

Worship
The Heart of Worship (Part 2)
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It's been our joy over the last number of weeks to study together regarding the issue of worship, and we return to that topic again this morning. Our study of biblical worship, let me remind you, has been built on four foundational principles. Principle number one is the end for which God made the world was His own glory. God was motivated and moved by nothing else in creating everything that is made except for His own glory.

Principle number 2, the chief end of man therefore is to glorify God. If God made everything for His own glory, it means He made you for His own glory and me for His own glory as well. That means our chief end, the reason we are here, is to bring glory to God.

Number 3, you and I were made to worship; you were made to worship. You see if we were made to glorify God the chief way that intelligent beings glorify God or bring glory to Him is through their worship.

And last week we added a fourth foundational principle, God alone has the right to prescribe how we worship Him.

So, you and I were made to worship the true God. God requires it of us. God demands it of us. God requires it and demands it of you. But there's a great problem and a very unsettling problem, and it's this: not all that claims to be worship is in fact true worship. As we've learned over the last number of weeks, the world is full of what the Bible calls idolatry, false worship. Our hearts are, as John Calvin said, "a factory of idols". We can turn anything into an object that pulls our minds and hearts away from God in the place that He deserves.

But there's another problem, not even all that claims to be the worship of the true God, is true worship. As we saw last week with Nadab and Abihu and with the incident of the golden calf in the book of Exodus; you can intend to worship the true God and yet do so in such a way that invites the anger of God. So that means that the crucial question that we have to ask and answer is this; how exactly has God prescribed that He be worshiped?

In the coming weeks we will examine the specific elements components or if you like activities of worship that are acceptable to God. But before we get to the activities of worship we first need to understand the heart and the soul of worship. We need to learn God's perspective on worship, the divine standards, the canons, the rules, the tenants, the directives of what makes our worship acceptable to God. And who better to teach us that than the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want us to turn to the gospel of John, the fourth gospel. This morning and next Sunday if the Lord wills, I want us to study our Lord's words in John 4 because toward the end of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus teaches us exactly how to worship, not the elements of worship, not the activities of worship. We'll get to that. But rather He teaches us how to worship in the most foundational sense. He teaches us about the heart of worship.

Now before we can fully appreciate Jesus' words toward the end of this chapter, we need to get our arms around the context in which Jesus speaks them, you will see as we go along that that's crucial to understanding what Jesus wants to teach us about worship. So, we need to get the flow of the context. It begins of course in verse 1,

Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John," [that is John the Baptist] "(although Jesus Himself was not actually baptizing, His disciples were), He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.

Now Jesus here was not afraid of the Pharisees and what they might do to Him. He told His disciples remember that He had come to give His life a ransom for many. He wasn't afraid of death, that was coming, that's why He came. Instead what's happening here is the concern He has is that the antagonism of the Pharisees not come to a head too soon. Jesus was on a timetable that was established by His Father. And so, to bring their anger down from what we could say was a full boil, to a slow simmer, He leaves Judea and He goes north to the region around the Sea of Galilee. That's the ministry context in which this incident occurs.

Notice in verse 4 the theological context says, "And He" [that is Jesus] "had to pass through Samaria." The Greek text literally says it was necessary for Him to pass through Samaria. Now the Pharisees and the ultra-legalists of that day absolutely hated the Samaritans and were so afraid of being tainted by them, that they actually would take the long way around to avoid going through the land of Samaria. They would take the long way to Galilee. They would go east until

they got to Jericho, and at Jericho they would cross the Jordan River, and then they would go up the Jordan rift valley until they got up north near Galilee, cross back over the Jordan and get to the main cities of Galilee.

But most of the people weren't so strict, and they just took the shortcut, the short route through Samaria. Josephus says this was the normal route that Galileans took to the feast in Jerusalem. So, verse 4 could simply mean that it was necessary for Jesus to take this route because it was the normal route to Galilee, but John likes to use this Greek word "it was necessary", translated here as He "must" or He "had to". John loves to use this word to describe something more, Jesus' mission. This statement may include a more profound point than simply His travel plans. It may be that Christ was compelled by God's providential purpose to go through Samaria for the sake of a woman and the others that He meets in the little town of Sychar. Notice verse 5,

So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there,

If you went to the land of Israel today, you can still see this well, it's in the modern village of Aschar. It's one of the better-established sites that we can be fairly certain is legitimate. In Genesis 33, we learn that Jacob bought land in this area and undoubtedly this was the reference that we have here, and he dug a well. Now there are many springs in the area, in fact some would estimate as many as 70 to 80 natural springs in the area of this well. But it's possible that by the time Jacob finally arrived, all of those had been claimed as property of local tribes, and so to keep from creating issues with his neighbors, Jacob decides simply to dig a well to supply his family and herds. It was no small task; in fact, in Jesus' day this well was more than 100 feet deep. That brings us then to the interchange between Jesus and this woman.

Notice the middle of verse 6, "... So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. [And] It was about the sixth hour." You know I think it's completely fascinating that in a gospel given to us to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, John gives us these glimpses, these remarkable glimpses into Jesus' true humanity. It was the sixth hour, or in our way of counting about noon. Jesus and His disciples had been walking all morning; undoubtedly, they'd left that morning for their journey to the Galilee, and they'd been walking all morning probably at a brisk pace and Jesus at this point by noon is genuinely tired and thirsty, just like you and I get. So, He sits here by the well to rest. Notice verse 7,

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Now to fully appreciate what’s going on here, you really have to take yourself back into the culture of first century Israel. You have to understand what makes this highly unusual. First of all, this was a Samaritan. Now the hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans went back literally 750 years. You remember that when Samaria, the northern part of Israel, was captured by the Assyrian empire in 722 B.C. they deported most of the people of substance, and they left only a few stragglers in Samaria. But they imported then to repopulate the land, people from all over the Assyrian empire. Those people came in by the droves, and they intermarried with those few straggling Jews that were left and the result was the Samaritans.

Now these people who came from all over the Assyrian empire brought their own polytheistic views, their beliefs in many gods. And for a time that polytheism influenced the culture, but over time the polytheism faded away, and these people, these Samaritans, became worshipers of Yahweh, the God of Israel. But with a few strange twists. First of all, they only accepted the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, as inspired. Those are the only books from God they said; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Secondly, they refused to worship in Jerusalem; instead, they built their own temple on Mount Garazene about 400 years before Christ. So, understand how the Jews thought of these people. To the Jewish people these Samaritans were half-breed idolaters. And they were hated. So, the woman asked then, “what, you are a Jew and you ask me for a drink, me a Samaritan?” Now why would this be a problem for Jesus to ask this Samaritan woman for a drink. I mean after all, obviously, the Jews could travel through Samaria? That’s why Jesus is here and the disciples at this very moment in time are in the city of Sychar purchasing food for them to eat from the Samaritans.

Well, John explains the problem at the end of verse 9, literally the Greek text says, “for Jews do not use together with Samaritans.” In other words Jews don’t use the same utensils or vessels with Samaritans; and to do so was to ceremonially defile yourself. So, here’s the problem, Jesus wants a drink of water, but the only vessel there is the pot that the woman has and maybe a cup that she brought, and so Jews don’t use the same implements as Samaritans. John says because

that would make them ceremonially unclean. So, her first problem, her first strike against her was that she was a Samaritan. But this wasn't just any Samaritan, this was a woman.

Now that doesn't seem odd to us at first blush, but you have to understand that no Rabbi of Jesus' time would have ever carried on a conversation like this with a woman that he didn't know. In fact, one Jewish document of the time says this, "talk not much with womankind" the elders said this of a man's own wife how much more of his friend's wife. Hence the sages have said he that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the law and at the last will inherit gahena. An ancient prayer that is still in the Jewish prayer book says, "blessed art Thou O Lord who has not made me a woman." Don't laugh too loud men.

So, two strikes this woman had against her; she was a Samaritan, and in that time the strike was that she was a woman. But there is a third strike because this woman is not just any woman. She's here drawing water at noon. Now most of the time women drew water in the cool parts of the day, usually at sunset around sunset. And understand that in that culture, drawing water was really a social activity. Think of Jacob's well as kind of an ancient version of Starbucks.

Now, it may be that this woman had good reasons, good practical reasons for coming at noon and for coming alone, but more likely she was purposely avoiding the other women of that community. Because, as we will soon find out, she had been married to five of the men in this small community, and she's now living with a sixth. She undoubtedly was a pariah and an outcast with the other women in this small town. Like Hester in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, this woman wears the scarlet letter.

Now in the interest of time, let me just read the first part of Jesus' discussion with this woman. Look in verse 10,

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water literally leaping up to eternal life." The woman said to Him,

“Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.”

Now you understand of course, that this is an amazing interchange of our Lord as He shares the truth of Himself and the gospel with her. Jesus is here offering this woman the living water of eternal life; that living water that is connected to the work of the Spirit of God. But she doesn't get it. Either she is incredibly dense, or she purposely is avoiding the spiritual point Jesus is making. As you look through what we've just examined already of this chapter there are many practical lessons in these verses, I don't have time to make them for you except for one. This has nothing to do with the theme of my message this morning; I'm just throwing it in for free. One thing stood out to me this week as I studied this passage, I could not help but being struck by Jesus' sincere love of people. Here was the worst of people, and yet He strikes up a conversation with her and His intent was not merely to get a drink of water, but to reach her soul. He loved her, this is to be true of all of us as well.

You know my family and I are reading together a book called *Trials and Triumphs* It's filled with brief stories from church history of famous Christians and their stands for Christ. This week we read the story of Ambrose. Maybe you've heard of him. Ambrose served as the bishop of Milan in the 300's A.D. Ambrose was a remarkable man for many different reasons. It was under his ministry that the church father Augustine came to faith in Christ. Listen to what Augustine said about Ambrose and his love for him.

Augustine said, “That man,” that is Ambrose, “that man welcomed me as a father, I began to love him first, not as a teacher of the truth, but simply as a man who was kind and generous to me.” Do you and I have that kind of genuine interest in people, the kind Ambrose had, the kind our Lord perfectly exemplifies here in John 4?

Now we come to what is, most commentators agree, the heart of this passage and where I want us to learn about worship. Verse 20, the woman says,

“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship,” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the

Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

Those are rich and profound verses, because in these verses, Jesus teaches us how to worship God. He shows us what a heart for worship looks like. True worship is obviously the theme of this paragraph. John uses the Greek word for worship some 11 times in his gospel. Nine of those 11 occurrences are in those verses I just read to you. In this brief section our Lord opens up the heart of worship, in fact we could put it this way. Jesus here, identifies for us four inviolable laws of worship; four inviolable laws of true worship. We’ll examine just the first one today and the other three Lord willing next Sunday.

Inviolable law of worship number one: true worship is not external, but must rise from the heart. True worship is not external but must rise from the heart. We see this in verses 20 and 21. Notice in verse 20, the woman says, “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

Now, this woman makes a statement but it’s really a question, you need to learn this man, this happens sometimes. This is really a question, and her question here may have been sincerely motivated. Remember back in verse 19 she’s just concluded that Jesus is a prophet, and so it would be perfectly natural for her to ask this question because this question went to the heart of what had divided the Jews and Samaritans for literally hundreds of years. And so, here’s a prophet, here’s this compelling question that’s been on my heart for years I’m going to ask it of this man. That’s possible.

More likely; however, she was just very uncomfortable with the personal direction the conversation had taken just a moment before and this is a way to send it in a different direction altogether. Notice verse 16, you remember after she misses the point and asks out of her own convenience to have the water Jesus is offering, Jesus says fine, I’ll give you that water, but first,

“Go, call your husband and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband....”

Now that was technically true as we’ll see in a moment, but it was really her dodge, it was her way to end that part of the conversation quickly and move on.

Jesus said to her, “You have said correctly, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.”

Now remember as part of the incarnation, Jesus had surrendered what theologians call the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Jesus didn’t walk around with omniscience all the time, knowing everything. He lived like you and I live, but here, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Jesus uses His omniscience, and He drags out this woman’s dirty little secret. She had had five husbands. Now the clear implication here is either that she had divorced some or all of them or perhaps her own promiscuity, her own loose living and her own unfaithfulness, had caused her husbands to divorce her. Regardless, now she’s living and sleeping with a man who is not her husband. It’s interesting isn’t it that Jesus had and still has the unique ability to expose the sin that stands between us and God. That’s what He does with this woman.

So how did the woman respond to that, well she did what many of those we try to share the gospel with do she threw up a distraction, some biblical or theological issue that makes the whole discussion seem much less personal. Oh, okay well that’s interesting, but tell me where do you think Cain got his wife? That’s the kind of question she’s posing, I think. Verse 20, “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship,”

Now this argument stems from the Old Testament. Turn back to Deuteronomy 12. Here was the crux of the problem, in Deuteronomy 12; God had said this through Moses, verse 5,

“... you shall seek *the LORD* at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come. There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of you herd and of your flock. There also you and your households shall eat before the LORD your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you.”

God says listen, I’m going to identify a place and you are not free to offer all the sacrifices I’ve told you to offer just anywhere you want. You have to come to worship where I tell you.

Now later, and by the way there's no hint in Deuteronomy or anywhere else in the books of Moses of where that place is going to be. Later the Scripture identifies that one place as Jerusalem. In 2 Chronicles 6:6 God says, using the same language as Deuteronomy 12:5, God says, "I have chosen Jerusalem that My name might be there."

Now, there's a problem. Remember that the Samaritans didn't accept anything but the Pentateuch, the first five books, and in the first five books there's no mention of the place where God wants them to worship, just that He wants them to worship in a certain place. So, if you examine only those first five books, the most important mountain that lies within the borders of Israel in those first five books is Mount Garazene. So, that's where the Samaritans built a temple, and that's where they worship. Even after the Jews destroyed that temple in 128 B.C., the Samaritans continued to worship there and offer their sacrifices there. The Jews on the other hand believed in the rest of the Old Testament, and when they looked at the rest of the Old Testament the place that God wanted them to go was clear, it was Jerusalem. So, that was the crux of the debate, and that issue had divided these people for more than 400 years.

So, her question here is really about where to worship, that's obvious; but Jesus knows this woman, and He knows that her real problem is that she has misunderstood worship altogether. So, look at Jesus response, verse 21, "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.'"

Now, don't stumble over the word "woman" that sounds kind of cold to us, but it's a word in the original language that would be much like our word for ma'am, or madam. He says woman believe me or listen to me, I'm telling you the truth, and then in essence Jesus tells her that the place doesn't matter. Jesus wants her to know that true worship is not external but must rise from the heart. But folks, this wasn't, in one sense, this wasn't new. This has always been true; this has always been a law of true worship.

Turn back with me to Psalm 51, Psalm 51. Here you'll see David after his sin with Bathsheba confessing that sin to God and in verse 16, he says, "... you do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering."

Stop there. Now is David saying to God, I know you don't really want me to sacrifice like you've commanded me to do. Not at all, David was simply saying that that act of sacrifice was in and of itself not enough, verse 17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

David was saying, listen I can come to the right place, I can offer the right sacrifices, but if my heart isn't genuinely repentant, if it's not contrite then it doesn't matter to You, You don't want the external, You want the heart.

We see this again in Isaiah, turn to Isaiah 66, the very last chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, he begins in verse 1 saying,

Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and ... earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?" [I don't need your temple, He says,] "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." [That is who fears Me enough to listen when I speak and to do it. Then notice what He says in verse 3 it's really shocking, God says,] "*But* he who kills an ox" [that is you come with your ox to give a sacrifice to Me,] "is *like* one who slays a man, he who sacrifices a lamb is *like* one who breaks a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering is *like* one who offers pig's blood; he who burns incense is *like* the one who blesses an idol."

What is God saying here? He's saying listen, if you come to me with the sacrifices I've demanded of you, with the sacrifice of an ox, of a lamb, a grain offering or you come burning incense but your heart isn't engaged you are not contrite of spirit, humble in heart, trembling at My word, then it's just to Me like you've brought a human sacrifice, which is of course is detestable to God. Or it's like you brought a dog for sacrifice, or you brought pig's blood which was of course was an unclean animal. Or it's like in burning incense you're blessing an idol. He says you might as well be a pagan; offering those kinds of sacrifices as to come to offer sacrifice to Me that doesn't spring from the right heart.

This is throughout the prophets, but turn over to Amos, the prophet Amos 5:21 he says to the people of Israel,

"I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies."
[Now remember these were ones God had demanded.] "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*; and I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fattlings. Take away from Me the

noise of your songs; I will not *even* listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

God is saying through the prophet Amos, listen, don't come to Me with the right sacrifices and the right festivals in the right place and think that that makes your worship acceptable to Me if your heart isn't right if you don't have a righteousness heart that flows out in right living. I'm not interested, God says.

The prophet Micah makes the same point in Micah, Micah 6:6,

With what shall I come to the LORD *And* bow myself before the God on High?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings With yearling calves? Does the LORD
take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil?” [He's using
hyperbole to say listen it doesn't matter how much of this stuff I do.] Shall I
present my firstborn *for* my rebellious acts, [can I even go beyond what God has
commanded,] the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? [Verse 8,] He has told
you O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do
justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

The bottom line is if your heart isn't right then God doesn't want thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil or anything else you might give Him. He's uninterested.

Now obviously you can see from this text that this law of worship has always been true, and yet Jesus back in John 4, turn there back with me again In John 4 Jesus is saying that there's a change also happening, notice what He says. John 4:21, “Woman, believe me, an hour is coming...” Now that's a favorite expression of our Lord to refer to His passion, to His death, His burial and His resurrection that time when God Himself would tear the curtain into the holy of holies and invite everyone in who has faith in His Son. He says, ... an hour is coming when ... you and “you” here in the Greek text is plural, in English you is understood by the context to be singular or plural, but in Greek it's obviously singular or plural, and here it's plural. He's saying you, that is you Samaritans will worship neither here nor there. You know what Jesus was telling this Samaritan woman and all of us, was that at His death, place would no longer matter. And certainly, of course, God punctuated that some 40 years later after the death of Christ when the Romans destroyed permanently the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD.

But what I want you to see is this, notice how Jesus is correcting this woman's skewed perspective about what it meant to worship. She was all tied up in place and things and ceremonies. To her if you were in the right place, and if you were performing the right ceremonies, then you were truly worshiping. So that was the key question, so where do I go? Once I got that question settled, I'm worshiping. Jesus wants her to understand that worship doesn't automatically happen just because of where you are and what you're doing. True worship is not a question of where you are, but where's your heart. It's not a question of what you're doing, but what's going on in your heart.

The fact that you came this morning is a good thing. That in and of itself is an act of obedience to God, you gathered for the corporate worship as Scripture demands. But the fact that you came this morning does not for a moment mean that you have truly worshiped God any more than attending a football game will make you an athlete. No more than attending a concert will make you a musician. The fact that in your private life this week you set aside time to read the Bible and to pray does not mean that you truly worshiped God. Just because you sang with us this morning doesn't mean you worshiped. Worship doesn't happen simply because all the externals are right. The right place, the right activities, the right words. Listen, get this, Jesus says worship begins in the heart and rises out of the heart and expresses itself in all of the activities. It begins with a conscious choice, a conscious desire and a deliberate choice to worship to exalt God for who He is.

Let me ask you, why are you really here this morning? Did you this morning at some point before we gathered together or as we gathered together, did you make a conscious decision from the bottom of your heart that you were here to exalt and lift up the name of God? If not, you didn't worship. Worship doesn't happen by osmosis. It begins with a deliberate choice, and then it continues moment by moment as you continue to worship. Because we're humans, our mind can drift immediately, and so we have to always be coming back with a choice to worship God.

The first law of worship is this, and do not miss it. True worship is not external but must rise from the heart. Worship is not about where you are. It's not about what you're doing in and of itself. You can be in the right place and doing the right things and not be worshiping. Understand, that Jesus here in this text tells this woman, and He tells you and me, that if we want to worship, we've got to get out of our minds that being somewhere at the right time or performing the right activities means in and of itself that we're worshiping. That means nothing to God as we saw from all those Old Testament passages.

What matters to God is what's going on in your heart. Even as you listen to me right now, as you listen to me preach, let me ask you a question. Is it a deliberate choice to make this an act of worship where you are listening as it were to the voice of God to you? If not, it's not worship. It may be instruction, it may be teaching, or it may be something you're ready to be done with, but it's not worship. Worship only comes when the heart says I'm here to exalt God. That is my chief concern.

Next week we'll look at the other three laws of worship according to Jesus.

Let's pray together.

Father, we thank You for this profound encounter of our Lord with this Samaritan woman. We thank You for what it shows us of the beauty and majesty of His life, for His wisdom, for His graciousness, for His love for people, even the outcasts of society. Father, we thank You for all those things, but we thank You most of all for what our Lord here teaches us about worship.

Lord, we know that You made us to worship, that we will continue to worship You throughout eternity if we belong to You through Christ. Father, teach us how, let our Lord teach us how. Give us open and receptive hearts. And Father, I pray that You would help us to learn even today that externals in and of themselves do not matter to You if the heart is not engaged.

Father, may we as Your people start with the heart. May we determine from the bottom of our heart with all the resolve that's within us to truly worship You, to exalt You, to lift You up, to praise You, to listen to Your Word as an act of worship.

And Father, we are so prone to sin and so quick to let our minds drift. Help us to constantly be bringing ourselves back with a deliberate act to exalt You, whether it's here together or whether it's privately in worship. We pray Father, that through us Your name in worship would be hallowed, would be exalted, would be set apart.

For the honor of Christ we pray, Amen.