, of course, this is far clearer. There it is manifestly, even physically. God who gives and we who receive.

What a wonderful discovery for Lewis to make so early in his Christian experience. But note carefully his important statement. It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates his presence to men.

What then is worship? The term comes to us in our modern speech from the Anglo-Saxon Worship. W-E-O-R-T-H-S-C-I-T-E And this later developed into worship. And it means to attribute worth to an object.

That's the meaning of the word. To attribute worth to an object. Or, worship is the worth-ship of the one you worship.

Worship is to attribute worth to an object. Or, the worship is the worth-ship of the one you worship. To worship Jesus Christ is to attribute worth to him.

Worth, worship, is the worth-ship of Jesus Christ. Now let's turn to Revelation 4 and verse 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worshiped him that lived forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor and power for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Now here we have true worship. And I want you to notice the order. The first thing in verse 10 is they fall down.

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne. That is first and that is always first. The falling down speaks of submission to the one worshipped.

Total submission. If you're going to worship in reality and in truth there must be the total submission before the one whom you are to worship. And here we find they fall down before him that sat on the throne and worshiped him that lived forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne.

First the submission second the casting of their crowns before the throne. Now in the days when the Revelation was written if a king was conquered by Rome, by the Roman legion if possible he was brought to Rome before the emperor himself and he had to prostrate himself at the emperor's feet. This was his act of total submission total abdication to the emperor.

If he were not taken to Rome a huge image of Caesar was placed before him in his own land where he had been conquered and he was required to fall down before that image and cast his crown at the feet of the image. So John here is revealing the first two essentials. The first is the falling down, the submission to the one you worship.

The second is the casting at the feet of the one worshipped the crown. Now, what is the purpose of the crown? The purpose of the crown is to draw attention to the one wearing it. It exalts the wearer.

What does it mean for the true worshipper of Christ to cast his crown at his lord's feet? He's saying by so doing I want you alone to be exalted you alone to be noticed you alone to be glorified you alone to be seen. That's the second requirement. The desire to live for the glory of Christ and Christ alone.

Can you meet those conditions? When did you submit yourself absolutely without reserve to Jesus Christ as your lord, as your master? When did you do that? When did you permit the Holy Spirit to bring you to that place where to live is Christ not you, nor anybody else nor any movement, nor any man but Christ. That's the place the Holy Spirit wants to bring you to. For me to live, said Paul, is Christ.

Can you say that? The two first essential conditions for true worship are the total submission the second is brought in us by the Spirit of God that the one longing of your heart the passion of your heart is of Christ to be magnified in your body whether by life or by death. What next? Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive all honor and glory and power. Three things.

For thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Now what are they saying? Well they are ascribing worth to the one on the throne and they are telling him that he is worthy. Now that is worship.

The worship of the one worshiped. Thou art worthy to receive three things. Now I want you to note them.

Glory. What have they just done? They have advocated and they have cast their crowns before the throne. They have divested themselves of their glory.

And they are saying now thou art worthy to receive glory and thou alone. And what next? And honor and power. Now these three things are the three things that men seek.

That is the basic problem of the world today. What do men seek? They seek to be glorified. They seek to be exalted.

They seek to be honored. They seek power. That is the problem.

Thou alone art worthy to receive glory and honor and power for thou hast created all things. And for thy pleasure they are and were created. Now let's look at Revelation chapter 5. One of the great chapters if not the greatest chapter on worship in all the Bible.

In verse 8. And when he had taken the book the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints. Now I want you to notice again the order. What is it? First they fall down.

Exactly the same order. Then in verse 9 they sung a new song saying Thou art worthy. What are they doing? They are ascribing work.

And that is worship. Thou art worthy. To take the book and to open the seals thereof for thou art slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.

What are they doing? They are ascribing work to Jesus Christ. Now that is worship. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth.

And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders. And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice Worthy is the Lamb. Do you see that? Worthy is the Lamb.

Ascribing work to the Lamb. This countless multitude is worshipping the Lamb. Ascribing work to Jesus Christ.

It's a tremendous chapter. We may come back to it later. One of the greatest Methodist preachers of the last century read this chapter every Sunday morning in his devotions.

Right throughout his Christian life. And he would worship his Lord. But let's get the order here.

Always there is the falling down. The absolute submission to the one worship. Then again in Revelation chapter 7 and verse 11.

And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four beasts and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God. So here we have exactly the same order again. What is it? The falling down before worship.

You cannot worship God unless there is a submission at heart to Him. Every time without exception you find this falling down. In chapter 11 of Revelation verses 16 and 17.

And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces and worshipped God saying We give thee thanks O Lord God almighty which art and was and art to come because thou hast taken to thee great power and hast reigned. What do we find? The same order. The four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats when they are to worship what do they do? They fell upon their faces and worshipped God.

And what are they saying? We give thee thanks O Lord God almighty which art and was and art to come. They are ascribing work to Him. Falling down before the giving of themselves to worship.

Have we reached that place yet? Can you say yes? I know what it is to worship Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is real to me. He is real to me.

I recall that moment when I made a total submission to Him. It was glorious. I thank God for what the Spirit of God has done in my spirit bringing me to that place where I seek nothing besides the glorifying of Christ in my life.

Can you say yes? For me to live is Christ. Worship is not simple but it is glorious. But I've found these many years that it's the one thing the enemy will oppose more than anything else.

More than intercession, more than petition. The one thing he does not want is for you to worship Jesus Christ. But it is not simple.

Why? Because the rewards are so great. As you learn to worship Christ and give yourself to the worship of your Lord you will find that there are times when He will be so real to you that you could stretch forth your hand and touch Him. Nearer to you, more real to you than your best friend or your closest loved one.

The rewards are great. But the problem is that firstly very few worship Christ and therefore the spiritual senses are not quickened to His presence. Now we know that the body has senses but the spirit also has senses.

And it is by the senses of your spirit that you are made conscious of the presence of Christ. God is a spirit. He can only be worshipped by that which is spiritual enough by our spirits.

But to many it is difficult because they cannot see Him with their physical eyes. They cannot touch Him with their physical hands. They cannot embrace Him.

But we can touch Him not with our physical hands or we cannot see Him with our physical eyes. And yet we know that He is omnipresent. He is always present.

But He can be seen and touched or handled by the senses of our spirit. After all it is that spirit world that is the real world. That is the eternal world.

That is the world in which we are to live by which we are to be dominated. Not the material world. Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth.

You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings where? In heavenly places in Christ. This is my spiritual location.

Isn't yours? Our citizenship is where? Well you might say it's in the United States. It's in heaven. You are to become spiritual.

And know what it is to live in that unseen world in the realm of the spirit and be conscious to the promptings of the spirit of God and the living Christ and the loving Father. It's all in the realm of the spirit. He can be experienced.

He can be seen. He can be touched. Not physically but with the senses of our spirits.

You can see the Lord every morning. Isn't that wonderful? You can go out into the day conscious of his presence. What more do you need? The conscious presence of Christ is word in your hand.

His spirit in your spirit is strengthening you and quickening you and enabling you. What more do you need? This is life in abundance. But the tragedy is Christ.

Jesus Christ is not a reality to so many. Why? Because he is not worshipped. He wants to become to you a mirror in your husband, your wife, your children, your best friends.

And he can be. And you will never know the ultimate in this life, ultimate fulfillment until he is. Until you know what it is to love him with all your heart.

And not until he becomes a conscious reality to you. Can there be that love for him and that fellowship with him that he desires for your sake. For your sake.

The enemy will oppose this. Very often circumstances will fight against it. But you must check your will to become a worshipper of Christ.

It's not a matter of saying, well, I see this truth. I know it. I realize I need to master it.

After all, I know that I've been called to fellowship with Jesus Christ and I want to be a worshipper. Or I hope I can become one. No, you must will to become one.

It's not what you wish to be or want to be. It's what you will to be. If you become.

This must be mastered. The worship of Jesus Christ. It's in that early morning hour that you spend with him and I trust it is at least an hour that you spend with him that so much depends.

Because the mind is fresh and impressionable. It's in that early hour that we meet with the Lord. David met the Lord early.

Early will I speak to you. My voice shall fail here in the morning. In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee and will look up.

It's in that time that Jesus Christ should be worshipped and our spiritual senses quickened by that worship. Because senses are quickened by youth. When you begin to worship Christ you will find it almost certainly rather difficult.

You will be praising him and ascribing worth to him but somehow not necessarily so but very often this is the case. Say well I don't know I did it all but nothing happened. Persevere.

Persevere. Make certain, make certain that you surrender his name that there's nothing between us. There's nothing between us.

Nothing. Make certain that you're walking in the light. Not only with your Lord but with other members of the body of Christ.

Because your love for him is revealed in your love for others. Make certain that you're seeking nothing for yourself and there's no desire to make anything of yourself. That which will satisfy you live for him.

So when we come to worship Christ is there the truth of mission? Is there the desire to be able to say a minute for me to live is Christ. And then the worship becomes a beautiful experience. And the senses are quickened.

But you must persevere. There was a man in the city of Detroit a dear Christian brother who was trapped in a hotel fire. He was badly burned.

When he had recovered he was brought almost to the point of death but he recovered. He was blind and his one lament was that he could no longer read his Bible. But he requested that he be taught braille.

They tested the tips of his fingers. There was no sensitivity in his fingers. They were so badly burned.

Now they were scarred. They tested his toes. Still no sensitivity.

They tested his nose. Nothing. They tested his lips.

Nothing. And finally he hung. And that man read the Bible through three times.

Senses are quickened by you. What happens to the blind man? His hearing is quickened. Why? Because he's more dependent on it.

His touch is quickened. Why? Now he's feeling his way. These senses are quickened to acuteness.

You see the value of worship. I do not believe that any man can be consistently conscious of the inward promptings of the Spirit of God to direct him in his life unless he's a worshipper of Christ. I do not believe that is possible.

When we are to be led by the Spirit we are to walk in the Spirit. But the key to it all, I believe, at least in my own experience, is being the worshipper of Jesus Christ. When the enemy has pressed me and turned me aside from it I've lost me to many, many other areas of my personal experience.

And always there has to be the determination to come back and to give myself to worshipping my Lord. Then it is that he not only becomes a reality but one is increasingly conscious of the leading of the Spirit of God. Now let us turn to Matthew chapter 4. We have a very important passage here on worship.

It is the temptation of our Lord in the wilderness. And it is the enemy's final effort to bring him down. Thus saith again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

Not only the kingdoms but the glory of the kingdoms. And saith unto him all these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Now I want you to notice Satan has the correct order.

He said I'll give you everything I'll give you all the kingdoms and the glory of them. All I want is for you to fall down and worship me. That's all.

That's all I want. Very clever. What is the use of having the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them if Satan has you? You will serve the one you worship.

You will serve the one you worship. The Lord would have the kingdoms but Satan would have him. The person you truly worship is going to control you.

Even the man in the world knows that. Have you not heard the phrase she worships her husband or he worships his wife or they worship their daughter or they worship their son. What is the man in the world saying? The man who has no knowledge of Scripture.

He's saying that that person lives for the one he worships. She worships her husband. She lives for her husband.

Even the world knows that. He lives for his wife. He worships his wife.

She's everything to him. She worships him. You will serve the one you worship joyously.

You won't have to be poor. You won't have to be motivated. You will serve that one.

And what did our Lord say? Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve. Now I want you to notice the importance of this statement. Worship before service.

Worship first then service. Then observe him only shalt thou serve. Underline it and don't be afraid of it.

But you might say I serve my church. No, you serve the Lord in your church. You may be dissatisfied with certain things happening in your church.

You cannot be dissatisfied with the Lord. He has placed you there to serve him. So you are serving him in your church.

I had the privilege for ten years of ministering to groups of missionaries in the Orient on some very difficult fields. And a missionary very often in the first term comes up against formidable obstacles. The devil might say to him, for instance if he was laboring in Japan well these people they are deceitful.

Yes they are. They're not worth it. They're not worth serving.

They're not worth laying down your life for. But you are laying down your life for the Japanese as a service to Jesus Christ. Do you see what I mean? The apostle Paul said I'll tell your servant for Jesus Christ.

And that's what holds a missionary. The only thing that can hold him when he's in the fire he's in the fire very often. Nothing else will hold him.

He'll either give up or he'll lose the will to fight or he'll come home. But if he knows the Lord Jesus intimately he knows what it is to worship him and walk with him, he won't quit. He won't give up.

But he needs to know in the hour of his death. So do you. You don't serve others primarily you are their servants for Jesus' sake but you are serving the Lord.

And that's why you serve others. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve. That's Christian experience.

The worship of your Lord and loving him and serving him and expressing that love for him and serving others as their willing slave. And the more you worship him the more you desire to serve him. The more real he becomes to you the more you want to live for him.

Now let's turn to Matthew 2 where we have the worship of the Christ child verse 11 And when they were come into the house they saw the young child with Mary his mother and fell down and worshipped him and

when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. What we find exactly the same order again. First the falling down the worshipping and then the presenting of gifts.

Always in scripture this is the order submission before worship. Now let's turn across to 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 17 Now the Lord is that spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty but we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord. This is what Hudson Taylor called changed by beholding.

Changed by beholding changed into what? Into the same image made Christ like. How simple how glorious and it's true. You recall when Moses came down from the mount his face stone they had to cover his face and here it is before us.

It is as we behold the Lord and it's the desire of the spirit of God that you behold Jesus that you be taken up with him that you worship him and as you worship him what is happening the spirit of God is making you like the one you worship. You're being changed when you worship him. Anybody with any knowledge of missionary know that the person in a pagan land looks before he listens.

He wants to see something and if he's Japanese he certainly wants to feel something and he has a right to see something different. He has a right to see Christ in that missionary and he has a right to that and if the missionary is a worshipper of Jesus Christ he will see Christ in him and he cannot deny that. One of the outstanding Christians in Japan today is a medical doctor and that medical doctor first saw a missionary and he couldn't deny that Christ dwells in him and that was what first began to creating her that desire to seek the Lord and saw Christ in him.

Changed by beholding. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve. It was my privilege some years ago to visit what is possibly the most famous mission station in India Donover in South India.

Donover is a beautiful mission compound the founder of that mission Amy Carmichael has become famous in recent years because of her excellent book describing the mission activity of Donover and she waited upon the Lord for all the buildings and everything that was to take place at Donover a very beautiful compound. For example all of the gates are circular in red brick but circular and everything is beautifully planned. Amy decided that what they needed was a chapel, a large chapel and after much prayer she determined that the chapel was to be placed in the very center of the mission compound and the chapel was to have two spires.

How unusual one spire yes, two spires, why? The Lord had a very definite reason for this. The spire at the front of the chapel was to represent worship the spire at the rear was to represent service so that at any time during the day whenever they saw that chapel and those spires they knew that worship preceded service. Worship first Jesus Christ first praise of him first, consciousness of him first living for him first then the service the service of love for him expressing the laying down of life for others and that was Donover.

Amy Carmichael herself labored for 40 years without a furlough and no missionary literature in recent years has had the blessing upon it I believe to equal that which has come out of Donover Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve Worship first Is it first in your life? You recall that very famous incident that took place in the experience of Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 6 we're all familiar with it Isaiah was the king's biographer the king was his idol and then the king died and we're told in the year the

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