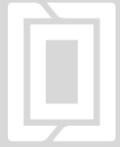


A CALL TO WORSHIP (part 1)

John 4:1-24



March 3, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

How challenging is to get to the worship service ready to interact with the Living God?

You see someone in the church parking lot who has brought pain to you or your family's life and it sets you off. You walk into the worship center and maybe you aren't noticed in the way you think you should be noticed. You see someone speaking or on the worship team that you don't like and then you hear the drums for the first song and you think one of two things: 1) Why do we need drums in church? or 2) Why aren't the drums louder? You begin to look through the study notes and you keep reliving what happened to you this past week at work or wonder why your spouse is so insensitive to your needs.

It's into this chaotic context that Jesus calls us to worship. What is meaningful worship from Jesus' perspective? What's the eternal and vital role that we play worshipping with our brothers and sisters today? What kind of worshipper is God looking for?

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is unapologetic in His agenda. Jesus came to dramatically change our vision of worship. This morning Jesus wants to speak directly into our hearts concerning the most important topic of worship.

¹ Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ² (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³ He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴ But He needed to go through Samaria. ⁵ So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹ Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:1-9)

In 722 BC the Assyrians came into the Promised Land and destroyed 80% of Israel. They destroyed the northern 10 tribes in the area we call Galilee and Samaria and only Judea was left intact. Assyria moved five foreign nations into that area of Galilee and Samaria and these nations dwelt among the remaining Jews. They wed together and created a hybrid nation and form of worship. They even made their own priesthood and believed worship should take place at Mt Gerizim (Bethel, Gen 12:1-5). In Jesus' day, going north to Galilee from Judea you would go left or right and go around Samaria. The Jewish Mishnah indicates that Samaritan women were regarded as perpetually unclean. The Mishnah forbid even touching the bucket of the Samaritan woman. Jesus could have cared less about how His world perceived her. Jesus breaks all rules here.

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." ¹¹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹² "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.

But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'¹⁸ "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." (John 4:10-18)

Who is the first Gentile in the New Testament to come to faith? In a male dominated society, surely it is going to be a man. We get a woman who has been rejected by five different men and couldn't marry anymore, so she just lives immorally. She is so lonely that she pursues men, and she comes to draw water at noon when no one would be at the well.

When Jesus wants to teach us something about worship, he uses the lowest person on the totem pole in Jewish culture. Why? Worship is not about some mythical moment at the end of our week. Worship has to do with real life. Worship happens in the brokenness of adultery and hunger and racial conflict.

To this desolate, ostracized, broken Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, Jesus looks her in the eye with love and tenderness and listen to what He says in John 4:14, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

What Jesus promises is the New Covenant promise of the Holy Spirit (c.f. 7:37-38) that will come with a new heart. This is what Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel promised. "I will sprinkle you with pure water and you will be clean from all your impurities. I will purify you from all your idols. I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you..." (Ezek 26:26-27a) This promised New Covenant Holy Spirit will come through the redeeming work of the One who stood before this Samaritan woman.

John is making it clear that it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that takes away our frustration of trying to find satisfaction in this world. It's the Holy Spirit that turns us into people who overflow with life to love others instead of sucking up other people's life. When we come to Christ, what do we drink? We drink in His promises of real life and the power of the Spirit. This is the living water Jesus offers the Samaritan woman and this is the living water He offers us today. This is how Jesus turns a worldly, sensual adulteress from Samaria into a fountain of life. This is how he takes us and turns us into fountains of life.

¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain (Mt Gerisem), and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father ²² "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:19-24)

Instead of addressing her adulterous past, the Samaritan woman distracts by trying to suck Jesus into an academic controversy. Jesus says that doesn't matter and explains to her that the world is about to have a change in worship. Worshipers of the true God will not be preoccupied with location. Instead they will be preoccupied with a Person. We are no longer looking for the place of worship (Mt. Gerizim or Jerusalem), we have the Person; Jesus is where heaven and earth unite.

What is meaningful worship from Jesus' perspective?

God is seeking worshippers who worship in spirit and truth.