

## Sermon Notes November 27, 2016 “How & Why We Worship: Worship Matters” Psalm 95

This particular Psalm is the classic text in the Bible about worship. Down through the centuries, the Christian church has looked to this maybe more than any other single place in the Bible to inform our worship. This text tells us almost everything we need to know. It answers the questions, *what is worship, why should we worship, and how can we worship?*

All of history and all of creation is about worship. From the very beginning we were created for worship.

We've been looking at this question, and this topic of worship, because it's literally the essence of life itself. It answers the fundamental questions that we ask about life itself. What's the meaning and purpose of my life? Why am I here, on this earth?

### 1. **So then, what is worship?**

Now, the answer of the Bible and the answer of this text ... *Worship* is the act of ascribing ultimate value to something in a way that energizes and engages your whole person, your whole being. Worship according to this text is something that engages every aspect of your being: mind, will, and emotions.

### 2. **Why should we worship God?**

The answer of the text is because you're already worshipping something. You're already ascribing ultimate value to something. Your whole life is already controlled and oriented toward something to which you've ascribed ultimate value. The process of true worship of God is to recognize where your worship already is and transfer your ultimate value to God.

### 3. **How can we do worship well?**

How can we get more skillful at it? They're four things you need to have in order to worship well.

#### 1) First, **community**.

It's so obvious you miss it. Everything in this Psalm is in the plural.

Of course, you're supposed to be good at individual worship. Worship should be every day, all day. My sense, though, of the Scripture over the years is that individual worship is a preparation for corporate worship, which is the real transforming experience.

D. A. Carson writes, "In corporate worship ... we focus on God himself, and thus we become more godly and learn how to worship—and collaterally we learn to edify one another, forbear with one another, challenge one another and love one another..."

We need each other. Marva Dawn writes this, "One of the greatest gifts the Church can give to the world around us is simply to be the Church. The community renews this identity as the Church by assembling for worship!"

Here is what Scripture is telling us. You will never know God as He is unless you are in a worshiping community, if possible, a small group of people you pray with regularly, and a larger one you worship with corporately. The one-on-one thing with God alone doesn't work. As with a diamond, it will not really show you all of the facets. You will never see them all. It won't show you all of the excellencies of Christ. It won't give you the great inventory of all that God is. And to add to that, the more diverse that worshiping community the better.

**1) So, first of all, you need community much more than you think you do.**

**2) Secondly, if you want to get better at worship you need truth.**

The first thing you must do if you want to enter genuine worship is you must be willing to submit to the truth of the Scripture, you must be willing to submit to a body of truth as the self-revelation of God, you can't pick and choose and design your own god, a god that fits you, because if you do that, you will completely cut yourself off from any real ability of having spiritual experience, and more importantly, to truly worship.

**3) Thirdly, you need the Spirit.**

The word Spirit doesn't show up in here anywhere. However, it

does tell us this. The purpose of worship is to come into His presence, to come before Him. So, in spite of the fact God is everywhere, by the mediation of the Holy Spirit, if you use the truth, if you do this in community, if you understand the purpose and nature of worship, sometimes the Holy Spirit will make you aware of the very presence of God. You will sense His reality. He will be present, palpable. You can almost feel Him. Present in His power or present in His grace or present in His love or present in His majesty or present in all of those things.

**4) Lastly, you need *gospel Sabbath rest*.**

Look at the very last part of the passage. It's very confusing. The first part of the psalm seems very good and upbeat, and suddenly it gets really severe. It's a real downer. Why would you end a psalm on worship with such a downbeat thing?

What we must understand is that the ultimate rest would be to believe the gospel. The book of Hebrews is important because it helps us to understand this Psalm. Especially the end of this Psalm. If you believe the gospel, you rest from your work spiritually. What that means is you don't have to be perfect. You don't have to know everything is going well in your life for God to bless you.

The gospel ends all of that tiring work. The gospel gives you deep and final rest. He already loves you. He already accepts you in Christ. Why would this be at the end of a psalm on worship? Because if you don't understand gospel rest, you're going to turn worship into one more work. What the Psalmist is saying is, "If I belong to the great King above all gods who is such a God of light and high beauty, and I'm his and he's mine and nothing can separate me from him ..." In worship, we enter into that reality. Worship really gives you rest.