

Your Personal Worship Weekly

by Mack Tomlinson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of true worship in spirit and truth, focusing on cultivating a heart of genuine worship, overcoming hindrances like spiritual laziness, unconfessed sin, unsundered hearts, bad attitudes, distractions, physical tiredness, and opposition from the enemy. The goal is for every believer to leave with a heart change, becoming more personal and purposeful worshipers on Sunday mornings.

Scripture: Psalm 42:1, John 4:23, Romans 12:1, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 12:28

Topics: "True Worship", "Overcoming Hindrances to Worship"

Description

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Transcript

Let's pray again and before we open God's Word, pray with me. Lord, we do pray that you would be our joy beyond the sacred page through the sacred page of scripture as we open the book of God beyond us in spite of us but for us and for your honor would you speak to us this morning words of life words of reality words that would apply to every believer in this room we bless you for the sacred and joyful time of sitting at the feet of Christ in hearing your voice through the bible so lord our expectation is unto you today we don't look to a man no man can help us but only as your word is opened and faithfully and accurately faithfully communicated so we ask for the holy spirit's help for me and for us in this hour in Christ's name we pray amen john chapter 4 is the place of our text john 4 alan in opening this morning in the first couple of sentences he used the word worship three times my ears were tuned in my ears perked up because i thought well maybe he's prophesying because i'm speaking this morning i want to speak to each of us about our worship on sunday mornings not the theological topic of worship but our worship at providence chapel your personal worship here weekly and mine i want to speak on this this morning for me for you how real is your worship when you come in here how quality is it when you come in here through the whole process how changed are you at all when you leave here your personal worship weekly that's the topic so john chapter 4 we'll read verses 21 through 24 a very familiar passage and before we read it just think about the drama of this in a way the amazing scene jesus must go through samaria because he has an appointment right with a woman not a proverbs 31 woman by any means a woman who's immoral

who's drifting from relationship to relationship who's also a gentile and yet it's to such a woman pagan completely ignorant of god and it's to her that jesus says the most profound words about worship that he ever spoke that's quite amazing so let's read john 4 beginning of verse 21 we'll read through verse 24 jesus said unto her woman believe me the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor yet at jerusalem worship the father you worship what you do not know we know what we worship for salvation is of the jews but the hour is coming and now is notice this repeated twice in this verse and in verse 24 when the true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth for the father seeks such to worship him god is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth my goal this morning is that every christian in this room would leave here with a heart change to be a more personal and purposeful worshiper on sunday morning that's the goal that all of us would leave here with a heart change that will lead us to to be a more personal and purposeful worshiper on sunday mornings now i've been reflecting in recent months and even this week on some really good things about providence chapel we should reflect on that shouldn't we things such as the centrality of the bible the centrality of the bible here as long as i'm living and i know as long as these other brothers are living it'll be this that providence chapel is about this is what you'll get from the pulpit the centrality of the bible the desire to glorify christ and obey him faithfully providence chapel is about that the centrality as you've heard in recent weeks if you've been here and if you can even hear the centrality of the local church the importance of being a truly truly being a praying church biblical church government a plurality of elders and deacons these are good things genuine pastoral care for the flock and for one another good thing church members that walk in love for one another a heart for missions and evangelism that should only increase and improve among us biblical church life and caring for one another a culture where legalism is recognized as a bad thing that's a good thing a culture of cultivating healthy relationships for discipleship and friendship training future pastors preachers and leaders i could mention other things as well list right lee has a list in his mind right now 29 other things but we won't go there in all those areas we can still grow and improve can't we we never arrive and the lord has blessed our church in so many ways and it's not your elders that get the credit for that this is what god has done here over 23 years he led us to this place so providence chapel i i'm not joking i believe the ch spurgeon would enjoy membership here i believe jeffrey thomas by the way who two weeks from now will preach in this pulpit the sunday before the conference i believe he would enjoy church membership here i can mention other names that you know i'm not trying to sing the praises of providence rather i'm only recognizing and expressing gratitude for what god has given us here it is special but in saying those things this morning i want to address an area of our church life that our desire i desire to see improvement it's an area that any church can still improve in right now if there's any area of church life that i have a burden for it's this that our sunday worship time would become more fully biblically orb'd and more full of life and more edifying because we can improve here on sunday mornings and that applies individually to us as well as for the entire church for if we are not true worshipers on sunday morning and individually we will not fully be a worshiping congregation you know a marching band is only as good as those marching an army troop marching is only as in sync as everybody is marching in sync right all right you have a you have a four a quartet singing if one arm's off the whole quartet's off in the singing right so the title of my message today i couldn't i was torn between which one true worship what it is and how we should do it or i could title it the worship at providence chapel on sunday mornings so whichever one you like better you can choose john macarthur said worship is the ultimate priority he's right worship is the ultimate priority for the christian in life and for the church when it gathers and here in john 4 jesus said that the father is seeking something he's seeking worshipers when he looks at you does he see one when he looks at me does he see one a worshiper are you or are you not a true worshiper of god think about it just because you come doesn't mean you worship him when you're here right being present

going through the motions doesn't mean you've worshiped at all if worship is in spirit and in truth worship is the supreme response of adoration and love given to god in all of life it's supreme above all other realities and activities and that's why satan wanted it from jesus in the wilderness if you'll just bow down and worship me all these things will be yours he wanted to steal the highest thing that god alone can receive worship and jesus here says that the father is seeking worship worshippers who worship in a certain specific way true worship ought to be non-negotiable in our church and in our life but you know the increasing busyness of life elevates even more the vital importance of purposeful and intentional worship when when we come in here when you have you and i cultivated a mentality a worldview if you will about worship have we cultivated a mentality that when we walk in here by the time the call to worship comes we should be set in our minds to have personal intentional personal worship i confess i've often missed that i confess i've often walked in here not having given a thought to how i'm going to worship on sunday morning could anyone join me confessing that we all there are there at times aren't we so this morning let's think about worship because if worship is important to god pause it must become increasingly important to us as christians all of life life should be made of worship if worship means adoring god in our hearts and giving unto him true heart worship that's true but macarthur also said this quote worship is not a narrowly divined activity limited to sunday mornings corporately together he's also right there worship is not limited to sunday mornings it's much broader and bigger than that we're to worship how many days a week seven days a week a great reformer said worship is a proper business of the whole life in which believers should daily exercise themselves but this morning's message is more narrowly focused to our own sunday morning worship together so question what could make what will make our worship on sundays even better more biblical more life-giving more enthusiastic that's what i want us to really focus on today what each of us need to do better on sunday when we walk in here together so how can worship in spirit and truth become more of a reality for you and i weekly now listen close to these next this next sentence our w-e-e-k-l-y worship should not be w-e-a-k-l-y worship it shouldn't be that way our worship when we come in should not be weak and dull and in a rut but it's up to me as a member here it's up to you as a member here for us to elevate the reality in our own hearts of when we come how do i need to worship god today what do i need to bring heart and mind and soul what's needed more among us do you feel a need to worship better in your own life of course this depends upon the holy spirit we know that but it also depends on each of us when we come in here each sunday and how we come in here how ready in our hearts are we to worship so i want us to think about this morning and that fact in the context of all that is good about providence chapel our worship each week can have more life and reality and this message is going to be practical and very specifically focused because our church worship on sunday mornings our church worship corporately i mean our corporate worship as an entire church has to do with our regular lord's day worship meetings we don't congregate as an entire church any other time of the week we have prayer meetings scattered out with the entire congregation together four or five times a month it's once a week this meeting therefore is especially biblical and more important even than private prayer meetings and certainly more important than private devotions at home because god has promised to inhabit what the praises of his people that's corporate god has ordained the local church meeting the corporate meeting so this day the lord's day for worship is different and more significant for worship the churches of christ in the earth that meet on the first day of the week the lord's day weekend and weekend all the churches of jesus christ that gather on this day weekly is the most significant time of worship there is on the earth but it only becomes as significant here as we individually make it that's our focus this morning my sunday worship and yours being more and more meaningful so back to our text john 4 we'll focus in on verse 24 itself god is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth verse 23 jesus has already said that worship the father in spirit and in truth that simple statement that simple brief

statement is packed full of great reality and implications for us individually because jesus said the father is seeking worshipers individual individually worshipers do you worship yourself in spirit and truth we either don't or sometimes we do or more often than not we do or normally we do worshiping in spirit of in truth in truth do we even know really the first thing about what this means what it actually means to worship in spirit and in truth brethren we will never worship biblically if we don't worship in spirit and truth important question here if it is truly providence chapel's corporate desire to worship in spirit and truth to be a church that does that in reality and not just in word only then what can we do that will enable us more on sunday mornings like runners on the starting line of a race who hear the words on your mark get set how must we worship well there's two major truths here jesus plainly gives us in verse 24 truth number one we must worship in spirit the lord used both words and both words mean something different we first must worship truly in spirit now the word here for spirit is lowercase not uppercase meaning this isn't referring to the holy spirit rather it means the human spirit or heart rather than the mind specifically it refers to another part of man it's within us of course we love god with our minds that's part of the great commandment to love god with our heart soul mind and strength but this is referring to something other than the human brain and the human intellect intellect it's referring to the heart and spirit of a person that spirit spiritual part down within you that you're moved to worship god it's it's through the mind but it's beyond the mind it's the human spirit the spirit part of us paul refers to the thessalonians he refers to this when he says to them that your whole spirit and soul and body being preserved blameless and in romans 1 9 paul says to the romans speaking about god he says to god whom i serve with my spirit in the gospel in the preaching of the gospel of his son now the word there in romans 1 9 that he uses for serve is better translated worship it means worship whom i worship with my spirit what paul is saying really paul worship god with his spirit it means with the inner heart and spirit that that is with our affections with our heart love with our with our spiritual adoration our desires the worship center of our being stephen sharnock said without the heart there is no worship without the heart there is no worship without the heart it's only hypocritical worship it's only a stage play in acting the mind can hear arguments and and logical deductions rational statements of truth the hearer can take in and totally understand what's being said and can even intellectually nod with agreement about some things that are said but that's not worship worship is by the human spirit and from the human spirit toward god with what jonathan edwards called religious affections religious and he that's a good word for edwards religious affections that is love-filled emotion that comes out of your soul toward god in worship that is devotion from the heart it's the affection and direction of the love of the heart and the desires of the heart toward god that is part of what it means to worship in spirit so if we want to worship god in spirit we're talking about the heart and our affections not here now this isn't this isn't gone because god speaks to us through our minds but it's got to go in our soul and in our affections and it's got to produce worship in spirit so worship and spirit will be marked by some things i want to mention a couple for us to measure ourselves by because edwards believed this that i'm going to tell you i didn't get this from edwards but i've read edwards at all of him i had a friend tell me on the phone recently we were talking about edwards he brought up edwards to me because he was asking me about john david brainerd and he said well have you read edwards works on all that that he said about the brainers and i said no i know i haven't and he said he wasn't bragging he said well you know i read through all the edwards works twice both published and unpublished writings and he said a lot about the edwards i said i didn't i didn't do that but i know what i'm telling you in a moment edwards believed worship in spirit will first be marked by this a genuine heartfelt love and enthusiasm a genuine heartfelt love and enthusiasm do you have enthusiasm at all within you when you worship on sunday it's a good question enthusiasm basically means within your heart and your soul you have a spiritual earnestness and a zeal in your heart that causes you to to really endeavor to worship a realness a heart engagement a spiritual zeal within i wonder sometimes if god said

to me or to any of us this question how we would answer at least sometimes on some sundays could you act as if i'm wonderful and glorious by your actions of worship i mean evidence some genuine spiritual life and heart engagement but you know some christians on sunday morning are always kind of like eeyore the donkey and winnie the pooh you kind of remember how eeyore was kind of like well i guess i'm going to church today don't expect anything different sorry if you don't like to sit by me at church i guess i'm just too dull to be around who's preaching today oh him again his church finally over we'll praise god how about some improvement eeyore it's a picture isn't it a funny one but i wonder how many i wonder if there's too many eeyores across the land and churches these days no life just present and accounted for is that what jesus christ wants from us within being that way in a hidden way we go through the motions but we really worship like that worship that's just predictable worship that kind of is dead as a doornail sometimes i'm not saying we have this here but i'm warning against it this morning today if i see lifelessness in my worship pattern i should repent today we should repent of lifeless worship and gain new ground in coming in here weekly you brothers and sisters each of us including myself we have new ground to gain in worship with new vigor and new heart and love for christ so how about some improvement in life and heart and inner zeal and enthusiasm in worship that's part of what it means to worship in spirit what else marks worship in spirit true emotion both kinds i'm not asking you to be who you're not i'm not asking you to be like somebody else i'm asking you to be more as a created and saved child of god be more in worship all you can be true emotion at times we ought to have more pleasure and joy in our worship at times there ought to be more godly fear in the moment more silence and reverence and sober mindedness in worship at times quiet reverence in worship where we're caught up in the reality of god in the moment and he's ministering to us and we're oblivious of anyone else also at times expressive joy and reality and emotion all are genuine and parts of true worship in spirit when we worship in spirit we are engaging god the holy spirit with our hearts and our emotions as well as our minds worship should cause us to experience true pleasure and it's amazing to me that we think emotions are fine for all other legitimate human experiences except for sunday morning except during the worship of god why would why would we view emotions being felt or expressed in the worship of god as something negative we don't think it's strange to cry at a funeral we don't think it smile it's strange to smile and laugh and rejoice at a wedding i mean you may kiss your bride yay while the kiss is going on everybody's clapping and yelling we can rejoice over human marriage god made us to feel emotion in life and death situations and he made us to feel emotion in the worship of god you quench your emotions in worship and you will wither away to not knowing even how to worship the bible is full of this reality david was not stoic or somber when he was dancing before the ark the disciples weren't quiet when they returned with joy from their first mission back to jesus jesus was not dull when he rejoiced in spirit in the greatest of all things the worship of god why would we believe that our emotions should be shut down or oppressed i'm not talking about emotionalism i'm not talking about outbursts that are clearly carnal and fleshly and not decent and in order i'm not talking about you know i'm not talking about i'm often the most stoic guy in the room we ought to realize that emotions are the most valid when we're worshipping god so why can't why can i use them in every other area of life except in here on sunday something is wrong with that viewpoint emotion rather than being quenched ought to be enlivened by true worship emotion within your heart and mind rather than being suppressed and quenched ought to be enlivened by true worship i'm not calling us for us to be fake i'm not i'm not calling us to suppress god's stirring in our hearts i'm calling us to be truly free to be free to be genuine in worship to be free to be yourself in here to be free to shake off false religiosity it isn't biblical to be free to truly worship in spirit for our singing and our preaching should move us emotionally and bring enthusiasm into our souls it did in the bible among god's saints it's biblical because we are to love god with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength that means all of us everything we are

we're to love him and that means on sunday morning when we have the one opportunity as an entire church to worship him together second to worship in truth father seeking those who worship him in spirit and secondly those who worship him in truth now to worship in truth is really exactly what it implies broadly all right to worship only according to what is actually true and to what is actually reality i've been in eastern europe and i've been in places where i've seen orthodox people devoutly go through the motions of kissing the icons and bowing down i've seen muslims with their carpets on their knees and we know it's not worship according to truth don't we to worship in truth means that we accord we worship according to only what is fully and truly biblical anyone who believes things that are not according to scripture they cannot be a worshiper if you believe things that would be clearly seen as false doctrine you are not a worshiper of god if we anyone who holds the falsehood can never worship god anyone who walks in unrepentant sin can never worship worship is according to the truth of god based upon the word of god led by the spirit of god who is the spirit of truth so dead worship going through the motions heartless worship is not true worship ritualistic religious actions of worship are not true worship because it's not worship according to truth so any professing christian who's walking in clear disobedience they can never worship god until they're walking in disobedience and in obedience if they're living a lie and yet coming to church regularly they're not a worshiper if you walk in darkness john says you lie and do not the truth so brethren if we are not worshipping in spirit and in truth we're not worshipping that we can have everything great order of service everything set out media's working we sing the greatest songs we hear a phenomenal message but if we in the moment aren't engaged worshipping in spirit and in truth we hadn't worshiped to be true worshipers we must cultivate a few things number one we should cultivate and i saw this phrase so i bought it we must cultivate the david factor what's the david factor what was david's ruling passion what's it was it to be a great king or to be wealthy or to become king quick so he has an opportunity to kill saw he's going to get revenge on saw now what was david's ruling passion has the deer pants after the water brook so pants my soul after the oh god my soul thirst for god for the living god he said in psalm 63 oh god you are my god earnestly will i seek you i thirst for you my whole being longs for you i have looked upon you in the sanctuary that is in church on the day of worship i have looked upon you in the sanctuary beholding your power and your glory that's david the supreme worshiper of god in spirit and in truth possibly the greatest commentator on the old testament ever says quote there is only one thing that david desires to have a lingering clinging and chained gaze upon the beauty and greatness of the lord that is worship and that's what any one of you can begin to do in here on sundays more what is your ruling passion at providence chapel when you walk here on sunday mornings seeing friends or seeing jesus i like seeing friends i like the hugs i like the handshakes i like the the smiles i like seeing friends but it's my ruling passion when i come in here seeing people or seeing the lord what's your ruling passion when you come so we need to cultivate the david factor secondly we should cultivate the simeon factor luke chapter 2 remember old simeon when joseph and mary brought the infant boy to the temple to present him to the lord old simeon walks in and here's what luke says about his coming in for worship he came to the church with the holy spirit upon him he was in church in communion with the holy spirit and he was walking in the reality and power of the spirit while in church as a result in church he discerned some things he spoke some things in the moment that were fitting pause joanne and rob were examples today but in the moment when there's an opportunity to give testimony they're an example how to do it right it was edifying it was about what god did it was it was breath we had brevity they were examples and what heart hank shared was heartfelt thanks about mary's mary's surgery fitting times brethren in the moment simeon was in the moment in church so he discerned some things he spoke some things he saw some things he prophesied some things he was moved in his heart by some things and he worshiped here's a man in church functioning this way what what would it look like any given sunday if more of us were just a little more like

simeon you have a word as one of the brothers that's burned in your heart that morning in your bible reading and god described you with a thought a verse and a thought why can't you stand up and share it some of you who've never done it brothers this is participation reality let's be more like simeon in the moment the david factor the simeon factor and then thirdly the mary factor what was mary's choice with many distractions and likely friction between her and martha what did she choose in the moment intentionally purposely sitting at jesus feet hearing his words worshiping christ beloved brethren on sundays the only time we worship together as a congregation our worship needs to be more a participant activity and not just a spectator activity it's not to be the leaders participating by leading publicly while you only and always sit there passively just going through the motions even if you don't say anything outwardly out loud or stand up or pray or give a testimony don't be a passive worshiper engage yourself benefit from every song you sing every prayer that's prayed let your mind be on it and agree with it in prayer when you hear a testimony listen to it and be encouraged by participate in the congregational worship together engage more in each part of our worship and if we do this will mean us as individuals intentionally to choose to worship with our spirit in every single part of and at every point of our worship service let me say that again this will mean you and i intentionally worshiping with our spirit bringing our heart in every single part of our service and at every point of our service you participate more be in the moment more in the singing really sing from your heart in the praying pray whether you pray out loud or not don't be passive in the hearing of the teaching in the sermon receive in your heart the truth and don't just let it float by because you've been listening an observation of the lord's supper don't just take the supper feast on christ while you take the supper be intentional in the meeting function in the meeting engage in the meaning be active in the meeting thrive in the meaning the mean this means each of us participating in the parts of worship as they are happening participation also our worship needs to be more empowered worshiping in the holy spirit so how can we increase this it would help by all of us waking up and yielding ourselves to the holy spirit and coming to the meeting being full of the spirit that's a novelty sometimes but it'd make a difference how would your worship be if you sought the lord saturday night sunday morning and you said holy spirit i want to worship today truly so help me fill me control me and let me be like simeon to be in the spirit on the lord's day in the temple to worship you what would your worship be like it might be better it might be real it might be life-changing it might flow over onto someone else where you bless them just by your the fragrance of your life in worship come to church full of the spirit as i move toward closing i want to remind you of something else you know don't you that there are always hindrances to worship on sunday morning how many of you had something try to hinder you this morning anybody there's always hindrance some kind a disobedient child whatever there's always hindrance to true worship on these mornings i just want to mention a few really quickly hindrances number one spiritual laziness can be a hindrance if you're going to be a true worshiper on any given sundry sunday you cannot be spiritually lazy about it you won't benefit casual and laid back gets you nothing in the worship of god on sunday if we don't kill that tendency within us the father will not find us to be a true worshiper hindrance number two unconfessed sin if i regard iniquity in my heart the lord will not hear me neither will he accept my worship if i have unconfessed sin that i know i need to make right hindrance number three an unsundered heart an unsundered heart i'm being stubborn and i won't yield an unsundered heart and here sometimes we sing all to jesus i surrender hindrance number four a bad just a bad attitude you wake up with a bad attitude and then people add to it so you you're coming and you're mad at your wife well don't stay mad at your wife if you want to worship because you won't worship in spirit and truth you're angry at your nine-year-old get your heart back controlled and right and come in and then offer your worship hindrance number five legitimate distractions and i'm just gonna name one but it's probably the biggest one in our church example the challenge of young growing families i could have heard a loud amen right there ethan's smiling at me

grinning at me the challenge of young growing families for moms and dads when you're in a church like providence chapel this is big for some of you it and it stretches and challenges us wouldn't it be easier to just stick them in a church nursery yeah but undesirable but here you are in the sunday meeting it distracted at times so you as a young mom and a dad who share that load you have to maneuver and manage this as a family and and most all of you are doing this in such a great way so how can you as a parents of young children or coming children they'll be here soon how can you worship better with your constant distraction weekly here's my advice learn in the moments when you're not distracted to focus on what's happening in the service the song the prayer the message the sharing and grab something from the lord in that moment that he'll give you the holy spirit will give you those mom and dad he has something for you every time you come to worship so in those moments when you're not distracted watch for those the spirit will have something for you if you're keeping your heart in the worship time so stay on track and don't let your mind wander and begin to ask the lord every sunday to give you something for your soul even if it's something within a five minute window trust him for something that can be life-giving so that you can get it so that you can come away from this time having worshiped and having received something that's real hindrance number six physical tiredness only application are you staying up too late on saturday night hindrance number seven opposite opposition from the enemy we know that comes don't we we know this is real we have to recognize it and we have to learn to stand in christ and not be robbed by the opposition from the enemy these are hindrances and other things week in and week out that we must learn to overcome to become increasingly a true worshiper and god has grace each week for that c.s lewis wisely said one time it is in the process of god being worshiped that he communicates his presence to his people and brethren the holy spirit every sunday for you as you come can breathe fresh life and help into your mundane worship don't stay in a rut if you're in one how can we worship better here together only by each of us becoming a person who worships the father increasingly in spirit and in truth i'm not asking any of you to be someone this morning that you're not i'm not asking you to be someone who god hasn't made you i'm asking you to change into a better worshiper because that's whom the father is seeking and he's still seeking and he will meet with those who worship him in spirit and in truth let's pray father we pray that the words of our savior would ring true in our hearts in a life-changing way we want to be among those who worship you in spirit and truth so help us lord apply this to our lives right where we are individually and help us to move from where we are move us by your holy spirit and change us by your spirit into what we need to be as worshipers we bless your name for your word and we thank you in christ's name amen

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