

Worship

The Harp and the Bowl

Part 1 – Spirit and Truth

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INTRODUCTION

How far would you go to worship God?

Illustration – In the early church, in Rome, Christians had to worship in the catacombs sometimes as deep as 100 feet underground so that they would not be discovered by the authorities. Can you imagine having to worship God among dead bodies?

The Harp and The Bowl

The New Testament provides two distinct aspects of worship. One at the Jerusalem council, James, the brother of Jesus, prophesies that in the last day a certain tabernacle would be rebuilt (i.e. the tabernacle of David).

"After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up" (Acts 16:16).

And second, there is a phenomenal picture that occurs around the throne of heaven in the book of Revelation which is a combination of prayer and song—the harp and the bowl which is found in Revelation 5:8-9. Is there a more qualified place to learn about worship than what takes place at His very Throne?

Worshipping God with the harp and the bowl represents a combination of declaring the Word of God and prayerful singing.

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (Revelation 5:8)

Jesus' Mission Statement

When Jesus came to earth, He came with a mission of restoration. His mission statement is found in [Luke 4:18-19](#). He said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Signifying the type of death He would die, Jesus said, *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself (John 12:32)*. By His death Jesus reconciled the world to God. Though He died once, never to suffer death again, we can, by our praise and worship lift Him up or magnify Him for all to see.

In His conversation with the woman at the well in Sychar, Jesus presented the proper order of Kingdom worship by saying that those who worship the Father must worship in spirit and truth. In the midst of a crucial conversation, which included racial, gender, religious and ethnic complexities; the subject of worship was brought forward.

Jesus did three things to restore Kingdom order: (PP)

1. He proclaimed the Word of the Kingdom
2. He demonstrated the works of the Kingdom and
3. He Restored the worship of the Kingdom.

MAIN POINTS

- The object of New Testament worship is the FATHER
- The TWO pillars of New Testament worship are SPIRIT and TRUTH
- In worship something is always exchanged
- In worship our posture always changes.

MAIN POINTS PLUS BREAKDOWN

1. The object of New Testament worship is the FATHER

- a. It is not enough to worship – you have to know who your worship is directed to
- b. Jesus de-bunks the idea of special location(s) as the designed place of worship, in fact, location and methods are of no advantage

- c. The worship that Jesus espouses – is inward and not based on ceremonies and rituals or outward expressions

- i. **And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND HIM ONLY YOU SHALL SERVE.'" (Luke 4:8)**

2. The TWO Pillars of New Testament worship are SPIRIT and TRUTH

a. TRUTH

- i. **True:** genuine, real and sincere – opposite to what is counterfeit, simulated, imaginary or pretended. *"Conformity to reality or actuality; often with the implication of dependability."*
- ii. There is a difference between **PERSONAL TRUTH** and **THE TRUTH!** The woman at the well had beliefs she considered to be true and reliable. She pointed to Jacob's well as a place of significance, BUT in light of the TRUTH (Jesus) who spoke to her, her truth did not stand up.

1. Holy Spirit leads into all truth – He is the "Spirit of Truth"
2. Jesus is the truth
3. Jesus speaks the truth
4. Jesus bears (*to remove the covering and to expose*) witness to the truth
5. The truth sets us free
6. Through Jesus - grace and truth came into the world.

- b. The Samaritans only accepted a portion of scripture and, therefore, their knowledge of the Messiah was limited)

- i. Truth is critical because you can be sincerely wrong and be in ignorance.

c. SPIRIT

- i. The expression of the heart, soul, body and spirit that is aimed towards God; it includes **affection, adoration, reverence, blessings, exaltation, magnification** and declaring the greatness of God

1. Worship must be birthed in the Spirit because God is Spirit (His very nature) and must be worshipped as such.
2. Although worship is a spiritual activity, it can be reduced to a fleshly and soulish thing – this is not acceptable.
3. Holy Spirit leads us into all truth
4. Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth
5. Christians must worship in Spirit.

d. *Philippians 3:3 - For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

3. In worship something is always exchanged

- a. From Genesis to Revelation, every time that God is worshipped and adored something is always exchanged between humanity and God. This includes, sacrifice, offerings, tithes, wealth, and human expression of various types.
 - i. New Testament worship has two common elements:
 1. Our posture changes (i.e. mostly falling down) - the posture of the heart – in humility and attitude not ritual
 2. Wealth - giving seems to be intertwined with worship both in the Old and in the New Testaments
 - ii. In worship our posture always changes.

4. The purpose of worship is to know the Father

²⁵The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

- a. True worship is not based on physical location, methods or rituals but rather knowing God and the cry of the human heart towards Him

Psalm 76:1 - To the Chief Musician. On Stringed Instruments. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song. In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel.

- Judah means praise – in praise God is known.

SCRIPTURAL TEXT

John 4:20

Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But 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. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

- The only other time He would declare this was at His trial.

The Samaritans

The Samaritans were "half-breeds," which is part Jew and part Gentile. As such, they were considered outcasts and were despised by the Jews. They had their own religious system in Samaria that competed with the claims of the Jews (see John 4:20-24) and believed in the coming of the Messiah (John 4:25).

Past Circumstances Surrounding the Samaritan Woman

- She is a Samaritan and a woman
- She was a second-class citizen in a male dominated society
- She had a negative reputation (that she helped create to some extent)
- She desired to avoid people as much as possible
- Most people wanted to avoid her (around her children and husbands)
- She lived in a village - everyone knew about her and her past
- She felt as though she had to live out her life in isolation.