

Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian Life
Matthew 19:16-20
Part Ten

Christ came into this world to give life and life abundant according to **John 10:10**. So how does someone who has received the gift of life from Christ, by grace through faith, enter into the abundance of that life? Worship is the key, and there is no other key other than worship. And why is this?

When a Christian, or in other words when someone who has received the gift of life from Christ bows before God in worship, who in response to God and all that God has done for them through Christ lovingly presents their body to God as a living sacrifice, or perhaps better said lovingly recognizes God's right to rule over them and over every area of their lives, it is then and only then that they will be filled with the Spirit. It is then and only then that they will enter into the abundance of Christ's life.

And as they enter into the abundance of Christ's life through worship, will they be blessed? Yes! Will others be blessed through them? Yes! Will God be blessed? Yes!

So is worship important? Absolutely! There is nothing more important than worship. And this is why I have over these past few months given a series of messages entitled "Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian Life" and have developed for you a diagram that I have entitled "Living Above the Line."

And what has been my hope for these messages and for this diagram? My hope has been that God will use this series of messages and this diagram as it unfolded week by week not only to provide us 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 has been my hope.

This morning will be the last message in this series. And it will be different from the others. For this message is not designed to convince you that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life but to help

personalize what we have talked about.

And how will I do this? I will do this by asking you a series of personal questions. And hopefully by the grace of God you will answer them honestly.

Are you, having gained access to God's throne through the death of Christ, presently bowed before God in worship (Matthew 19:16-20)?

This is the question that we must ask ourselves if we are taking these messages that I have given on worship seriously. And what will answering this question require? It will require us to look at our lives carefully to see if there is anything or anyone in our lives that is more important to us than God, or in other words more important to us than our obedience to God. This is what will be required if we are going to be able to answer this question that I have just asked.

So now having said this, let me now caution you to not take this question lightly. And why would I say this? I would say this because in our humanness it is so very easy for us to practice self-deception. And if there is any doubts about this let us consider the rich young ruler and his interaction with Christ in **Matthew 19:16-20**.

And what do these verses say? **“And someone came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’ (17) And He said to him, ‘Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ (18) Then he said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ And Jesus said, ‘You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; (19) Honor your father and mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (20) The young man said to Him, ‘All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?’”** So now let me ask you this question. Was this rich young ruler self-deceived? And what is the answer? Absolutely! There was no way, based on what the Word of God teaches, that this young ruler had kept the commandments. But he believed he had. So, what was his problem? He was self-deceived.

So can we be self-deceived in the very same kind of way when it comes to

answering the question that we are presently seeking to answer, about whether or not we are truly bowed before God in worship? Absolutely! So how might we do this? It is very simple. All we have to do is to reduce God's commandments to a list of arbitrary behaviors and actions that we will be able to easily manage that may or may not have anything to do with God's commandments

So when I ask you the question, "Are you, having gained access to God's throne through the death of Christ, presently bowed before God in worship?" please do not go to an arbitrary list asking questions of yourself such as this. Have I gone to church this year whenever it was convenient? Have I responded to the financial needs of others or the needs of the church when I had a few extra dollars in my pocket? Have I stopped kicking my dog? This is a worthless list composed of worthless questions.

So if we are not going to use an arbitrary list of behaviors or actions to determine whether or not we are bowed or not bowed before God in worship, then what are we going to do in order to determine the answer to this question?

It will require us, just as I have said, to look at our lives carefully to see if there is anything or anyone in our lives that is more important to us than God, or in other words more important to us than our obedience to God. This is what will be required if we are going to be able to answer this question that I have just asked.

But even if we go through this examination this morning in this way and make the determination that we are in fact bowed before God in worship, I would still, because of how easy it is for us to be self-deceived, go one step further.

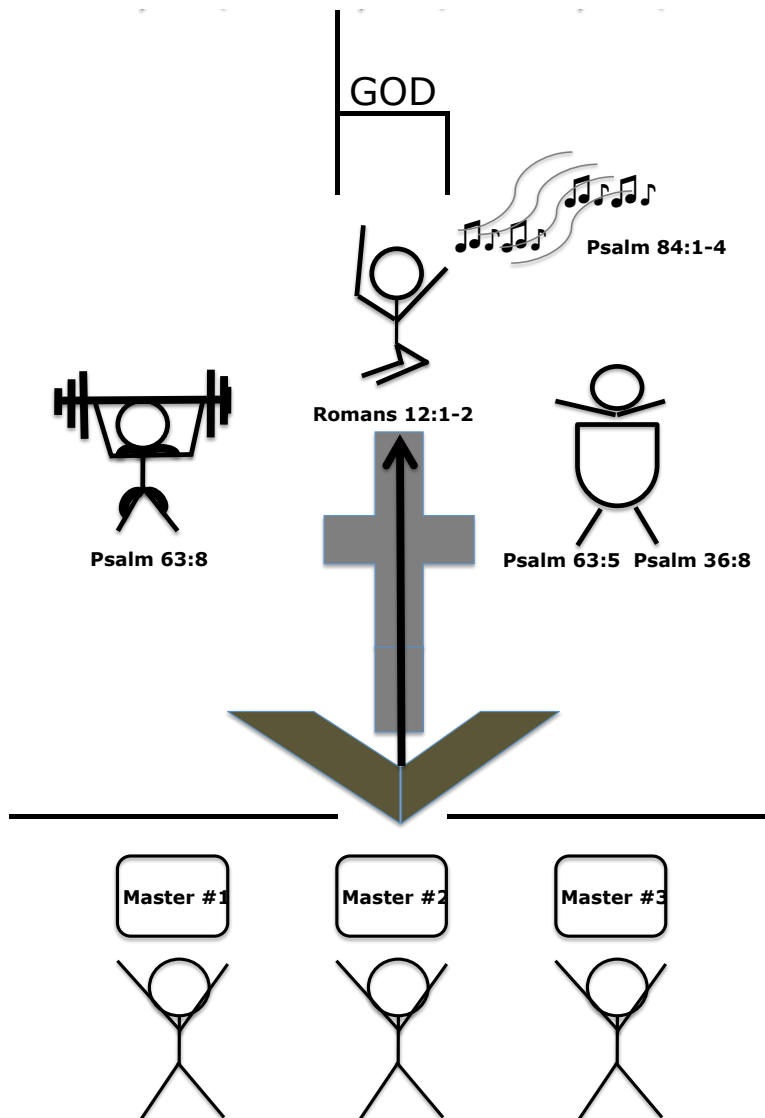
And this brings to us a second personal question that I would like to ask you this morning. And what is this second question?

If you are professing to be presently bowed before God in worship, are you presently enjoying the abundance of Christ's life (Psalm 63:5, 8; 84:1-4; John 7:37-39; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

So why would I ask this question? The answer is simple. If you and I are

truly bowed before God in worship, as I have shared with you, we will be filled with Spirit, and as we are filled with the Spirit we will enter into the abundance of Christ's life as Christ's life flows through us. This is why I can say to you with confidence that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life, and this is why experiencing the abundance of the Christian life will in fact confirm for us that we are bowed before God in worship.

So what will this look like?



This is how the abundance of the Christian life will look.

Those who have turned their backs on their former masters and have entered through the door that God opened for them through Christ, by grace through faith, and bow before Him in worship in response to all that He is and has done for them in Christ will experience certain things as an outflow of the abundance of Christ's life.

What the first thing that we highlighted as an outflow of the abundance of Christ's life? We highlighted joy, not just any kind of joy but the joy of the Lord. It is that joy that has nothing to do with our earthly circumstances, but rather it is a joy that comes from knowing that we know God and that He knows us and that He loves us and will always love us both in time and eternity. And because it is a joy that flows from this certain knowledge as bow before God in worship, this joy will fill us and flow through us even in our darkest hour and in our fiercest storm.

So, what was the second thing we highlighted as an outflow of the abundance of Christ's life? We highlighted satisfaction, not just any kind of satisfaction, but the satisfaction of the Lord. It that kind of satisfaction that has nothing to do with appetites of our flesh, but rather it has everything to do with the satisfaction of the deepest longing of our souls. And when we are in this place of blessedness an amazing thing happens. The things of this world that used to have such a hold on us are no longer viewed as necessary in order to achieve a sense of well being. Therefore if we have a house or don't have a house, or a family or don't have a family, or have our health or don't have our health will be secondary to the one that we truly value, that is that we have a personal relationship with God are able to worship Him.

And what was the third thing we highlighted as an outflow of the abundance of Christ's life? We highlighted strength, not just any kind of strength but the strength of the Lord.

If you are presently bowed before God in worship and are presently enjoying the abundance of Christ's life through worship what are we doing sustain this (1 Peter 5:8)?

We need to start the day in worship (Psalm 143:8). For me this involves several things. Before I get out bed in the morning I will remind myself that this is the day that the Lord has made and that I need to rejoice and be glad in it. This might not seem like a lot but it has proven very helpful to me.

So after have gotten out of bed and gone through my morning routine, which may or not include time in the Word, I will always then set aside time for prayer, for what I have discovered is that it is the primary means to either keep me bowed before God in worship or to get me bowed before God in worship.

So how do I start my prayer? I start by quoting a Psalm to God or by praying up a Psalm to God. For instance I might quote to God or pray up to God **Psalm 23**.

This is how I would begin. And after I have connected with His majesty and glory, when I feel as if I in fact had the opportunity to gaze into His face, I then begin to pray through my day, trying to anticipate what might be required of me in terms of righteousness in terms of those things that I might believe that I will be encountering.

Once I have done this I will then go on to supplication. This is where I pray for this church and the work of church and the advancement of Christ's church around the world.

But this is not the only time that I will take time to spend time with God in prayer. I believe that in order to remain bowed before God in worship, I will need to continue to revisit God in prayer throughout the day

First of all, I will try to revisit Him during whenever I am transitioning through the day from one activity to another. I did this on my way to the church this morning. I did this just prior to me getting up in the pulpit this morning.

So, what did I pray to God prior to getting up before you this morning? It goes something like this. "Lord, I have no strength. I have no power."

But this is not the only time that I will visit the Lord during the course of the day. I will also visit the Lord in prayer when I become consciously aware that I am now longer experiencing the various manifestations of the abundance of Christ's life.

At these moments in time I know what has happened. I have begun to allow influence in other than God and faith in His promises to control me.

May we by the grace of God do all that we can do to stayed bowed before God in worship, so that not only will we be blessed and others blessed but that God will be glorified.

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