

Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian Life
Psalm 84:1-4
Part Five

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? It should be measured by the life of Christ Himself, for it is His life that we have received.

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.

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.

In seeking to drive this point home we began a series of messages entitled, “**Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian Life**” as well as the construction of a diagram entitled, “**Living Above the Line.**” So, what is my hope for this series of messages as well as for this diagram?

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 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, is alone worthy of worship (Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 6:1-8). And what verses did we use to support this truth? We used **Psalm 19:1-6** and **Isaiah 6:1-8**. And how did we illustrate this in our diagram? Turn your note page over and write “GOD” sitting on a chair at the top.

And what was the second truth I presented that supports the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life? The second truth was 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 (Romans 5:12). And what verse did we use to support this truth? We used **Romans 5:12**. And how did we illustrate this truth in our diagram? Turn your note page over and add three stick figures with upraised arms and a line above them at the bottom of your diagram.

And what was the result of this? What was the result of this spiritual death having enveloped all of mankind thus preventing them from entering God’s presence to worship Him? The whole of mankind became idolaters, excluding no one, whether that meant worshipping idols made with human hands or erecting idols in their hearts. And what verses did we use to support this? We used **Ezekiel 14:1-2** and **Romans 1:21-23**. And then what did mankind’s idols become? They became their masters. And what passage did we use to support this truth? We used **Romans 6:16**.

And how did we illustrate this truth in our diagram? Now add a circle above each stick figure with the words “master #1,” “master #2,” “master #3” to your diagram.

Now this is very important for us to understand! For this is how, we were once living as a child of Adam. Having been cut off from God by the barrier of sin, we had become spiritual idolaters and those idols had become our

masters. And could those masters supply us what we truly needed? No, for they could not supply us with life and life abundant. What a miserable, wretched, spiritually bankrupt condition we were once living in, especially in light of the fact that we were created to be worshippers of God.

But God had mercy upon us! And this led us to the third truth that I presented that supports the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life. And what was this third truth?

Though mankind could not break through the barrier of sin, God, as an expression of His love, did break through that barrier by sending His Son into this world to die for our sins (1 Peter 3:18). And what passage did we use to support this truth? We used **1 Peter 3:18**.

Though we could not break through the barrier of sin, God did by sending His perfect, spotless lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world so that He, as God's lamb, might take our sins upon Himself on the cross of Calvary, as we saw in **Isaiah 53:4-6** and thus pay the debt we owed to God because of our sin, as we saw in **Colossians 2:13-15**. And how do we know that Christ was in fact God's Son and that He through His death on the cross did in fact satisfy the debt we owed to God because of our sin? We know this because Christ rose from the dead.

So how did we picture this truth in our diagram? Now create an open space in the line and extend a cross upward through the opening on your diagram on the back of your note page.

So does the Bible teach us that God broke through the barrier of sin that had separated us from Him through the death of His Son? Yes! But we would not have known this unless this message that the Scriptures refer to as the gospel had been made known to us. And praise God that by His grace it was made known to us! So how did we picture this truth in this diagram? Now draw a Bible at the base of the cross on your diagram.

So after we, by the grace of God, heard the message of the gospel and by the grace of God had responded in faith to the gospel by turning our backs on our former masters so that we might enter through the door that God had opened for us through the death of His Son, what happened next?

God immediately joined us to the life of Christ through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit according to **1 Corinthians 12:13** and this is extremely important for us to understand, for when we were joined to the life of Christ through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, we became alive to God and were then immediately able to enter into the presence of God, having been made the righteousness of God in Christ according to **2 Corinthians 5:21**. Praise God!

And what did we become when we entered through that door that God had opened for us and found ourselves standing in presence? This question led us to a fourth truth that supports the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life. And what was that fourth truth?

Those who choose by grace through faith to enter into God's presence through the door that He has opened will become His worshippers and will therefore experience the filling of the Spirit (Romans 12:1; Ephesians 5:18). This is a given for this is what we were saved to.

So how do we know that those who choose by grace through faith to enter into God's presence through the door that He has opened will become His worshippers?

We know this because worship is the natural response of those who have, by grace through faith, entered into God's presence through the door that He opened for them, through the death of His Son. We saw this in **Romans 12:1**.

And how did we illustrate this truth? Draw a figure bowed before the throne of God.

So, what will happen to those who, in response to God and all that He has done for them in Christ, choose to bow before Him in worship acknowledging His right to rule over them in every area of their lives? They will become Spirit-filled and the life of Christ will begin to flow through them. We saw this in **Ephesians 5:18**.

And it is at this point, as the Spirit fills them and the life of Christ begins to flow through them, that they will begin to experience the abundance of the life that Christ promised to them in **John 10:10**. This is why I am declaring to you as strongly as I possibly can declare to you that worship is the key to

abundant of Christian living. For it is only when we, in response to God and all that He has done for us, bow before Him in worship that the Spirit of God will fill us and the life of Christ will flow through us, and what will be some of those things that we should expect to experience as we are bowed before God in worship?

There are a myriad of different things that we could point to but there are a few manifestations that I would particularly like to highlight. So, what is the first one?

Those who bow before God in worship will experience joy (Psalm 84:1-4).

So why would I want to emphasize this particular truth? I have chosen to emphasize this truth because over years of my ministry I have encountered so many professing believers who are characterized by anything but joy. In other words, rather than being joyful they are ungrateful, unthankful, despondent, discouraged, depressed, and even at times despairing. This is certainly not the way it should be for if we truly, by grace through faith, have entered into God's presence through the door that God opened for us through the death of His son and are presently, in response to all that He is and has done for us, bowed before Him in worship, we will not be unthankful, despondent, discouraged, depressed, or despairing. We will find our selves filled with joy.

If there is any question about this or in other words about how true worship will inevitably produce great joy, let me read for you **Psalm 84:1-4. "How lovely are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! (2) My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. (3) The bird also has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God. (5) How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising you."**

So, what is happening in this Psalm? This Psalm, like other Psalms of ascent, expresses the joy of a pilgrim traveling up to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate one of the Jewish feasts. And what is the focal point of his joy? The focal point of his joy was his anticipation of entering into the temple, God's designated earthly house, for the purpose of worship.

This was the focal point of his joy. So now let us go back and look at these verses a little more closely and see if this is not so.

So now let us look at **verse 1. “How lovely are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts.”** So how did the Psalmist describe the temple in Jerusalem or in other words the **“dwelling places”** of Jehovah God, the Lord of hosts, in this verse? He described them as **“lovely.”** And how lovely did He consider these dwelling places or in other words the **“courts of the Lord?”**

Let me now read for you **verse 2. “My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.”**

The Psalmist considered the dwelling places of the Lord or in other words the courts of the Lord so **“lovely”** that just the anticipation of entering into those courts filled him with such joy that his heart and lips were filled with song. And this was even before He got to Jerusalem.

In the Psalmist’s mind there was nothing that was of greater value or of greater significance than being able to enter into God’s presence, in His holy temple, for the purpose of worship. In fact, if he could have taken up residence in the temple for the rest of his life that is exactly what he would have wanted to do for in his mind there would have been nothing that would have brought him greater joy.

And to illustrate this truth for us the Psalmist turned to the birds that inhabited the temple area. So now let me read for you **verse 3** and see if this is not so. **“The bird also found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.”**

So could Psalmist identify himself with these birds that had chosen to make their nests in the temple courts? Absolutely!

In the Psalmist’s mind there was nothing that was of greater value or of greater significance than being able to enter into God’s presence, in His holy temple, for the purpose of worship. In fact, if he could have taken up residence in the temple like the birds that had constructed nests in the temple area that is exactly what he would have wanted to do, for in his mind there would have been nothing, that would have brought him greater joy.

And then after the Psalmist had painted for us this beautiful picture of his longing and his overwhelming yearning to enter Lord's temple for the purpose of worship, he then made this declarative statement in **verse 4**, **"How blessed are those who dwell in your house! They are ever praising you."**

So based on these verses in **Psalm 84:1-4**, would you say that the Psalmist would agree with me that those who bow before God in worship will experience joy? Absolutely!

So how will we represent this on our diagram? On your diagram draw musical notes being lifted up to God from the kneeling figure.

So let me ask you this. Do you believe this? Do you believe that those who give themselves before God in worship or in other words who in response to God give themselves up to God as living and holy sacrifices will experience the joy of worship? Hopefully you do, for this is the truth!

But why is it true? Why are those who bow before God, in response to all that God is and has done for them in Christ, filled with such joy? It should be self-evident to us.

As we bow before God in worship, and as the Spirit of God fills us, the Spirit will be very quick to remind us of all the blessings that God has been poured out upon us in Christ. He will remind us that though we deserved death, that God as an expression of His love sent His Son, His only begotten Son, into this world to save us, so that we, by grace through faith, might receive from Him the gift of life. He will remind us that though He has left us in this world to continue His work, He has not left us alone but will provide us what we need when we need it. And beyond all of this He will remind us that after our work is done that we will enter into that dwelling place that Christ has been preparing for us in glory, where we along with all the heavenly hosts will lift up praise to Him forever and ever. And what will this produce in us? Joy!

So can the joy produced in us through the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit, as we worship God be overwhelmed by the disappointments, the discouragements, the heartaches, and the sorrows of this world? No!

And if you have any doubts about this, let me remind you what happened to Paul and Silas at the very beginning of their ministry in Philippi as recorded for us in **Acts 16**. Paul had cast out a spirit from a slave girl who was being used by her owners as a so-called fortuneteller. And what was the result of this? Her owners dragged them before the magistrates of city and falsely accused them of throwing the city into confusion. And what did these magistrates do in response to these false charges? They had Paul and Silas beaten with rods. They then had them thrown into a Roman prison and placed in stocks.

A very miserable situation wouldn't you say? But did the pain, the injustice, and the uncertainty that they were facing overwhelm them? No! Rather than being overwhelmed we find them, in the middle of the night while still in that Roman prison, while still in those stocks, singing hymns of praise to God.

How was this possible? I can tell you. I know what they did. They in the midst of their difficulties chose to focus on God and all that He had done for them rather than on the pain, the injustice and the uncertainty, and what was the result of this? I believe that the result of this was that they, in spite of the pain, the injustice and the uncertainty, were able to continue to remain bowed before God in worship, and because they were able to continue to remain bowed before God in worship, they were filled with His Spirit, and the joy of Christ expressed itself through them as they sang hymns of praise.

So will those who choose to bow before God in worship experience joy? Absolutely! I believe this.

So let me ask you this. If this is true, that those who truly bow themselves before God in worship will experience joy for all the reasons I have shared with you, then what can we conclude if I find I'm downcast, dispirited or depressed? This is what I can conclude. I am not worshipping for I have allowed other things to distract me and to control me other than God, and now I am reaping what I have sowed.

So, what is the solution? If we are truly born again we must take advantage of what has been provided us in Christ. We must come into His presence and commit ourselves to take hold of His face so that we might see His power and His glory. We must come into His presence and consider the great things that He has done on our behalf through Christ.

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And then we must collapse before Him confessing our sin, giving to Him all that He has asked of us and to do it with joy. And how will we know that we have truly in fact given Him all that He has asked for and our truly worshipping Him? We will know, when all the difficulties of our life are overwhelming, the joy of knowing that God loves us and blessed us in ways that we will never be able to repay.

May God give us the grace, even in the most difficult of circumstances, to bow before Him in worship so that we might experience the joy of true worship.