

Worship
The Heart of Worship (Part 3)
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Tom Pennington, Pastor
Countryside Bible Church

For those of you who are visiting with us I should tell you that you find us in between book studies. We finished several weeks ago now, I guess a couple of months ago we finished our study of the Epistle of James, the letter of James, the half-brother of our Lord. And soon we'll begin our study of the letter to the Ephesians, Paul's letter to the church there in Ephesus. But right now we're studying the issue of worship. Nothing really is more foundational to our lives than that because we were made by God to worship, and so it's crucial that we understand this issue.

We live, of course, in an internet age; most of you are familiar with the internet search engine Google. Maybe you've merely read about it with some curiosity in the newspaper, or perhaps for you Google has become a sort of constant companion, both at work and at home and now many of you even on your cell phones. It is an extremely useful tool regardless of what end of the spectrum you find yourself on. We can all acknowledge that Google has become a force in our world. But there is a dark side to Google that you may have never considered. The founders of this corporation called Google, took their name from a mathematical term, the word googol pronounced the same but spelled differently, its spelled g-o-o-g-o-l. Googol is simply the number 1 followed by 100 zeros. Now most of us don't use that number in our daily lives. We don't encounter things that need that sort of number to characterize them or to capture them. But that's how much information that the founders of Google planned to catalog and organize.

We need to ask the question, does Google or for that matter the internet, as a whole, really increase our knowledge? Or, does it merely make googols of information immediately accessible to us? And do you understand there's a huge difference between the two? James D. White notes, for example, that you can Google God and come up with millions of hits, but is that really helpful? In the end, how do we determine what's right and what's wrong? White goes on to say that in reality we're left with, "endless volleys of nonsense folly and rumor, masquerading as knowledge, wisdom and even truth. And this information is not simply at our demand," White writes, "but under our control."

We live in a world where we can see only what we choose to see, hear only what we choose to hear, and read only what we choose to read. Through technology we have the ability to filter out everything but what we wish to be exposed to, creating, what one University of Chicago professor called, “the daily me”: a self-created world in which we see only the sports highlights that concern our favorite team, read only the issues that address our interests, and engage only in the op-ed pieces with which we agree. The highly lauded personalization of information protects us from exposure to anything that might challenge our thinking or make us uncomfortable.” Listen to how White finishes, “unchecked, we begin to follow the sound of nothing more than the echo of our voice.” That is, in a very real sense, the world in which we live.

So, what happens when people who live in that kind of culture begin to think about worship? Well, they want to personalize it, just as they do everything else. They want to choose mechanisms for worship and a church that has all the elements that they like, that make them comfortable, often with little thought of what really matters to God. Does God care how we worship? Or can we simply take a kind of “daily me” approach to worship where we design into our worship the elements we like and leave out those we find distasteful.

Over the last two weeks we’ve learned that God alone has the right to prescribe how we worship Him. So, the question is then, how exactly has God prescribed that He be worshiped? In a couple of weeks, Lord willing, we’ll examine the specific elements or activities of worship that God has prescribed, but first we need to understand the heart and soul of worship, and so we’re looking at our Lord’s teaching in John 4, and at His conversation with the woman at Jacob’s well.

Let me invite you to turn to John 4, let me remind you that these are the words of the Son of God as He interacts with a woman of that day, a Samaritan. John 4, I’ll begin reading in verse 20, the woman responded to Jesus,

“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*.”

Now in this paragraph, Jesus teaches us how to worship God. He opens up for us the heart of worship. In fact, we could describe it this way, Jesus here identifies for us, four inviolable laws of true worship. As we already learned you and I were designed to worship God, and so we need to know how; and Jesus says, here’s how.

The first law, and the one we discovered last week, is that true worship is not external, but must rise from the heart. We saw that in verses 20 and 21. True worship is not external, but must rise from the heart. Merely showing up at the right place and performing the right activities does not constitute true worship. Listen, God is not satisfied with an outward shell of worship. It’s not enough to God that you showed up here this morning. God is unimpressed that I am here and that you are here. Performing the right activities which we are doing this morning, these are the activities God prescribed for His worship. First, that we’re to sing to Him, we’re to pray to Him, we are to read His word together, we’re to give; we’re to listen to the word of God taught. All of those things have been designed by God as part of worship. Those are the right activities. But the fact that you are participating in the right activities does not mean that you are truly worshipping God.

We learned that true worship begins with a decision in the heart. It begins with a decision in your heart to say I am here this morning to ascribe to my Creator and to my Redeemer the glory that He deserves, the praise that He deserves. It begins consciously from within the heart and true worship always starts there. It doesn’t start by showing up. It doesn’t start by opening your mouth to sing. It starts with a decision in the heart. True worship is not external, but must rise from the heart.

A second inviolable law of worship, and the one that I want us to look at today, is found in verse 22 and it’s this; true worship is not merely emotional but must result from knowledge. Let me say that again. True worship is not merely emotional, the key word there is merely. It does involve emotion, we’ll learn that two weeks from today Lord willing. That’s crucial that our entire being be engaged in worship, so emotion is involved, but it is not merely emotional, instead true worship must result from knowledge.

For more than 500 years before this encounter in John 4, the Samaritans had worshiped God their own way. Undoubtedly many of them, perhaps even this woman had worshiped with their hearts, they had sincere hearts of worship when they came to the foot of Mount Garazene and offered sacrifice to God. But Jesus says here to this woman, that their worship in spite of its sincerity was grossly deficient. Notice what Jesus says to her in verse 22. “You worship what you do not know;” The word you here in the Greek text is plural, in other words He’s saying this, you Samaritans worship what you do not know.

Now we ought to begin by making sure we understand what Jesus did not mean. Jesus was not telling this woman, listen you Samaritans have this strange view of God that teaches that He’s unknowable. They didn’t teach that, that’s not what Jesus was saying. Nor was Jesus questioning their sincerity, He wasn’t saying listen, I know you go through the motions but you don’t really believe this stuff, you aren’t really worshipping your real problem is your lack of sincerity. There is no hint to this woman or about the Samaritans that there was any lack of sincerity on their part. Instead, Jesus is saying that they are worshipping the true God; absolutely they were worshipping the true God. But at the same they were ignorant of Him. They were ignorant of the truth about Him. They simply did not know what He was like.

Jesus adds in verse 22, “we worship what we know,” and by “we” of course Jesus means the Jewish people. You see without question the Jewish people have had a definite advantage on the rest of us. Paul makes this point in Romans 3, turn there for a moment, in Romans 3:1, as Paul begins to indict the religious as guilty before God as well, he brings up the Jewish people and he says in Romans 3:1, “Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?” In other words, does the Jewish person have any advantage on us spiritually, he says, absolutely verse 2, “Great in every respect. First of all,” that is of first importance, “they were entrusted with the oracles of God.”

In other words, with the revelation of God, with the Word of God. They had a huge advantage, because they had been entrusted with this revelation of God. That was their key advantage. They knew who God was, because He had told them. He had revealed Himself to them. As D. A. Carson writes, “whatever else was wrong with Jewish worship, at least it could be said that the object of their worship was known.” The Jews stand within the stream of God’s saving revelation; they know the One they worship. So, what was Jesus’ point then, to this woman. He wanted her to know that although worship is not truly worship without the heart, verses 20 and 21, true worship is not just having the right heart, that’s not enough. You must have the right heart, you must have a heart that longs to worship God, but it doesn’t end there. It’s not true

worship if that's all you have. Worship, to be true worship, must be informed with a right knowledge, to truly worship, Jesus told this woman, you have to have a right knowledge of God Himself.

Notice what Jesus said to her, verse 22, "You worship that which you do not know..." In other words, He was saying you are ignorant about the object of your worship; you are ignorant about God Himself. Now this was a common rebuke of the Old Testament prophets of Israel. It was common for them to rebuke their ignorance of God, of His character, of His ways. Let me show you just one example. Turn to the prophet Hosea, it's the book right after Daniel in the Old Testament. Hosea brings up this very issue or God brings it up through Hosea. Turn to Hosea 4, Hosea writes, "Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel," this is Hosea 4:1, "Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land,"

[It's not uncommon in the Old Testament for God to use legal language, this is legal language, it's really remarkable, the God of the universe is saying to Israel, listen I have a court case against you, I'm going to indict you for something, I'm going to bring you before the court. God what would You accuse Israel of, what would You sue them for? He says here's the reason, verse 1,] "Because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land." You don't know God, you don't know Me. Notice verse 6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest." [That is Israel from being a priest to the nations, to represent God to the nations.] "Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

Now what I want you to see here is the problem with their knowledge wasn't because they didn't have God's revelation. It wasn't because God hadn't made Himself clear. Verse 6 says they were destroyed for lack of knowledge because they have rejected knowledge and specifically they have forgotten the law of God. That doesn't mean they couldn't remember it. It means a conscious decision to turn away from God's revelation of Himself.

Let me ask you this morning, could God make this indictment against you? God has revealed Himself clearly in His word, He has made Himself known, and God said to Israel, I've got a court case against you, I'm going to sue you and here's why, because you have turned your back on My Self revelation. You don't know Me, and you don't know Me not because I haven't made Myself known but because you haven't bothered to find Me there.

Look at Hosea 6:6, the prophet Hosea makes the same point, “For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” The prophet Hosea is saying much of what we’ve seen in other passages and that is: listen, I don’t care about your external worship, I don’t care about your sacrifices and all the things you do. What I want is for you to be loyal to Me and I want you to know Me. This was the problem, not only with the Jewish people of Hosea’s time but it was a problem for the Samaritans.

Turn back to John 4. You remember that the Samaritans accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament, only the Pentitute, as God’s word. So, they did not have God’s complete revelation about Himself, they did not have the full portrait that the Old Testament painted of God.

A number of years ago, I read William Manchester’s biography of Winston Churchill. And I was inspired by reading that biography, this portion of it called “the Last Lion”. I was inspired by that to take up oil painting. Because as I read that biography I discovered that Churchill had done just that. In the period between the world wars when everybody thought Churchill was washed up as a politician he would never again have any sort of power. He retired to his estate, Chartwell, and he began to take up painting. He actually became quite good at it. He was in his 50’s at the time, and I decided that if he could do it in his state in life, at his age, then it was time for me to try it as well.

So, I took some classes that taught the methods of the Renaissance masters. It’s fascinating really; the Renaissance master painters learned and taught painting as a series of skills. You start by learning line drawing, simply taking a pencil to paper and learning how with lines to represent objects and their relationships to each others to each other; to capture the right sizes, to capture the right proportions. The right relationships, then once you have mastered line drawing, which is just as it sounds, lines on paper that capture those images, then you move on to tone. You take charcoal, and you take those line drawings now, and you add to them charcoal on paper, a depth, that tone gives them dimension, it makes the object stand out on paper.

The next step, once you’ve mastered that skill, is to move on to beginning painting. Initially you use only white paint and one other color, it’s called tone painting; where you’re simply now taking what you’ve learned with line drawing and tone and transferring it to paint and canvas. Once you’ve mastered beginning painting, the next step then is to learn the principles of color. And you take a course in color, and you learn the incredible variety and majesty of the system of color, all built, all tones, all colors built on three primary colors; and the relationship that they

have to each other. Once you have mastered the principles of color, then you move on to copying the works of the masters, to re-painting the paintings of the masters in order to learn their techniques and styles.

There's a sense in which we could say that the Samaritans by only using the Pentitide only had pencil sketches of God. Oh, they were accurate, no question. I mean God had revealed Himself that way in the Pentitide, but they were still the pencil sketches. The rest of the Old Testament would fill those sketches out with the rich hues of tone and color. And of course, Christ Himself was the perfect revelation of God, and they didn't have any of that. They were ignorant of God, and therefore, Jesus told this woman, you're not ready to worship, because you don't know Me. You don't know God.

Now, look at the profound theology that Jesus teaches this woman in an informal conversation. Understand, by the way, that not all the truth about God that she needed to learn does Jesus teach her here. But instead, He teaches her the one truth that goes to the heart of the issue that was the main cause of her ignorance and therefore of her lack of true worship. Notice what He says to her in verse 24, "God is spirit," now remember Jesus claimed to be God. In fact, in John 1 we're told that Jesus exegeted or explained God. You want to know what God is like, listen to Jesus. He'll explain it. He'll tell you, and here Jesus makes an unequivocal statement about the being of God. He says God's essence is of the nature of Spirit.

By the way let me just put a little plug for theology here, some people think, you know theology, it has no relationship to life it doesn't matter it's just boring stuff, doesn't matter at all. Well it mattered to Jesus. Jesus in dealing with this woman who needed to know Him and bow her knee to Him goes to theology and starts talking about the immaterial nature of God. Why? Because ideas have consequences, she had a bad idea about who God was and therefore it affected her worship. Don't you for a moment believe those people who say well theology doesn't really matter, it mattered to Christ.

Now what did Jesus mean here by saying, "God is spirit?" Well fortunately, He defines it for us after His resurrection in Luke 24:39, He says this to His disciples, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see," [listen] "for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

When Jesus says God is Spirit, He means that God doesn't have flesh and bones, God can't be touched. In His essential being God has none of the properties that belong to matter. In the

universe there are only two kinds of existence; there is matter that exists, and there is the immaterial that exists. So, the material and the immaterial and He's saying listen God doesn't belong to the material category, He belongs to the immaterial category.

Now God can choose to make His presence known through physical phenomena so we can see Him, but He is still by nature a Spirit and those physical manifestations are not permanent manifestations of His being. So, Jesus told this woman that to truly worship God you have to know that God is Spirit.

By the way, Lord willing two weeks from today, next Sunday of course being Resurrection Sunday, we'll look at a passage regarding that, but two weeks from today we'll talk about the practical implication on our worship of Jesus' declaration that God is Spirit. But what I want you to see today, don't miss the big idea Jesus was getting across to this woman, you must have a "right knowledge of God" in order to truly worship God. But you also have to have a "right knowledge of salvation". Look at the end of verse 22, "For salvation is of the Jews, you worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is of or from the Jews." Here Jesus probably means two things. He probably means that the Jews were the vehicle through which God revealed His salvation.

Zacharias had said that about John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, he'd said in Luke 1:77, that John the Baptist was, "To give to his people *the* knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins," God would use John for that purpose. But I think Jesus also means that the promised Savior, the Messiah would be Jewish and He's going to touch on that as we'll look at it in a couple of weeks down in verses 25 and 26.

So, get this in verse 22, Jesus' point is that true worship must result from knowledge, knowledge of God and the knowledge of salvation. Jesus shared theology with this woman to broaden her knowledge so that she could worship. Now, how do we acquire that kind of knowledge, the kind of knowledge that allows us to truly worship God, to know God? - only through a knowledge of the Word of God. Ultimately true worship can only flow from a knowledge of the Scripture.

You say well wait a minute, I know people who know a lot of Scripture, and they are not true worshipers, I can see it I know it, it's obvious. Well that's true, in fact I've told you before I think that one of the most knowledgeable people in Scripture I ever met was a man who I met when I was doing prison chaplaincy work, and he was a prisoner for having killed his mother-in-law. So, let me put it to you this way, you can know Scripture and not worship, absolutely. You

can know Scripture and not worship, but you can never worship without knowledge of Scripture, that is the knowledge of God as He's revealed Himself in Scripture. Or to put it in another way, let me say it this way; your worship will only rise as high as your knowledge of Scripture goes deep. Your worship will only rise as high as your knowledge of God as He's revealed Himself in Scripture goes deep.

Let me ask you this morning, do you know God, or could God genuinely say about you, I have a court case against you. I have an indictment against you. I've made Myself known in My Word, but you haven't bothered to look. How do we come to know God? - in His Word. Well there's an absolutely foundational passage on this front that I want us to turn to this morning, turn to Proverbs 2. Proverbs 2, the book of Proverbs of course is given to us by God in order to teach us how to live in the details of life in a way that pleases Him. And here at the beginning of this book, Solomon under the inspiration of the Spirit lays down for us a crucial point about how to pursue God and a knowledge of God in His Word. Now let me let me walk you through this passage. Proverbs 2:1, "My son," [now understand of course that Solomon was initially speaking these words and codifying them in writing as training for young men, but of course it's appropriate for us all.]

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover" [here it is] "the knowledge of God.

That's the goal, that's where we want to get. We want to know God as He's revealed Himself, so that we can really worship, but how do we get there? Well I want you to see that this passage is composed as an if-then statement. Notice verse 1 if, verse 3 if, verse 4 if, verse 5 then. So, this promise that comes in verse 5 is conditioned on those if statements in verses 1 through 4. We will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God, now those are parallel terms, fear of the Lord and knowledge of God. As one writer says those characterize the essence of Old Testament spirituality, the poles of awe of God fear of God, and intimacy the knowledge of God. That's what we want, we want to fear Him properly and we want to know Him. Here is the essence of what we ought to be pursuing. And He says you will, this is a promise, you will discern the fear of the Lord and you will discover the knowledge of God. So, folks here it is: if you and I will fulfill the if, the conditional part of this sentence, then we will discover the knowledge of God.

So, let's look at the condition, this is what you have to do if you want to know God as He's revealed Himself in His Word. Look at verse 1,

“My son if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you,”

Now here of course Solomon is speaking but he's not saying that his words, separate from what God has revealed is what this man should listen to. Instead he's saying, listen, I'm speaking revelation, and if you respond to what I'm saying, then it's as if you're responding to God. So, he's sort of personifying, if you will, his words as God's words. “My son,” and notice how we're to respond, “if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments,” notice that the search for God is not some ethereal one where you sit down with your legs crossed and curl your fingers and repeat some mantra like “ommmm”. That's not how we discover God. God is found here, notice verse 1, in words and in commandments. God is found in His own revelation of Himself in words, in sentences, in phrases, in clauses, in commandments, that's where God is revealed. So, you've got to receive the word, that means to welcome them to embrace them and you've got to treasure them. That means you consider them valuable. David said they were extremely valuable to him, you've got to treasure them they've got to matter to you.

That's the first part of the condition, verse 2, “Make you ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding;” In other words, you've got to really listen. You can't just pass your eyes over the words on the page and come to know God and who He is. You've got to really engage to learn who God is. Listen, incline your heart, I love that, it's like bend the ear of your heart toward God and listen.

Verse 3, but understand that all of your work isn't going to really get you anywhere without God's divine intervention, verse 3, “For if you cry for discernment, and lift your voice for understanding;” Recognize you can't do this on your own: God I want to know You, I want to know what You've said about Yourself, I want to really worship You, I want to understand You. Help me to see You and what You've revealed about Yourself in Your Word.

Verse 4, “If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures;” of course he's personifying wisdom and wisdom of course, the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, this knowledge of God. You've got to seek her and search for her. Listen, this speaks of the intensity with which you and I are to engage in this. Don't you expect for a moment to find God in His Word as He's revealed Himself with a cursory glance. You have got to search and seek; you've got to ransack the Scriptures.

Let me ask you if the person you bought your house from were to send you a note and to say listen, I'm old and unable to use the wealth I've accumulated and I, I like you and your family and I really want you to know that I want you to be the benefactor of a treasure I buried in your back yard, there's a million dollars there, it's yours for the taking, I don't remember exactly where, but it's in the back yard, I buried it there. It's about 3 feet deep. Now let me ask you, if you believed that person, what would be the intensity with which you would pursue that little search. You know what the intensity would be. Well, listen folks God has promised us that if we will search in the Word of God like that, we will find an inexhaustible treasure, God Himself. If we are willing to display that kind of intensity in the search.

He goes on to say, "Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and you will discover the knowledge of God." You'll see God in the full portrait of who He is. How can how can Solomon promise this, well look at verse 6, "For" because here's why I can tell you this. "it's the LORD who gives wisdom; [and] From His mouth" that is the words He speaks, from the words He speaks, "*come* knowledge and understanding." He said listen I can promise this will happen because it's God's words that give us these things. That's how you gain the knowledge of God. Let me tell you something, you can sit in church all your life, and you can have a sincere heart that longs to worship, but if you aren't willing to pursue a knowledge of God then you will never truly worship Him because your worship will only soar as high as your knowledge of God and His word goes deep.

That's why I want us as a church to study, that's why we learn the word of God, that's why I'm teaching you. Because this is our only hope, to truly worship we've got to know who God is. Jesus told this woman, "you don't even know that which you worship." You can't be really worshipping. This law of worship, knowledge is crucial; it's perhaps the most abused one in our day. Bertrand Russell, the atheist said this of Christians, "most Christians would rather die than think, in fact they do." Unfortunately, he's too right.

Today we are witnessing in the church at large a massive downplaying of biblical knowledge on several fronts while at the same time exalting the place of emotion. Now I'm all for emotion, and we're going to talk about that in two weeks, you cannot worship God without emotion. But emotion does not constitute the worship of God. There must be knowledge. When you look at the emergent church movement, at the charismatic movement, you see this emphasis on emotion as opposed to knowledge. In fact, knowledge is downplayed, well you know theology is divisive we don't want to bring that in, let's just gather around our experience. Jesus says, no, no, absolutely not. You see the deadly combination in today's churches of sentimentality and no

theology has lead many Christians to think that sincerity alone is all it takes to make your worship acceptable to God. Others suppose that sincerity plus emotion equals true worship. If I have a sincere heart, and if I'm really emotional about it, then I'm worshipping. What Jesus taught, what He taught this woman and what He teaches us here, is that sincerity of heart plus the right knowledge equals true worship.

Now, let me bring the application closer to home, for those of us who know God, who want to worship, who are a part of this church, let's make sure we apply this truth Jesus teaches us here to our own view of worship. Let me give you just a couple of implications. Number 1, worship is not found only in a particular mood or atmosphere. It's not the environment that makes for worship. When I was growing up it was common in churches to see printed across the platform Habakkuk 2:20, "But the LORD is in His holy temple, let all the earth be silent before Him." Now when I was growing up, I thought I knew what that meant. I thought that meant come in, sit down, and shut up. Keep your mouth quiet because worship is about quiet solitude and not moving.

Today, we have the other extreme. There are many who think they haven't worshiped unless the decibel level reaches 100. Listen folks, that's not what it's about. Worship is not dependant on a particular environment, whether it's a quiet one or a noisy one. Where there is a heart of worship and where there is an accurate knowledge true worship can happen in either environment. But where there is no sincerity of heart, and where there is no knowledge of God true worship won't happen in either. It's not about mood, setting the mood of worship. You know, let's lower the lights and make everything contemplated and quiet, and that will be worship. Or let's crank up the strobes, and let's crank up the volume, and that will be worship. Listen, worship is not found in either end. Worship starts in the heart, and it grows out of knowledge of God. It's not about a mood; it's not about an atmosphere.

Secondly, worship is not a feeling or an emotion. Worship is not a feeling that comes over you or an emotion you feel. Again, emotions are important in worship, but emotion alone is not worship. There are some Christians who are merely driven by emotions. And here's how they think: when they leave church if they laughed and if they cried, if their heart was touched and warmed by a story; then they are certain that they have worshiped. Those same people are often put off by serious study of the Bible because it doesn't create that kind of emotional reaction, it seems cold and sterile to them. Listen, if that's you; I understand, I've been there. But listen to what Jesus would say to you if He was here this morning. It's the inviolable law that He shared with the Samaritan woman, true worship is not merely emotional, but must result from a

knowledge of the truth. Your worship of God will soar only as high as your knowledge of God's Word goes deep. A. W. Tozer wrote,

“the history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion. And mans spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.” Tozer goes on to say, “for this reason the gravest question before the church is always God Himself and the most portentous fact about any man (this is you) the most portentous fact about you is not what you at any given time may say or do, but what you in your deep heart conceive God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God.”

Listen, you know what Jesus is saying, the bottom line, He's saying if you have a hard time worshipping, it's because you don't really understand God. You don't know God, because no one, listen, no one who really encounters God, who really knows God has any consistent problem worshipping; it's just the natural reaction. You can go from cover to cover in your Bible and every time somebody encounters God, not one time do they say, well that was an irrelevant experience, that was a boring experience. When they come face to face with God, they fall down and worship invariably. It is a natural response and reaction to encountering the reality that is God.

And if you have trouble worshipping, it's because you aren't really encountering God. You don't understand Him, you don't understand Him as your Creator, you don't understand Him as the Omnipotent Being who holds your breath at this very moment in His hands; as the God of grace who revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ to bring you forgiveness because of His love. And if you want to deepen your worship, if you really want to worship God truly, then you've got to deepen your knowledge of who He is. Let me encourage you to do what we what we read in Proverbs 2. Seek the words, treasure them, look for God, cry out for understanding, be intense in your search, be deliberate and purposeful in your search for God. Then you will discover the knowledge of God.

Let me encourage you as well to read some of the classics about God and about God in Scripture. Get some of the books if you don't have them, if you've read them, re-read them, if you've never read them get them and read them. Read books like A. W. Tozer's, *Knowledge of the Holy*. That book was absolutely foundational for me as a young Christian. A. W. Pink's, *Attributes of God*,

J. I. Packer's, *Knowing God*. Or if you really want to dig deep and read widely, read Steven Charnock's, *The Existence and Attributes of God*. If you aren't a reader, shame on you. But if aren't a reader, then go online and listen to the series that I taught on Sunday night on the character of God. But whatever you do, expose yourself to what the Scriptures teach about God because you will only worship as well as your knowledge of God goes deep. Jesus said to this woman, "you don't even know the God you worship." May He never say that to us. Let's pray together.

Father, help us to see that there is nothing more important in the universe than this issue of worshipping You. It's what we were made to do. It's what we were created for. And if You draw us to Yourself, and we end up forever in Your presence, it's what we will do forever. Oh God, teach us what it means to worship,. Thank You for Your Son and for the truth that He lays on our hearts in this passage as He talks with this woman at Jacob's well.

Father, I pray that You would help us to see that true worship is not emotional. It's not merely emotional, but instead, it grows out of, it results from a deep abiding knowledge of all that You are. And if we really know You, if we really understand You, we will worship. It is the natural response.

Father, help us to see that true worship is not external but it must spring from, must flow out of the heart. I pray Father, that you teach us these principles. Don't let us leave here unchanged by these truths, but help us to grasp them. Help us to meditate on them. Help us to think about them this week. And even as we worship You in Your Son in His passion in His death and in His resurrection; help us to worship You like this with hearts engaged and with the knowledge of who You are and what You have done in Him.

We pray in His great name, Amen.