

God's Plan for Worship

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 4:20-24

In this chapter, Jesus spoke with a Samaritan woman by a well. One topic they discussed was worship. Jesus explained to her some basic principles about worship. This provides instruction for us as well. In this lesson, we're going to look at what Jesus said and what He taught about God's plan for worship. There are four basic points we're going to see in His teaching on this occasion.

The Worship PLACE

- The Samaritan woman's initial question was about the place of worship (v. 20) – the Jews worshipped in Jerusalem, the Samaritans in “this mountain” (Mount Gerizim); which was right?
- Jesus explained that neither place would be the designated location for worship (v. 21) – God does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24); we are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- Yet the fact that there is no designated place of worship does not mean that assembling is unimportant – from the time when the church was established, togetherness was emphasized (Acts 2:44-46; 20:7); assembling with others is to be a priority (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- No specific place or type of location is mandated – but assembling together is (this implies some place)

Worship with KNOWLEDGE

- After addressing the place of worship for the Jews and Samaritans, Jesus brought up another point – the Jews worshipped what they knew, the Samaritans did not (v. 21); in other words, the Samaritans did not properly understand God
- Prophecy about the new covenant indicated that those under it wouldn't need to be taught about God – they would already know Him (Jeremiah 31:31-34); foreshadowed being born again (John 3:3, 5)
- The assembly would still be open to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:24) – but even then, there would be an emphasis on God and making Him known (1 Corinthians 14:25)

Worship in SPIRIT

- This refers to our inner being – “the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides” (Thayer); we cannot just “go through the motions” or act by mere tradition; it must be from the heart
- We must have the proper attitude – recognize that God is worthy of our worship (Psalm 100:1-5); we must come before Him with reverence (Hebrews 12:28-29) and

humility (Psalm 8:3-4); we must assemble with gladness (Psalm 122:1) and not view it as a burden (Malachi 1:13)

Worship in TRUTH

- This is to follow an objective standard – worship God according to His instructions/word (John 17:17); heart-felt, emotional worship is good, but it must also be what God has instructed
- We need to look to His word to see what actions are to be included in our worship – singing (Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26); praying (1 Corinthians 14:15; Acts 4:23-31); preaching/teaching (Acts 20:7, 20, 31; 1 Timothy 3:15); giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2); Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 33)

Conclusion

- God is seeking for people to be His worshippers (John 4:23) – but we must worship Him in His way
- Rather than doing things OUR way, we need to worship “in spirit and truth ”