

# In Spirit and in Truth: Rooted and Established

## Freedom Church of Denton

### Worship

Volume 1, Lesson 12

- **In Devotion** (feel free to highlight, underline, and scribble notes. Take your time, working through the following material over the course of the next week...it would be better for you to get through one sentence with understanding than the whole lesson with no understanding!)

*...with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and  
having favor with all of the people  
Acts 2:46-47*

The cornucopia of blessing that the Spirit was pouring out on this home-harvest celebration of providential proportion, resulted in hearts that were abounding in great gladness, overflowing in expressions of lavish praise toward God. This is what one would expect as Luke concludes his primer on this new Spirit-filled type of fellowship in Acts 2:36-47 that revealed 12 essentials for walking out new life in Christ. It is no accident that “worship” (which is featured in this lesson) and “discipleship” (which will be featured in the next and final lesson of this section) are the two final outcomes of this Pentecostal experience. After all, they correspond neatly with what Jesus said about the two greatest commandments, **to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might; and to love your neighbor as yourself.**

May I be so bold as to suggest that worship is the *point* of it all! It is the end, the culmination of all that Christ did and said, the *telos* of his sacrifice, death, and exaltation; namely, the offering of praise from the objects of his mercy. And here, the saints exuberantly offered him the reward of his suffering!

Anyone who views praise and worship as belonging to emotionally-oriented people alone, are spiritually anemic and neither understand the greatness of God nor the surpassing greatness of their inheritance in Christ Jesus. Have you ever heard someone say something like, “I just go to church for the teaching, but I’m really not into that singing and worship stuff?” Hmm. At first hearing, and to the undiscerning ear, this statement may have a certain deceptive appeal. It can seem to suggest that more mature people aren’t given to the more “emotional” aspects of church life. But nothing could be further from the truth. Authentic spiritual worship is one of the chief spiritual affections that testifies of a genuine salvation experience. It’s why we are commanded in Hebrews 13:15 to offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

It is admitted however, that there are few who respond to God in a manner that is as pleasing as did the sinful woman with the alabaster jar, when she prostrated herself at the dusty altar of Jesus’ feet, kissing them and anointing them with ointment and the tears of her repentance. This is

because there are so few who understand their own hearts as courageously, that perceive the purity of God's grace and mercy as clearly, and surrender themselves as completely in heartfelt worship as did she.

Similarly, there are few that have learned to humble themselves as fully in worship as David did when he recklessly disrobed himself of all his royal garb only to don a lowly linen ephod, dancing with all his might in the streets. Unfortunately, in Christian circles, pride and unbrokenness often masquerade as propriety and order, when the reality is that those that are continuing to measure their offering have failed to perceive the Savior's true worth. They have become satisfied with caricatures and shadows while having before them access to the authentic and unveiled glory of the One that dwells in unapproachable light.

But the fact that so few fail to comprehend should not serve to limit those who do. Do not allow the enemy or the world or religion talk you out of the Hosanna that God is going to receive, either from your lips or the dirt that you will be buried beneath. Give it up freely, voluntarily, and extravagantly. Allow the fears and failures of your past to become the fuel for the fire on the altar of your heart. Do not settle for the crusty crumbs of yesterday's bread or the nostalgia of mountaintop memories. No, strive to keep faith and worship alive, fresh, and spiritual, with unveiled eyes, from faith to faith, and from glory to glory. After all, for eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it ever entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love him. It will take all of eternity to plumb the depths of God's limitless love and power!

Worship isn't an addendum to the gospel, it is the chief aim - the glorification of God by the objects of his mercy. While it is true that we can worship God in many different ways, in and through our lives, of particular interest here is worship that is direct and vertical, in word and in song, with the whole heart, the whole mind, and the whole soul. You and I are invited into fellowship with his Spirit. He longs for personal and intimate communion where exchange takes place. A lack of desire in this area is symptomatic of a disease of the soul, for Jesus stands at the door of every believer's heart knocking. He wants us to open the door and invite him in to dine with him, and to eat of the bread that he has to offer, and to drink of the wine that he himself has poured. And here in Acts we have the introduction of the most excellent vintage that heaven's cellars have to offer. It is a vintage of eternal origin and yet at the same time altogether new. It is worship that has been birthed of a New Covenant.

New Covenant worship is exclusively spiritual worship. It cannot be rendered apart from the operation of the Holy Spirit. Any attempt to worship the King from the intellect or the emotions *merely*, will fall short of the fragrant aroma God desires. Our worship must be in and of the Spirit. True worshipers worship God in Spirit and in Truth. This is the worship of the New Covenant. Such worship is dynamic. It changes things and is infectious and extraordinary. Extraordinary in its nature, full and free; extraordinary in its burden, light and easy; extraordinary in its duration, daily and perpetual; extraordinary in its fervor, red hot and unquenchable; extraordinary in its supply, as if empowered by an eternal plurality of rivers flowing with living water! It transcends the intellect and emotions, although both are invigorated by it, and find their full faculty in it.

Some unfamiliar with this type of worship and experience may exclaim, "I am not into that experiential Christianity thing!" Really? If you are not experiencing, then you do not exist. All

of us exist in some sort of experience. We are experiential beings. The real question is, what kind of experience are you having? Is it an academic one? Is your experience purely intellectual? Is it static or dynamic? Does your experience change the environment around you, or does the environment around you change your experience? Is your experience purely emotional or is it spiritual? Are you clothed with power or are you clothed with worldliness and humanism? Do you have a form of godliness that denies the power thereof? Have you tasted of things glorious that men are not permitted to speak of? Do you know joy inexpressible and a peace that passes all understanding? If not, why not?

The impact of the Holy Spirit on the worship of New Testament saints is undeniable. The house shook when these same saints gathered together in prayer and worship in Acts 4:31. Philip was carried away by the Holy Spirit, to be seen no more by the eunuch in Acts 8:39. When the church at Antioch worshiped and prayed in Acts 13:1ff, Paul and Barnabas were set apart and sent out as missionaries. As Paul worshiped, he described being caught up to the third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:2. As Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God in the Philippian jail in the midnight hour in the middle of their distress, an earthquake shook the very foundation of the prison that held them captive. The doors were opened and their bonds fell off! The Great Revelation of John occurred, not coincidentally, as he was caught up in worship in the Spirit while exiled alone on the isle of Patmos on the Lord's day! And while in the Spirit, he was invited up to see the throne of God in heaven and the One seated on the throne! All these dynamic and rapturous occurrences and more, happened in the midst of Holy Spirit-filled worship!

Each were precipitated by ministrations that were offered directly to the Lord in prayer, fasting, and praise, as the saints individually and corporately engaged in spiritual interchange with the Lord. The example to the new believer cannot be missed. When we worship, God is glorified. When God is glorified, God changes things, God happens to things.

New believers need to be taught the importance of worship and praise, the physical use of the tongue and the entire being, privately and corporately. How to lift up holy hands without wrath and dissension. Do you see him high and lifted-up? Do you see the train of his robe fill the temple? Worship from the tongue is not only the fruit of the operation of the Spirit in our heart, but also the conduit. In other words, the heart cannot remain in a depressed state when praise is sincerely and honestly lifted to the throne of God. Praise welcomes the manifestation of his power. Praise exalts the truth that melts the lies and magnifies the light that dispels the darkness.

So, offer up a sacrifice of praise! What else does salvation and devotion lead to except praise? We enter His gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. We are called to speak to one another in Psalms, Hymns, and spiritual songs. This is the offering that God requires of the New Testament saint - a sacrifice of praise that originates from a tongue that is connected to a heart that perceives the holiness, power, and the glory of the incorruptible God. There is something about seeing him for who he is that elicits a response from the heart. And there is something about the response from the heart of a child of God that elicits the affection of the Father. Draw near to me and I will draw near to you, he says.

Praise is medicine for the heart. Oh, that we would make use of praise with the same sincerity and commitment with which we make use of remedies. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

When we worship God we expel the enemy. Worship is a weapon of our warfare and the joy of the Lord will be our strength.

That is because, at the heart of worship, there is a throne and one sitting on the throne, who is mighty and worthy. He is high and lifted up and the train of his robe fills the temple. His eyes are like fire, his hair like wool, and his name is Worthy. He is worthy of praise, worthy of thanksgiving, worthy of glory, worthy of honor, worthy of exaltation, worthy of admiration, worthy of love, and worthy of our affection.

So take time to cultivate a lifestyle of worship and praise. Come up here, come up higher says the Lord! That you may know him in the fellowship of his sufferings and in the power of his resurrection! To know what is the hope of our calling and the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.

Do you see him now? High and lifted-up? May I encourage you to bow down now and open your mouth and tell him how wonderful he is? Tell him how glad and generous your heart is toward him. Tell him of his wonderful might and of his powerful right hand. Tell him that he is holy, holy, holy. Tell him he is worthy, worthy, worthy. Ask him to consume you with zeal for the house of the Lord and to set your heart on fire! Ask him to remove every desire except for the desire of him and his presence! In Jesus name!

- **In Meditation**

As you consider the following references, first pray and invite the Holy Spirit to come and teach you as only the Teacher and Comforter can. Admit to him your complete inability to understand anything spiritual apart from his grace and illumination. Then consider each of these verses, taking notes on anything that the Spirit brings to your attention; perhaps a **S**in to confess, a **P**romise to claim, an **E**xample to follow, a **C**ommand to obey, or a **S**eed of righteousness to sow. If successful, you are learning to read the Word of God with your **S.P.E.C.S.** on!

**What kind of worship is pleasing to the Lord? What does God require of true worshipers in the following passages? Record other observations as well:**

**Mark 12:30** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalms 51:16-17** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 5:3,4,6,8** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 7:36-48** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalms 24:3-4** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 4:21-24** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 11:6** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 7:7** \_\_\_\_\_

**Philippians 3:12** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 12:1** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18** \_\_\_\_\_

**Revelation 3:20** \_\_\_\_\_

**What form(s) did worship take in the Word of God?**

**John 12:13** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 5:19** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 13:15** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Timothy 2:8** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalms 63:4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalms 100:1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 24:50** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 9:4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 26:39** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 17:5-6** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Kings 8:11** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Samuel 6:14-22** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 2:2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 4:31** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 13:1-3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 16:25-26** \_\_\_\_\_

**What purpose does worship serve?**

**Romans 9:23** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nehemiah 8:10** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proverbs 17:22** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Chronicles 20** \_\_\_\_\_

## **In Application**

**In groups of 2 or 3 discuss the following:**

Discuss ways that modern life assault worship and devotion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the golden calves of our day? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If there are no shortcuts to worship or to abiding in the Presence of God, discuss ways that we can cultivate this culture within our spiritual community, families, and homes, especially in light of the addiction to distractions, media, and technology. Discuss the disciplines of silence, simplicity, and solitude: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Set some S.M.A.R.T. Goals in this area: \_\_\_\_\_

