

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Worshiping God in Truth John 4:24-26

Psalms 100 says, "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. (3) Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves, We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. (4) Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. (5) For the Lord is good; His loving kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations." The world is being called by the Lord to do many things but one of those things is to come before Him with joyful singing.

Certainly this morning we have had the opportunity to do this. But simply having the opportunity to sing joyfully to the Lord does not mean that we will take advantage of it.

In fact there may be a few people here this morning who chose not to sing at all, but why would they do this? One of the most common reasons people will give for not singing is they feel that they can't sing well, but the Scriptures do not call us to sing well. The Scriptures call us to sing joyfully.

Can we sing joyfully and not sing well? The answer would have to be, yes! Hopefully when you come into our services you would commit yourself to sing to the best of your ability when given the opportunity.

Now let me ask you another question. Can we assume that we are singing joyfully simply because we are singing? The answer again would be, of course not! Just because people are singing does not mean that they are singing joyfully. They could be simply going through the motions. Certainly I think this would be easy for us to accept.

Now let me ask you another question. Can there be those here this morning, who think that they are singing joyfully to the Lord, who may be self-deceived? The answer is, absolutely. Listen to **Amos 5:21-23**, "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. (22) Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings of your fatlings. (23) Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps." Could there be people here this morning who think they are singing joyfully to the Lord who are not? The answer is of course. They may think that they are singing joyfully to the Lord but in truth are only making noise.

Each time we come together in our morning service we have the opportunity to sing joyfully to the Lord. Hopefully we will take advantage of that opportunity, but how can we be assured that we are in fact doing this rather than just making noise?

To help us answer this question we need to go back to the passage that we have been considering over the past several weeks, **John 4:1-26**.

The passage that we have been examining records for us Christ's *interaction* with a Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26). Let us for a moment quickly review what we have already covered.

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We have examined the request that Christ made of this Samaritan woman in John 4:1-9. Let me read these verses for you. **"When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (2) (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), (3) He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. (4) And He had to pass through Samaria. (5) So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to His son Joseph; (6) and Jacob's well was there, Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (7) There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' (8) For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. (9) The Samaritan woman therefore 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.)"** Christ's request for a drink of water totally shocked the Samaritan woman, and this shocked response leads us to the next area that we examined. What was that area?

We have examined the offer that Christ made to this Samaritan woman in John 4:10-14. Let me read for you **John 4:10-14, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.' (11) She said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? (12) 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?' (13) Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.'** What was the second area we examined in Christ's interaction with the Samaritan woman? The second area that we examined was His offer.

What did we discover in this examination? We discovered that Jesus had taken advantage of her shocked curiosity and offered her living water. In other words, He was offering her the gift of eternal life made possible through the indwelling Spirit who would become within her a well of water springing up to eternal life. Unfortunately, she misunderstood what He was saying, and this misunderstanding leads us to the third area that we have examined. What was that area?

We have examined Christ's insight into the Samaritan's woman's encounters with various men (John 4:15-19). Let me read for you **John 4:15-19, "The woman said to Him, 'Sir give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.' (16) He said to her, 'Go, call your husband and come here.' (17) The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband;" (18) for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.' (19) The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.'"**

Though the Samaritan woman was struggling to understand what Christ meant when He offered her living water His personal revelations about intimate details of her life, designed to expose her need, dramatically impacted her and changed her perception of Him. How did her perception of Him change? Her perception of Him changed from bemused skepticism to a reverent respect, and this leads us to the present and final area of our examination.

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We have begun to examine the instruction Christ gave to the Samaritan woman about worship (John 4:20-26). Let me first of all read for you **John 4:20-23**, "(20) **'Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.'** (21) **Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. (22) You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. (23) But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.'**"

When the woman said, "**I perceive you are a prophet,**" it appears that she as a Samaritan had entered into a period of Messianic speculation since the Samaritans did not believe that there would be any prophets after Moses. Therefore, in order to primarily but not exclusively gather more information about Him, the woman introduced a longstanding dispute concerning the proper place to worship in **John 4:20**.

Christ responded to her in **John 4:21-23**. In Christ's response He changed the issue that the Samaritan woman had raised from the proper place of worship to the essential nature of worship itself and the identity of true worshipers. Who are the true worshipers? Who are those who have really experienced what it means to worship and whose offerings of praise, adoration and service are acceptable to God?

True worshipers are not necessarily those that go to a particular worship site but rather those who worship God in *spirit and truth*.

Last week we considered what it meant to worship in spirit. What does it mean to worship God in spirit? The Greek is quite clear. It does not say "The spirit" but "in spirit." When Jesus spoke of worshipping in spirit He was talking about the human spirit. Jesus wants us to know that worship must be *sincere* and not just simply lip service. In other words, our worship must flow out from the life that God gave us in Christ. Our worship must be generated from the unseen recesses of our heart. True worship must take place on the inside before it can take place on the outside. True worship must flow from the depths of our being, from that living water that we received from God as a gift through Christ.

How is this accomplished? How is the living water within us released so that our worship can be sincere or in spirit? The only way for this to happen is for us to respond to the exhortation of the Apostle Paul in **Romans 12:1-2**. **"I urge you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."** It is the presentation of our body as a living sacrifice that makes it possible for the life that we have received to manifest itself, or in other words, for the living water to flow from us as a well of water springing up to eternal life.

Hopefully, this is a present reality for each of us here this weekend. Hopefully, each of us can say, "I know that I am worshiping God sincerely, or in other words, in spirit; because I have given up my body as a living sacrifice. I know that I am worshiping God sincerely, or in other words, in spirit, because my worship is the outflow of the living water that was given to me by God.

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Is this all Jesus said about worship? Of course the answer is, no. He told us those who worship God must not only worship God in spirit but also in truth.

I would hope, as we consider this additional comment by Christ concerning worship, that it might clarify for us what we have already covered; so that we would know, by the time that we finish tonight, that we are in fact true worshippers able to sing songs joyfully unto the Lord.

Let us go back to the phrase that we began examining last week, but this time we will not be looking at what it means to be worshipping God "in spirit" but rather "in truth."

Worshiping God "in truth" means that those who are worshipping God must be truly seeking to live lives consistent with God's word. Let me read for you a portion of Christ's high priestly prayer in **John 17**.

I would like to pick up His prayer in **John 17:14**, and this is what it says, **"I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (15) I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."**

What is the truth that Jesus is speaking about in His prayer on behalf of His disciples? Jesus tells us, **"Thy word is truth."** Jesus is talking about God's word. What does He want God's word to accomplish? He wants the word, God's word, the Scriptures to sanctify His disciples, to mature them, to perfect them, to set them apart as holy. When this has been accomplished Jesus would describe them as having been sanctified in truth.

The Scriptures are not dead to His disciples. The Scriptures are alive to His disciples. Let me read for you **Hebrews 4:12**, **"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."**

In Christ's prayer he is praying that His disciples might be sanctified in truth but He could have just as well have prayed that His disciples through the word might become true worshippers. If this in fact was His prayer, and if that prayer was answered, how would the worship of those disciples be described? They would have been described as worshipping "in truth." Worshiping God "in truth" means that those who are worshipping God must be truly seeking to live lives consistent with God's Word.

Let us go back and look at the entire phrase. Worshiping God in spirit means that our worship must be sincere, or in other words, it must flow out from that living water that was given to us as a gift from God. Worshiping God in truth means that we are truly seeking to live lives consistent with God's word. Worshiping God in spirit and worshipping God in truth cannot be done *separately*. They are intimately connected.

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If we fail to worship God in truth, if we are not seeking to conform our lives to the teaching of God's word, we are not worshiping God in spirit. We may be honoring Him with our lips perhaps even in the songs that we may be singing while at church, but our hearts are far from Him. Conversely, if we truly are not only honoring Him with our lips but also with our hearts, then certainly we will naturally find ourselves seeking to conform ourselves to God's word. Let's try and put what we have just considered into its larger context.

The Samaritan woman wanted to gather more information about Christ, and she did so by introducing a longstanding controversy about the proper place to worship. Jesus responds by changing the subject from the proper place to worship to the true nature of worship itself. What did He share with the Samaritan woman? Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth.

Are you, this weekend, worshiping in spirit and truth? Are you, this weekend, in your sincere efforts to conform your life to the teachings of God's Word, unleashing that living water in such way that it is permeating who you are and what you are doing? If you are then certainly you can say this weekend that you are worshiping in spirit and truth.

Who should get the credit for this? Should it be us or should it be God? It totally needs to go to God. Let us read **John 4:23** once again, "**But an hour is coming (speaking of the cross) and, and now is (referencing to the chronological closeness of that event), when true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.**"

This last statement by Christ might appear as if there are people out there who somehow totally apart from God have figured out how to worship Him in spirit and truth and He somehow comes along and discovers them. This is not what it means at all. Rather, it means that He is seeking out people whom He has chosen to be true worshipers in order to call them to Himself.

Let me read for you **John 10:14-16**, "**I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, (15) even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. (16) And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.**" This flock that the Lord is in the process of assembling will not become a part of His flock until they hear the voice of Christ. We become a part of His flock on His initiative not ours and it is not until we become a member of His flock that we are then able to worship Him in spirit and truth.

These are the people that Christ is even now seeking. God is seeking the people whom He chose before the foundation of the world to offer up praise and worship to Him. Yes, it true that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, but why? Was it for their sake? Yes, of course for their sake, but He also came to seek and save that which was lost for His sake. He sought them in order that they might become true worshipers. He did this that they might give to Him the honor, glory and praise that He deserves.

Jesus in His interaction with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well is doing exactly that. He is seeking her out not only to satisfy the thirst of her soul, but also that she might become a true worshiper. He is seeking her out so that she would very shortly be able to worship Him in spirit and truth

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Why is worshipping God in spirit and truth the only way to worship God? Let us go down to **John 4:24**, "**God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**"

Since God is spirit and therefore unseen, that is where true worship must originate. It must originate in the unseen recesses of our heart. God is not seeking out worshipers to worship Him who will do so only superficially, who are willing to only give Him lip service. Christ's instruction concerning the true nature of worship strengthened her Messianic speculation. How do we see this strengthening speculation in this passage?

When Christ spoke of the importance of worshipping in truth, she seizes upon this opportunity to press her messianic speculation that was first of all manifested in her statement, "I perceive that you are a prophet" to a much more specific statement in **John 4:25**. Let me read this passage for you, "**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.'**" This is a woman who will not be denied. The Samaritan woman in John 4:25 is in effect saying, "If you are the Messiah" disclose it."

Did Christ do this? The answer is yes. Look at **John 4:26**. "**Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."** The one who had sat by the well and asked her for a drink was none other than the promised Messiah, the one who could indeed provide her with living water and satisfy the deepest longing of her soul.

How will she respond to this declaration? We will find this out beginning next week. For right now, let us not lose track of what Christ was doing when He was interacting with the Samaritan woman.

It was not about her drawing a drink of water to satisfy His physical thirst. In fact, we don't know from the text if she ever did draw the water that He initially asked for. Rather, Christ's interaction with this Samaritan woman was all about satisfying the need of her soul through the gift of living water so that she might become a true worshiper of God. Hopefully, because of this, when she in the future would enter into a worship service and sing praise songs such as we did this morning, she would not only just sing but she in truth would sing those songs joyfully to the Lord.

Why was Christ sent into this world? Was He sent into this world to seek and save that which was lost? Yes! He was also sent to seek out true worshipers. He was sent to seek out those individuals who were chosen to worship Him in spirit and truth. This was Christ's mission.

It is not just His mission it is also our mission. Let me go back and read Christ's high priestly prayer once more, but this time I will read just a little bit more. "**I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (15) I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.**" He then goes on to say, "**As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.**" (**John 17:18**).