

# ***Teaching Sound Doctrine***

## ***BUILDING BETTER WORSHIP Pt. 4***

### **WORSHIP TODAY**

Our culture today has become one of selfishness and self-centeredness. This attitude has crept into our thinking regarding the *church* and worship. People have been taught to “join the church of your choice,” so when they start seeking a *church* they want one that meets **their** needs. The desires of God are ignored and one’s own desires become preeminent. This same attitude has come into the Lord’s church regarding our worship. They want to worship how they desire instead of how God desires. Today many will be more concerned with what they get out of it instead of worshipping Him. They will often be heard saying, “I did not get anything out of that.” They want to be *entertained* by the *performers* (generally the preacher and song leader). With a proper view of God and His awesomeness, they would not think in such shallow ways. If they would get that vision of God, they would not come to worship for what they can get out of it, but they would come to worship God. Self would take an inferior position and their engaging in worshipping God would take priority.

With a proper view of God and His excellence, preachers, elders, and other members would not have to beg people to come worship God. Almost every congregation of the Lord’s people has members who have to be encouraged and almost forced to attend services (elders and preachers are almost like babysitters with them). Then we have a large group that will attend Sunday morning but will not return on Sunday evenings to worship God. These individuals do not have a view of God’s greatness. When we see Jehovah in His glory, we will have the desire to worship Him.

We also need to recognize that in worship to God, that we are the participants and God is the audience. Preachers often incorrectly speak of those listening to him preach as the audience, thus we preachers have contributed to a wrong conception of worship. We have those who lead us in our worship to God (which is what the preacher is doing in leading us in a study of the Word of God). Each person is to be an active worshiper to God. *Audience* refers to:

- (1) those who watch, not those who participate,
- (2) those who observe, not those who perform,
- (3) spectators, not participators,
- (4) those in the grandstand not to those on the playing field. Therefore, we are

not the audience, God is. We should have the attitude of Cornelius when we come to worship: “Now therefore are we all here present before God” (Acts 10:33) for God to observe our worship to Him. When we have this type attitude and we come to actually worship God and not be entertained, then we will be receiving in return.

## **WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH**

Jesus told the Samaritan woman:

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 (John 4:23-24).

When we have the proper view of God, we will worship the Father. However, in worshiping the Father, we must do so in spirit and truth. *Truth* is in accordance with His Word, or as He instructs us to. *Spirit* has to do with our attitude in our worship.

### **According to Truth**

God has authorized five avenues through which we are to worship Him. Those five items are: singing, prayer, contribution, Lord’s Supper, and preaching. We have discussed these in previous lessons, thus I will not spend much time in this lesson on them.

We are given the command to sing praises to God. Every passage that speaks to this matter in the New Testament gives the specific type of music of singing. We also find that, in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, we have reciprocal action which means that we are doing it to each other and at the same time—thus congregational singing. There is no authority for choirs or choruses, even as there is no authority for mechanical instrumental music.

In worship to God we are to pray. Prayer is to be addressed to the Father through the name of Christ. While prayers are to be done in private (Mat. 6:6), they are also to be done in the worship assembly (1 Cor. 14:15).

As we worship, there is to be preaching. The preacher is leading us into a study of God’s Word: thus he must “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). A preacher is to keep back nothing that is profitable (Acts 20:20) and declare all the counsel of God (20:27).

Two avenues of worship are authorized to be done upon the first day of the week. The partaking of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the death of our Lord and Savior upon the cross. The emblems used are unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Mat. 26:26-29). This is done every Sunday (Acts 20:7).

God authorized the giving of our money into a common treasury—the contribution. This money is to be given cheerfully and from a liberal heart to meet the needs which might arise regarding the work of the church (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

When we have a proper view of God and His holiness, we would not dare tamper in any way with what He has designated for man to do in worship to Him. We would also observe the respect that He demands for His Word (see Nadab and Abihu; Lev. 10:1-2), but we would not dare alter anything which He authorizes.

### **Proper Spirit**

This deals with the attitude we are to possess as we participate in those avenues of worship. We might very well do the proper actions (those five avenues listed previously) and never worship. Unless we do it with the proper attitude, then simply going through the acts will be worthless. Again, when we have a proper view of God and His love for us, and His providing a Savior, our attitude in worship to God will change.

Remember that when the living creatures and the twenty-four elders saw the majesty of God, they fell down before Him to worship (Rev. 4). Likewise, when we see that awesome nature of God, we likewise will fall down and truly worship Him. Our minds will be centered upon what we are doing and saying. When we sing, it will not be just the saying of words, but it will be the pouring out of our praise to Him by centering our minds on the words which we sing. The prayers will be the emotions of our heart to our loving heavenly Father. When we partake of the bread and fruit of the vine, our minds will go back and be centered upon the great sacrifice Jesus made for us. We will look at our giving differently. Instead of feeling a compulsion to give, we will be seeing all that God has done for us and how He provides for us and sustains us and we will be giving cheerfully to further His cause (the greatest cause) here on earth. The preaching and studying of God's Word will not be simply spending time listening to someone "flap their jaws," but it will invoke within us the greatest respect, knowing that this is a study of God's message to us. There will not be the whispering, passing notes, sleeping, and so many of the things that go on during

the study of God's Word in the preaching that takes place.

## **CONCLUSION**

To build better worship, we must get a view of the majesty and awesomeness of God. When we really *see* God, it will change our entire attitude about our worship and change our life as well. We will no longer simply go through the motions of coming and simply spending time at a building, but we will put our entire being into worshiping our God. Our worship of the Father will not only be in Truth but will truly be in spirit also (John 4:23-24).