

Drawing Closer to God:

Week 5 - with a lifestyle of Praise & Worship

Take out praise

We were created to worship - to worship the Lord.

Everyone everywhere worships. There is not a single person on the planet who does not worship, someone or something.

The question is not: "Will you worship?". The question is: "Who or what will you worship?"

Wow, you might be thinking: "Those are massive statements", You might be asking yourself: "Are these statements true or not?"

Well, let's put them to the test.

Firstly, let's ask ourselves: "What is worship?"

Worship according to google is:

noun

1.

the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.

verb

1.

show reverence and adoration for (a deity).

If that is what worship is: "How can we define what Or who we worship?"

Well, we need to begin asking ourselves: "What is important to us?"

How can you tell what is important to you? How can you tell what you prioritize? How do you know? How would you know?

There are three commodities that we all have a limited supply of: energy, time and money - how we spend these three commodities helps us to determine our priorities.

What do you spend your energy on:

First?

How much energy?

What do you spend your time on:

First?

How much time?

What do you spend your money on:

First?

How much money?

use words not symbols

While, we don't believe that the Lord wants all our energy, all our time and all our money, we do however, believe He wants to be first in our energy spent, first in our time spent & first in our money spent.

The Greatest Commandment according to Jesus is in Matthew 22:37-38

"Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment."

The Lord clearly wants to be first in our lives.

In fact Jesus gives us a promise in Mathew 6:33 - please look up this verse and read it now - what is the promise?

Mathew 6:33 : Answer: when we put the Kingdom of God first in our lives - Jesus our Lord and King promises to take care of our needs.

You see Jesus is our Lord & our King:

Please read - Rev 19:16 - Who is Jesus according to this verse?

Answer: Jesus is The King of kings, Jesus is The Lord of lords.

Please read - Rev 1:5-6 - Who are we according to these verses?

Answer: vs6 - a kingdom of priests.

You see we are the subjects of His kingdom.

Please read - Eph 2:19 - Who are we according to these verses?

Answer: fellow citizens & members of God's household.

Now, returning to Jesus promise in Mat 6:33 - when we, the citizens of His kingdom, put Him and His kingdom first in our lives then He, our King & Lord, promises to take care of us.

Why do you think Jesus wants to be first in our lives?

Please look up Revelation 5:1-14 and read it now.

This is one of the most amazing passages in the bible that describes worship in heaven.

Who alone out of everyone in heaven, on the earth & under the earth, is worthy to open the scroll?

Vs.5 - Answer: the Lion of the tribe of Judah

Vs.5 - Answer: the Root of David

Who do you think is the Lion of the tribe of Judah referred to in this passage?

For help with your answer you can refer to Mat 2:3-6.

Answer: Jesus

Who is the Root of David referred to in this passage?

For help with your answer you can refer to Luke 1:30-33.

Answer: Jesus

The writer of Revelation then sees a Lamb looking like it has been slain standing before the throne in heaven and taking the scroll from the one who is seated on the throne of heaven. Who is the Lamb that has been slain referred to in this passage?
For help with your answer you can refer to John 1:29.

Answer: Jesus

Why is Jesus alone the only one worthy to take the scroll & to open its seals?

Vs. 9 (Answer - Because He was slain.)

Jesus is worthy of our worship because He has selflessly given us everything of himself. Jesus held nothing back from us - He gave up His very life for us. Jesus gave himself to us first! He gave us one hundred percent of himself. This gives us the first little bit of insight into why Jesus wants us to put Him first.

What did Jesus purchase with His blood?

Vs. 9 (Answer - men)

For whom did He purchase them?

Vs. 9 (Answer - For God)

The men that Jesus purchased for God with His blood where were they from?

Vs. 9 (Answer - every tribe)

Vs. 9 (Answer - every language)

Vs. 9 (Answer - every people)

Vs. 9 (Answer - every nation)

Jesus redeemed us, bought us, purchased us, from the slave market of sin and death, by dying in our place for the forgiveness of our sins. We all like sheep had gone astray the bible tells us in 1 Peter 2:25. We were dead in our sins and our trespasses according to Eph 2:1. We were children of the devil according to Jesus in John 8:44 and yet while we were still sinners He died for us according to Rom 5:8 proving God, The Father's great love for us.

What did Jesus do with these people that He purchased for His Father, God?

Vs.10 (Answer - He made them to be a Kingdom)

Vs.10 (Answer - He made them to be priests)

When we were born again and we received Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour, we received Him as our new Lord, King & Master. Along with that we became a new creation in Him according to 2 Cor 5:17. We received a new Father - God - The Father and we were adopted into His family according to John 1:12&13 & Eph 1:4-5, We become God's children. We also received a new identity. We became a kingdom of priests. This kingdom of priests that Jesus has established on earth has two main functions described in vs10. what are they?

Vs.10 (Answer - to serve our God)

Vs.10 (Answer - to reign on the earth)

This is an awesome privilege. We get to serve God on earth and we get to rule on earth and over the earth for the Lord as His very own children.

This is why Jesus is worthy. This is why Jesus deserves to be first and wants to be first in our lives. It is all a part of our worship to Him.

You see every single area of our lives and every single activity of our lives are now acts of worship to our Lord and King. When we work, when we compete of the sports field, when we raise our kids, when we go to school, college or university, when we meet as a church, etc. We do it all to and for the glory of our Lord, God and King - Jesus Christ.

What is Jesus worthy to receive?

- Vs.12 (Answer - power)
- Vs.12 (Answer - wealth)
- Vs.12 (Answer - wisdom)
- Vs.12 (Answer - strength)
- Vs.12 (Answer - honor)
- Vs.12 (Answer - glory)
- Vs.12 (Answer - praise)

You see Jesus is worthy of worship in every single area of our lives and every single activity of our lives. Our whole life now is an act of worship to our Lord and King.

Who is singing that Jesus is worthy to receive all this from us?

- Vs. 11 (Answer - the angels)
- Vs. 11 (Answer - the living creatures)
- Vs. 11 (Answer - the elders)

How many angels are singing it?

- Vs. 11: $1000 \times 1000 =$ (Answer - 1 Million)
- Vs. 11: $10\ 000 \times 10\ 000 =$ (Answer - 100 Million)

How many elders are singing it?

- Vs. 8 (Answer - 24)

How many living creatures are singing it?

- Vs. 8 (Answer - 4)

How are they singing it?

- Vs. 12 (Answer - in a loud voice)

Have you ever being to a sporting event or to a music concert with thousands of people in attendance singing and shouting loudly? How was it? Can you image what 100 million angels singing in loud voices would sound like? That is the worship what is happening in heaven right now.

In verse 13 who joins in with the angels, the elders and the living creatures in singing?

- Vs. 13 (Answer - every creature)

Where are these creatures from?

- Vs. 13 (Answer - in heaven)
- Vs. 13 (Answer - on earth)
- Vs. 13 (Answer - under the earth)
- Vs. 13 (Answer - on the sea)

This is universal singing - vs 13 says: "and all that is in them, singing"

To whom are they singing?

Vs. 13 (Answer - the one who sits on the throne)

Vs. 13 (Answer - to the Lamb)

What are they singing about that is due unto the Lamb & Him who sits on the throne?

Vs. 13 (Answer - praise)

Vs. 13 (Answer - honor)

Vs. 13 (Answer - glory)

Vs. 13 (Answer - power)

How long are they to be given, praise, glory, honour & power?

Vs. 13 (Answer - for ever)

Vs. 13 (Answer - & ever)

Jesus - God - the Son, God - the Father and God the Holy Spirit are worthy to receive all of the above because they are the creator, ruler, owner & sustainer of us all.

This is why they are to be put 1st in our lives and that is why we are to worship them.

In closing, think about our solar system for a second. For many many years mankind used to believe that the sun orbited around the earth and that the earth was the center of our solar system. Then we discovered that in fact the sun was the center of our solar system and the the earth and all the other planets orbit around it.

When we get born again that change should happen in our minds as well in relation to God. We realize: "Wow, we are not the centre of our lives. Jesus is the centre of our lives and our lives are to revolve around Him."

Why?

Well just like in our solar system - only the Sun has enough gravitational pull to hold all the other planets in check and orbiting correctly around the sun. So only Jesus, the Son of God, has enough power to hold my life together and to keep all the different facets of my life orbiting correctly. Jesus does this not only for my life but for every one of His people's lives.

This understanding lines up, with what we read in Hebrews 1:3a "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

Jesus sustains all things by His powerful word! This is why we should draw closer to Him by putting Him first and living a lifestyle of worship.

Day 1 - Personal Bible Study

Main thought of the day: "Seeing" who God is causes us to worship Him.

Please read Rev 4:6-11

These verses describe the throne room of heaven and precede the passage we studied at focus group.

We are introduced to the four living creature and the twenty four elders.

In verse 6 & 8 we read that the living creatures are covered with something - what was it?

Answer: Eyes

Verse 8 tells us day and night the four living creatures never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Why do you think they never stop saying it?

Could it be because they never stop seeing God on His throne in all of His majesty and splendor? They never stop seeing because they are covered with eyes and can see God all the time from where ever they are. This causes them to break out in praise, worship, adoration and thanks giving all the time.

Think about this for a second - have you ever had a revelation of God or a revelation of one of the aspects of His character or nature?

When you realized or "saw" that particular aspect of God, what happened in your heart? For most of us it leads us to be in awe, wonder and marvel about the Lord, which leads us worship Him more.

What effect do the four living creatures worship have on the twenty four elders?

Vs.10 (Answer - they fall down before Him who sits on the throne)

Vs.10 (Answer - they worship Him who lives forever)

Vs.10 (Answer - they lay their crowns before the throne)

Vs. 10 (Answer - they praise the Lord)

What is the One who sits on the throne worthy of, according to the twenty four elders?

Vs. 11 (Answer - glory)

Vs. 11 (Answer - honor)

Vs. 11 (Answer - power)

Why do they say He is worthy to receive glory, honor and power?

Vs. 11 (Answer - He created all things)

Vs. 11 (Answer - By His will they were created)

Vs. 11 (Answer - By his will they continue to be)

These twenty four elders and four living creatures see God as He really is and the result is spontaneous unending praise, worship, adoration & thanksgiving.

We believe that if we can "see" God like He truly is it will result in us living a life of greater worship like we discussed at the focus group.

Lord, open the eyes of our hearts so we can "see" you as you really are, we ask in Jesus Name.

Close by reading Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in Eph 1:17-19a and pray it for yourself.

Day 2 - Personal Bible Study

Let's look at an example in the Old Testament of what happens when people "see" God and by see we mean have an encounter with Him.

Please read Isaiah 6:1-8

Who did Isaiah see according to vs.1?

Vs.1 (Answer - the Lord)

Vs 1-4 describe the setting in which Isaiah saw the Lord - how closely does his description match that of the passages we covered in Rev 4 yesterday?

Tick one answer

It is the same place

A different place

Not sure

Most biblical scholars agree that it is the same place - the Throne room of heaven.

What does Isaiah become conscious of when he sees the Lord?

Vs. 5 (Answer - His own uncleanness)

Vs. 5 (Answer - The uncleanness of the people he lives with)

Is Isaiah "ruined" as he put it because of his uncleanness?

Yes - he is ruined or No - something happens - circle your answer.

What happens in vs 6-7 to cleanse Isaiah?

Vs. 6 (Answer - an angel takes a live coal from the altar)

Vs. 7 (Answer - the angel touches Isaiah's mouth with it)

What does the angel declare to Isaiah in vs. 7?

Vs. 7 (Answer - His guilt is taken away)

Vs. 7 (Answer - His sin is atoned for)

This is a foreshadow of the gospel.

1 John 1:7 - "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**"

Hebrews 10:21-22 - "and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having **our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience** and having our bodies washed with pure water.

How awesome is The Lord? He loved us enough to do something about our sin - He died in our place for the forgiveness of our sins & the removal of a guilty conscience. What does he require of us for this to take place? Simply what Isaiah did - to confess our sin, guilt, shame and then receive His forgiveness.

If you continually find yourself carrying guilt or feeling sinful and unclean - you will find it difficult to worship the Lord - your problem is one of two possibilities:

a. You have not confessed your sin and repented of it.

or

b. You have not fully grasped the power and effectiveness of the blood of Jesus to cleanse you of your sin and free you from a guilty conscious.

1 John 1:9-10

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Both possibilities will cause you to hold back from a life of worship. The solution to both possibilities is in your power to change as you ask the Lord for His help. Confess your sin and repent of it. Then chose to believe the bible in terms of what it declares Jesus has done for you, in so doing you will be free to live a lifestyle of worship to and for the King.

This is exactly what we see taking place in Isaiah's life.

In vs. 8 Isaiah overhears a conversation the Godhead is having. What are they asking one another?

Vs. 8 (Answer - Whom shall I send?)

Vs. 8 (Answer - Who will go for us?)

Because Isaiah had seen the Lord, because Isaiah's guilt had been taken away and because Isaiah's sin had been atoned for. He was free to respond instantly. What was His response?

Vs. 8 (Answer - Here am I)

Vs. 8 (Answer - Send me!)

And so he begins a lifestyle of deeper and more intimate worship to the King because the eyes of His heart had been opened!

Lord, gives us a deeper revelation of the gospel and our freedom in Christ so we may be free to respond to you and live a life of deeper and more intimate worship we ask in Jesus Name.

Day 3 - Personal Bible Study

In both passages from the previous two days bible study we see that as we "see" the Lord and the eyes of our hearts are opened it leads to a lifestyle of greater worship.

Please read Isaiah 6:9-10

The Lord, in response to Isaiah's willingness to go, is to send Isaiah with a message for the people of Israel.

He basically gives them two options in vs. 10. What are the two options?

Option one. Fill in the blanks

Be ever (hearing), but never (understanding);

be ever (seeing), but never (perceiving).

Make the (heart) of this people (calloused);

make their (ears) dull and close their (eyes)

Option two.

Otherwise they might (see) with their (eyes),

(hear) with their (ears),

(understand) with their (hearts)

and (turn) and be (healed)."

Do you think that it is the Lord's will for anyone to live in option one?

Yes or No - circle your answer.

Please read Ezekiel 33:11

It is pretty clear that the Lord's heart is for people and that he wants them to turn to Him and be healed.

Please read Isaiah 35:3-10

Five things take place in vs. 5-6

What are they?

- Vs. 5 (Answer - blind eyes opened)
- Vs. 5 (Answer - deaf ears unstopped)
- Vs. 6 (Answer - lame limbs healed)
- Vs. 6 (Answer - mute tongues loosed)
- Vs. 6 (Answer - water running in the desert)

What is the context in which these things are happening in the passage?

- Vs. 4b (Answer - retribution & salvation)
- Vs. 9b (Answer - redeemed people)
- Vs. 10a (Answer - ransomed people)

When we were born again we received a new heart and a new spirit - these are the provisions of the new covenant according to the following scriptures:

Ezekiel 11:19

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 18:31-32

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

Ezekiel 36:26

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Our new heart and our new spirit enable the eyes of our hearts to see the Lord and that results in us being able to live a lifestyle of worship to our Lord and King.

Lord Jesus - thank you for redeeming me. Thank you that you have given me a new heart and new spirit that I can "see" you more clearly - please keep on revealing yourself to me. In Your precious name I pray.

Day 4 - Personal Bible Study

Please read Isaiah 35:3-6a

We saw yesterday from this passage that the bible prophesy blind eyes opened, deaf ears unstopped, lame limbs healed, mute tongues loosed & water running in the desert.

Please read Mat 11 vs 2-6

When John the Baptist was imprisoned and he was doubting who Jesus was he sent some disciples to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah or should they except someone else. John was perhaps losing sight of who Jesus was and His worship of Him and His faith in Him was waning.

What was the answer Jesus sent them back with?

Vs. 4 - (Answer - tell John what you hear and see)

Vs. 5 - (Answer - Blind - See)

Vs. 5 - (Answer - Lame - Walk)

Vs. 5 - (Answer - Leprosy - Cured)

Vs. 5 - (Answer - Deaf - Hear)

Vs. 5 - (Answer - Dead - Raised to life)

Vs. 5 - (Answer - Good News - Preached to the poor)

While Jesus was on earth we see that he repeatedly performed the following miracles:

- Blind eyes seeing - Ref
- Deaf ears hearing - Ref
- Mute tongues speaking - Ref
- Lame lame limbs working - Ref
- Leprosy cured - Ref
- Dead raised to life - Ref

What is the significance of them for us and what does it have to do with worship?

We believe, as we have looked at over the last couple of days, that the eyes of our hearts need to be opened so we can "see the Lord" as he really is. Our hearts can be spiritually blind and we need Jesus to heal them so we can see Him and what He is doing on the earth today and how we can work with Him in what He is doing.

Secondly, we need Jesus to heal the ears of our hearts so that we can hear what He is saying to us and what He is telling us to do.

Thirdly, we believe that as we begin to see and hear like this our tongues will be loosened so we can worship Him, testify of His goodness, thank Him for His faithfulness and share the Good News about Jesus with the people in our lives.

Fourthly, the result of us sharing the gospel with our loosened tongues will be people being born again - which means that they have been saved from eternal death and raised to eternal life in Jesus Christ - Ref. Like Jesus raised the dead psychically, we as we share the gospel with people and they get saved we get to witness Jesus raising the spiritually dead.

Fifthly, another result of sharing the gospel (tongues loosened) is that people's leprosy is healed. People with leprosy in the bible were considered unclean, could not have healthy relationships with clean people and were outcasts of society. Leprosy is a type of sin in the bible and by type we mean is an allegory for sin. When sin came into the world it made mankind unclean; broke down our relationship and intimacy with God and one another; and we were cast out of God's presence. The good news is that like Jesus healed and cleansed people from leprosy, He forgives, heals and cleanses people from sin.

Sixthly, as we walk in the above experiences with Jesus we are walking in the good works that He prepared in advance for us to walk in according to Eph 2:10. This is like Jesus healing the lame

hands and feet of people. When Jesus heals us of spiritual lameness, our hands can do the work of the Lord and our feet can walk in the ways of the Lord.

Lord heal us in all of these areas, today we pray in Jesus name!

Day 5 - Personal Bible Study

We close off our study on worship today by looking at the last verse of Isaiah 35:6b-10

Today we want to look at the results of blind eyes opened, deaf ears unstopped, lame limbs healed, mute tongues loosed.

Describe what happens in verse 6b-7.

Vs. 6b - (Answer - water gushes forth in the wilderness)

Vs. 6b - (Answer - streams in the desert)

Vs. 7 - (Answer - burning sand becoming a pool)

Vs. 7 - (Answer - thirsty ground becoming bubbling springs)

Vs. 7 - (Answer - Jackals haunts becoming grasslands)

These transformations described in the above passage depict what happens when someone gets saved. Their lives are transformed from death to life from a desert to an oasis.

In verse 8 we read about a highway being made - what is the highway called?

Vs. 8 - (Answer - Way of Holiness)

In verse 9b-10 two types of people walk on this highway - what words are used to describe them?

Vs. 9b - (Answer - redeemed)

Vs. 10 - (Answer - ransomed)

These redeemed and ransomed people enter Zion - what are they doing as they enter?

Vs. 10 - (Answer - Singing)

When we put the Lord first in our lives. When we worship Him with our lives like we should. When our eyes are open, when our ears can hear, when our tongues can speak, when we can walk in His ways the result is that the spiritually dead are raised to eternal life and the spiritual lepers are healed and joined back into relationship with the Lord and are no longer unclean and cast out.

They in turn start to sing and worship the Lord, everlasting joy crown their heads, gladness and joy overtake them and sorrow and sighing flee away!

Wow what awesome results from us living a lifestyle to true worship to the Lord!

An attitude of thankfulness and gratefulness keep my heart soft and my eyes open to what the Lord is doing in me, through me and around me.

Personal & Corporate praise & worship are given by God to help me see and experience Him personally and corporately.

Let's look at an example in the New Testament of what happens when people "see" God and by see we mean have an encounter with Him.

Please read Acts 26:9-19

Paul's Encounter with Jesus