

Worship: The Key to Living an Abundant Christian Life
Romans 5:12; 6:15-19
Part 2

Jesus told His disciples in **John 10:10** “**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.**”

So how might the abundance of this life that we have received from Christ be measured? Should the abundance of this life that we have received from Christ be measured in terms of dollars and cents? Should the abundance of this life that we have received from Christ be measured in terms of our physical health? Should the abundance of this life that we have received from Christ be measured in terms of our worldly success? No! The measure of the abundance of this life that we have received from Christ is the life of Christ Himself, for it is His life that we have received.

It is a life that can provide us an abiding inner joy. It is a life that can provide us satisfaction for the deepest longing of our souls. It is a life that can provide us an unwavering strength to stand for righteousness in the midst of the most horrific circumstances, while at the same time being able to offer up praise to God with thanksgiving.

So if we are going to measure the abundance of our lives, let the measure of our lives be based on these kinds of things, for these kinds of things are the manifestations of Christ's life.

We were not saved to live meager lives. We were not saved to live defeated lives. We were not saved to live unfruitful lives. We were saved and given life so that we might experience the abundance of Christ's life, both in this life and in the life to come.

Unfortunately, we often fail to enjoy this abundance, not because it is not there in Christ to be enjoyed but rather because we, for whatever reason, are not choosing by faith to bow before God, the Lord of glory, in worship. This is why.

Worship is the key to abundant living! Worship is the key to unleashing the abundance of the Christian life, for worship is the key to getting our hearts

right before God and if our hearts are right before God, then the Spirit of God will fill us and the life of Christ will flow through us to the praise of His glory, as we day by day are transformed into the very image of Christ, not by the strength of our might, but through the strength and power of His might; the strength and power of our triune God.

Last week I began a series of messages as well a diagram that I hope will drive this point home over the weeks ahead. So, what is the title for this series of messages? The title is **“Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian life,”** and what is the title for the diagram? The title for the diagram is **“Living above the Line.”**

So, what is my hope for all of this? My hope is that God will use this series of messages and this diagram as it unfolds week by week not only to provide us with a better understanding of the dynamics of a worship-filled life but that God would also use this series of messages and this diagram to help fuel our appetite for worship and that our appetite for worship would become so voracious that each and every facet of our lives would become an extension of our worship and an expression of our love and affection for God. This is my hope.

So, what is the question that we are presently seeking to answer as we seek to make our way through this series of messages and as we construct this diagram piece by piece? What biblical truths will be highlighted in this series of messages and in this diagram to support the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life?

So, what was the first truth? The first truth was that the God of heaven, our creator, alone is worthy of worship (Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 6:1-8). This is what we covered last week.

And how did we illustrate this truth using the diagram? We illustrated this truth by writing out the name “God” on the seat of a chair, which symbolically pictured for us the God of heaven, our creator, sitting on His throne, the one true God who alone is worthy of worship.

So why is this particular truth so important? It is important for apart from understanding this truth, embracing this truth, and basing our lives upon this truth, we can never be worshipers of God and therefore will never be able to

enter into the benefits and blessings of such worship. So was this first truth we considered important? Absolutely!

So now we are ready to move on to the second truth that supports the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life? So, what is this second truth? The second truth is that though the God of heaven, our creator, alone is worthy of worship, mankind is unable to come into His presence to worship Him because they are spiritually dead (Romans 5:12).

So now let me read for you **Romans 5:12** and see if this is not so. **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”** So does the teaching of this verse support our second truth that though the God of heaven, our creator, is alone worthy of worship, mankind is unable to come into His presence to worship Him, because they are spiritually dead? I believe it does.

This verse, **Romans 5:12**, introduces a section of verses that contrasts the headship of Adam, whose transgression as our representative brought death to us, with the headship of Christ, whose act of righteousness on the cross of Calvary made it possible for us to be set free from the very kind of death that came to us through Adam.

So, what was the kind death that came to us through the transgression of Adam? It was not primarily physical death, where the human spirit is separated from the physical body, but rather it was primarily referring to spiritual death, where the human spirit is separated from God.

And how do we know this? God had told Adam in **Genesis 2:17** that though he could freely eat from every tree in the Garden of Eden, there was one tree that he could not eat from. And God called that particular tree **“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”** And then God spelled out for Adam the consequence to himself if he ate from that tree. And what was that consequence? It was **“for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”**

So did Adam eat from that tree even after God had warned him? Yes, he did. And did he immediately die on that day just as God had promised? Yes, he did. He did not die physically but he did die spiritually. And because he died

spiritually, his sweet communion with God ended, ultimately leading to his expulsion from the garden and thus as a consequence to his own physical demise.

What a tragic end! But it wasn't the end was it? Because Adam was the representative head of the human race, his sin as well as the death that came upon him because of his sin was imputed to his descendants based on **Romans 5:12**. And because it was imputed to his descendants, the whole of the human race, though created to be worshippers of God, were cut off from God as well as from all the benefits and blessings that comes to those who live in God's presence.

So, what is the second truth that supports the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life?

The second truth is though the God of heaven, our creator, alone is worthy of worship, and mankind is unable to come into His presence to worship Him because they are spiritually dead.

And how would we illustrate this truth in our diagram?

Turn over your note page and on the bottom of your note page draw three stick figures with their hands upraised who represent all the descendants of Adam, who were created, like Adam, to worship God. And then after you have drawn these three stick figures draw a line across the page, perhaps an inch or so above their outstretched arms that represent that barrier of sin that now exists between the descendants of Adam and God, which prevents them from coming into His presence to worship Him and thus also prevents them from enjoying all the benefits and blessings that our continuously poured out upon those who live in God's presence.

Obviously this is a very tragic picture of the human condition. But this picture represents the truth. The descendants of Adam are cut off from God by sin. And as long as the barrier of sin exists between the descendants of Adam and God, no person who is spiritually dead can bridge this barrier. And why can't they bridge this barrier? They cannot bridge this barrier because they are spiritually dead. Dead people can't do a whole lot of anything.

So once the descendants of Adam were cut off from God, did it stop them from worshipping?

No! It did not stop them from worshipping. Though they were cut off from worshipping the one true God, the one who alone is worthy of worship, they began to worship idols.

Let me read for you **Romans 1:21-23** and see if this is not so. **“For even though they knew God [referring to what they knew about God through creation], they [referring to the spiritually dead descendants of Adam] did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”**

When the human race was cut off from God by the sin of Adam, they lost a lot. And I believe in order to compensate for their loss the nations of the world became idolatrous. Or in other words, they bowed down and paid homage to creatures rather than to the creator. Hoping that through their worship of these idols they might be able to receive the protection, the provision, and the blessings that they felt that they were lacking and so desperately needed.

The only exception to this among the nations up until the time of the apostles was Israel, who had been chosen by God, through Abraham, to be a beacon of light to the world declaring to the world that the God of heaven, our creator, alone is worthy of worship.

So how did Israel do? Sometimes they did very well. But for the most part they failed, for they repeatedly over the centuries would continue to dabble in the idolatrous practices of the nations around them.

So based on what I just said, could we say, based on world history, that once the descendants of Adam were cut off from God and therefore from the worship of God because of the sin of Adam that the world by and large turned to idolatry in order to compensate for what they had lost when they were cut off from God and thus cut off from the worship of God? And I believe that the answer have to be yes. The world did turn to idolatry.

So now let me ask you this question. Are the descendants of Adam, having been cut off from God by the sin of Adam, still compensating for their loss through idolatrous practices? What is the answer?

I believe that the answer is yes! Nothing has changed! Though the descendants of Adam for the most part are no longer worshipping physical idols they are continuing to erect idols in their hearts, as they have done since the sin of Adam. So, what do I mean by this? Let me read for you **Ezekiel 14:1-2**. **“Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. (2) And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, (3) ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity.’”** These elders of Israel may not have been bowing down before the same physical idols of the nations around them but they were bowing down before the idols that they had erected in their hearts. They were practicing idolatry in a similar way as the nations around them.

Idolatry is not just about bowing down before physical idols that we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands, an idol can be anything that we value more than we value God (Ezekiel 14:1-2).

It can be anything. An idol can be a wife, a child, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a career, television programs, video games, the Internet, money, various pleasures, popularity, power. It can be anything that we place a greater value on than God.

And when that happens our idols will become our masters (Romans 6:16).

Let me read for you **Romans 6:16** and see if this is not so. **“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey.”**

So will the idols that the descendants of Adam erect either on pedestals, platforms or altars in various temples or shrines around the world or within their own hearts become their masters? Absolutely!

Turn over your note page and on the bottom of your note page above the three stick figures with their outstretched arms draw three circles and inside each of those three circles write master #1, master #2, master #3. These three

circles, with the word “master” written inside, are meant to picture for us what happens when we begin to worship or value idols more than God. Those idols will become our masters.

So now let me ask you this question. Will those masters be able to provide the descendants of Adam with what God can supply them? No, they can't.

Can they provide them with life and life abundantly? No! Can they provide them with an abiding joy? No! Can they supply them satisfaction for the deepest longing of their souls? No! Can those masters supply them with an unwavering strength to stand for righteousness in the midst of the most horrific circumstances, while at the same time being able to offer up praise to God with thanksgiving? No! Whatever idols they have erected or in other words whatever masters they have given themselves to they will never receive what they could receive from God if they were able to find a way to get through the barrier of sin that is keeping them from entering in the presence of God and the blessedness of His presence.

May God give us the grace to see the true spiritual condition of the people around us so that we might be moved by God to act with compassion toward them.