

## **Worship (36)    Worship in the World 1 – Evangelism & Missions**

In this series so far, we have exhausted almost every possible angle of corporate worship. Briefly we want to look at worship outside of the church. Certainly corporate worship is vital. We have already seen that our whole Christian life is our individual worship.

But we also want to see how worship intersects with the lives of unbelievers. After all, God's glory is not supposed to be something that believers hoard. It is something we are to make known. So, in this message, we want to look at what we can call, *Worship in the world.*

If we asked the question, 'Why should we evangelise,' and I asked everyone to write the answer on a slip of paper, I suspect we might find some differing answers. We may find some would say, 'Because God commands us to share the Gospel'. Others might say, 'Because people are dying and going to hell.' Some might say, 'Because Jesus is the only way, and people need to know that.' Some might say, 'Because we are supposed to love our neighbour and have compassion on them'. Some may answer, 'Because we have the truth and so we have a responsibility to share it with others.'

And all of these would be true answers. But none would be the main reason why we share the Gospel. I'm going to use John Piper's idea and say it like this: 'Evangelism exists because worship doesn't. Evangelism must happen because worship isn't happening as it ought to.' In other words, evangelism is all about worship. I want to show you that worship is the motive for evangelism; worship is the means for evangelism, and worship is even the message of evangelism.

### **1. Worship is the Goal of Evangelism**

You might remember if you have been following this series, we saw that worship is magnifying the glory of God. Worship is when the value of God's Person is seen by the hearts of people, and their whole beings respond to it in such a way as to say, 'Yes, He is valuable.'

On a trivial level, when a man drinks a soft drink, its taste and temperature and makeup has an effect on him. If he likes it and expresses gladness and his body experiences rehydration and refreshment, then his responses exalt the value of that soft drink.

On an infinitely higher level – when the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen and experienced by a human, he or she is affected and changed. His responses of fear and love and awe and submission and praise and joy show the Supreme Value of Jesus Christ.

That's what we mean by 'God's glory is magnified.' But for God's glory to be magnified, it must firstly be known. A person cannot glorify God's worth willingly if they do not know Him. The more God's glory is known, the more it can be magnified. The more knowledge of God's glory, the more worship.

We've seen God's supreme goal is to glorify Himself. God's ultimate goal is that His glory might be known and experienced and valued. God's supreme goal is not to make converts, or to save people from hell, though He does desire those things. God's supreme goal in history is to create worshippers who will glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

The only way people can know God's glory is through Jesus Christ.

**John 1:18** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

**Heb 1:1-3** *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

The only way they will know Jesus Christ is through evangelism.

**Rom 10:13-15** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

Can you see what we mean by saying, 'Evangelism exists because worship doesn't?' Our primary motive in evangelism is to see God glorified through Jesus Christ. That He might be known. We say, 'Our goal is, knowing Christ and making Him known.' Where He is not known He must be named. And so the logical thing is that evangelism must go beyond our reach, beyond our borders into foreign missions.

What is meant in the Lord's Prayer by that phrase, 'Thy Kingdom Come?' The kingdom of God is a vast subject in Scripture, but part of what is being prayed is, 'Let Your rule in the hearts of men increase this day.' In other words, may another heart submit to you, kneeling before Jesus Christ, and each one of those hearts become another *offering* up to God:

**Rom 15:15-16** *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

What will these Gentiles do when they are saved? They will know Christ, and they will magnify His glory in saving them!

**Rom 15:8-11** *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.*

Our goal is to make worshippers out of rebels. This is the goal in evangelism.

## 2. Worship is the Motive for Evangelism

It is not wrong to be motivated to evangelise by a sense of duty to do so. After all, a sense of obligation to obey a command is not a bad thing at all.

It is not wrong to be motivated by a sense of compassion at the thought of the unsaved person experiencing eternal torment. That is a real concern. Anyone who loves his neighbour as himself would not want anyone to experience that.

It is not wrong to be motivated by a sense of responsibility. You have the truth and others ought to know.

But a sense of duty can fluctuate with other duties pressing in on you. Your compassion can waver as you experience insults and rejection and indifference. Even your sense of responsibility can not seem as urgent.

**2 Cor 5:14-20** *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:<sup>15</sup> And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.<sup>16</sup> Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.<sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

What is it that constrains us to be ambassadors for Him? The love of Christ constrains us (v14).

But your own love for God will always be a consistent source of witness. It is a very natural thing. What you love and enjoy and cherish and admire, you can't help talking about, sharing with others. It becomes something you want others to share in, experience for themselves. You want them to partake and come back to you and say, 'You were right, it is wonderful!'

What you love with deep awe, so that it is the thing you take most seriously, will inevitably become the thing that you desire most urgently that others should know.

Put simply – your own worship of Christ is the ultimate motive for evangelism.

You can try and guilt people into evangelism. You can try and scare people into evangelism. You can try to egg people on from the external motives of compassion for others, sense of eternal judgement, limited time, having the truth. But nothing will so motivate as that internal experience that Christ is more than enough for you! That Christ has satisfied your soul. That Christ has awed and overwhelmed you to where you are in fear of Him. It is a genuine, continual experience of Christ that best motivates us to share Him with others. It is an overflow.

In fact, when you read the New Testament, you find Paul uses an interesting word to describe his evangelism.

**Gal 6:14** *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

When do you typically boast in something? You boast when you are exceedingly convinced of its value. Jesus Christ is our boast, because of His absolute value of which we become absolutely certain.

**Jer 9:23-24** *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.*

Moreover, the more we know Christ, the more we want Him to be known. Knowing Christ and making Him known are not two goals – they are one. The more you know Him, the more you will desire to make Him known.

The more we know He is the ultimate answer and satisfaction and purpose in life, the more we will want our neighbour to have the same knowledge.

The more we know the reality of sin and God's wrath, the more we will have compassion on our neighbour – glorifying God's justice and mercy.

Christians who are being illuminated do not have to be begged to evangelise; it is a natural overflow of their walk with Christ. That's why I think the New Testament has so little to say regarding commands to share the Gospel – because it is taken for granted that worshippers evangelise with their lips and their lives.

### **3. Worship is the Message of Evangelism**

Our desire is to make worshippers out of rebels. And that is why the message we share is essentially one about worship.

**2Cor 4:4** *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

The Gospel is the Gospel of the Glory of Christ. The message is about His glory. How is this?

When you think about it, the Gospel is about God the Creator who deserves to be worshipped. Instead of doing that, man has sinned and so fallen short of the glory of God. God's glory was then seen in both justice and mercy. God will vindicate His own righteousness by punishing sin. But God will also show what a good, kind Person He is by extending mercy to the rebel race of man by Jesus Christ, God the Son, offering Himself as a substitute for sinners. The glory all goes to Jesus Christ,

because the whole saving transaction centres on Him. You cannot be saved apart from Him. You must repent of sin and believe on Him.

God will consummate this glorious display when He winds up history, assigning the wicked to eternal torment, and the righteous to everlasting joy.

The message is really, ‘God exists. And you ought to be worshipping Him. But you don’t. That is a sin. God can, and should, and will, condemn you for not worshipping Him. But His mercy has provided a way for you to escape His wrath and to be made pleasing to Him – Jesus Christ. If you will repent of not worshipping Him, turn to Him in Christ, trusting Him to forgive you, and make you righteous, and give you a new heart which will worship Him, He will do that.’ The Gospel is about the worship God deserves, and how to return to where we do that.

A powerful example of evangelism/sharing the Gospel occurs in Acts 17:22-31 when Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and spoke to the ‘Men of Athens’ out of his love for the Glory of God.

The Gospel of the glory God deserves stands in stark contrast to a man-centred Gospel. A man-centred Gospel flatters the ego of self-centred man. In a man centred gospel, it is all about you. It is about how you are not fulfilled without Christ. Or how there is a God-shaped hole in your heart. Or how Christ’s presence in your life will aid your marriage, help your parenting, strengthen your finances, and generally polish and refine what you already have. God is the accessory you don’t yet have, the product you still need, the relationship that will really boost your life and wellbeing.

But what does this have to do with the Gospel? The Gospel is about self-worshippers getting off their false thrones, and bowing the knee to the rightful king. It is not about stroking people into thinking Christ is something that self could definitely use. It is seeing that you were made for Christ, and you are a rebel living on borrowed time. You are an outlaw in God’s universe. You are a fugitive and God’s justice will inevitably catch you. And when you are tried you will be found guilty of not worshipping the infinitely lovely one. And to not worship an infinitely lovely Person is an infinite offence. And an infinite offence requires infinite judgement – an eternal lake of fire. Yes, people need to know they are sick before they recognise their need for grace. They need to see through the law of God, and through the Word of God, that they have not been what they ought to have been, and that God will not overlook that. But He has also been patient and provided a means to repair the damage and to return.

People are not convicted by a man-centred gospel. A man-centred gospel might attract, but it won’t convict. And conviction needs to take place before repentance can take place.

It is the Gospel of the glory of God.

I have heard some preachers say this, ‘We will be fine worshipping in heaven. We don’t need to focus on worship now; we need to focus on the one thing we won’t do in heaven – that is evangelism.’ Granted, there will be no evangelism in heaven. But I believe you can see from the Scriptures that it is worship, however imperfect, which is

the true power behind evangelism. It is its goal. It is its strongest motive. And it is its message.