

Scripture : Exodus 20:4-6, John 4:23-24 (02/04/2024 Pastor David K Park)
Title : Worship with Integrity

There was a time in the history of the Korean-American churches that was tearful in retrospect. This was the time when the churches were growing quantitatively. However, as the churches grew in size, they were divided, and new churches were often formed. In Chicago, where I live, it's hard to give up the lead to other cities in terms of church division.

Why does worship sometimes seem to have such unintended consequences?

Worship is the most important part of our lives as believers. The church is usually described as having four or five functions. However, all scholars agree that the first function is worship. This means that worship is the most important of the church's functions. The following functions - education, mission and service, or fellowship - are ways to fulfill worship.

Consider today's New Testament scripture.

cf. [John 4:23 NIV] Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

The word worship appears in the scripture. Samaria had long been politically and religiously cut off from Jerusalem. The conversation in today's New Testament scripture is part of a conversation between a Samaritan woman and Jesus. The conversation is about living water - husbands - places of worship. The woman would have expected a straightforward answer to the question of place of worship, which was causing religious conflict.

cf. Mount Gerizim is

- a. the place where Abraham tried to sacrifice Isaac.
- b. where he met Melchizedek
- c. the first place Moses built an altar and offered sacrifices when the people entered the Promised Land.

Jerusalem was an important place of worship for the Jews, but Samaritans were forbidden to enter it.

What kind of region was Samaria?

They had lost their religious purity by worshiping pagan gods and had intermarried so much that they could no longer maintain a pure Hebrew lineage. They now had their own temple on Mount Gerizim and had no family relation to the Jewish people.

The word "worship" means "to bow down, prostrate." True worship is the prostration of the whole person before God.

In worship, all of us as worshipers should be immersed in an infinite trust in the character of God. This trust causes us to commit ourselves to God.

Our worship today should always be one of commitment. Have infinite trust in God, who protects and watches over your home.

Offer sacrifices of atonement to God through worship. The most popular and most active form of Christianity today is quite careful not to confront sin.

If Christianity does not confront sin head-on, who or what will be able to say that sin is sin on this earth?

Use only God's methods. In private, reveal the ugly feelings of sin in you without filter. If necessary, shed tears of repentance and offer prayers of atonement.

The Samaritans of John 4:20-24 still sacrifice on Mount Gerizim. Their temple was destroyed in 125 BC, but if you go to Mount Gerizim on their holy day, they cut open the bellies of animals the same way they did during the time of the Law of Moses. Today, about 400 Samaritans worship there.

Jerusalem had the truth but not the spirit, while Mount Gerizim had the spirit but not the truth. The Jews had the right data but not the right heart, while the Samaritans had the right heart but not the right data.

Our worship of God is not theoretical. You must have a heartbreakingly honest experience of your sins in this moment of worship.

It's been said that a church's worship cannot rise above the spiritual level of its congregation. What is important in your worship today is that you are moved and touched.

The burnt offering had to be a male without blemish. Those who had access to a bull had to offer a bull, which was expensive at the time. Those who could offer a bull could not offer a cheap lamb or a dove instead. They could not offer a sacrifice bought at a dumping price.

If we cannot distinguish between our time, our health, and our materials in our worship of the Mighty God, it cannot be called heartfelt worship.

What is true worship? True worship is gratitude for salvation by the grace of the cross of Jesus Christ, responding in faith to a deeper loving fellowship with God.

They hired a god to protect them, just as they hired a bodyguard to protect them. To serve the gods on their own terms, they created gods as they saw fit. They wanted to control and manage the gods as they pleased, and in the end, they created gods to fulfill their needs and desires. This is what an idol is. In today's Old Testament reading, God tells us not to make such idols.

Christians encounter God through worship, grow through worship, and discover their true purpose and mission in life through worship. Become true worshipers, offering a living sacrifice to God. Amen.