

# **A Cup Overflowing – A study of the Christian life**

## **Lesson 13:**

**A Christian Life is...**

***A Worship-filled Life***

# Define terms

- Great gulfs
  - An act, a state of mind, or both?
  - Vague, subjective, or according to scripture?
- We won't spend a lot of time on defining our terms, but it *is* important.

# Worship

- ...is not confined to those who worship the true God.
  - It is a part of the very nature of everyone.

“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

<sup>22</sup>Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.” Rom 1:22-23

# Definition

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  - *Leitourgeo* appears 5 times, and refers to “public service” or benevolence: “They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.” (Romans 15:27)

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    - ✓ *Proskuneo* – attitude of the worshiper.
    - ✓ *Latreuo* focuses on the act of worship itself.

# Attitude or acts?

- *Proskuneo* (προσκυνέω) is defined as:
  1. to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence
  2. among the Orientals, especially the Persians, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence
  3. in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication

(Thayer)

# Attitude or acts?

- *Proskuneo* (προσκυνέω) is defined as:
  - humble, reverent acts of respect or homage
- *Latreuo* (λατρεύω) is defined as:
  - to serve or minister to, either to the gods or men and used alike of slaves and freemen
    - ✓ In the NT, to render religious service or homage, to worship.
    - ✓ To perform sacred services, to offer gifts, to worship God in the observance of the rites instituted for his worship. (Thayer)

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- So worship on one hand involves the inner attitude of the worshiper, and on the other hand the external acts done in worship.
  - The two cannot be separated.
  - Proskuneo describes an attitude that excludes “word-only worship”. Latreuo excludes unauthorized acts.

*“Worship [proskuneo] the Lord your God, and serve [latreuo] him only.”* (Matthew 4:10 NIV)

# Spirit and truth

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup>Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:19-24

# Spirit and truth

1. Christian worship is not confined to a physical place.
  - “ ‘Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus declared, ‘Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.’ ”

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2. The Father desires worship from his people.
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2. The Father desires worship from his people.
3. We must worship in spirit and in truth.
  - “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”
  - “spiritedness” with which we worship?
  - Spiritual communion that takes place when our spirit joins with God, who is Spirit.

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3. We must worship in spirit and in truth.
  - “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”
  - “truth”
    - ✓ according to scripture (John 17:17)
    - ✓ genuine; not counterfeit (Matthew 15:8-9)

# Spirit and truth

1. Christian worship is not confined to a physical place.
  2. The Father desires worship from his people.
  3. We must worship in spirit and in truth.
- Jesus' word for "worship" here is *proskuneo*.
    - More spiritual attitude than external acts.
    - Jesus' focus was on individual devotion, rather than external location.

# Lifestyle worship

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

*Romans 12:1-2*

# True worship

- Is something we were created to do (Romans 1).
- Is of the heart (John 4:24).
- Is according to scripture (John 4:24).
- Involves both “acts of worship” and a proper “attitude of the heart” (*latreuo* and *proskuneo*).

# Notes for *A Christian Life is A Worship-Filled Life*

## Slide 2:

In any meaningful discussion, we need to define terms so that we're all on the same page. We may not agree totally on "worship" at this point, but we should at least work toward that goal.

- There are great gulfs between the way almost any two people interpret the word "worship". If one of us has one understanding of worship, and the other has a quite different understanding, the discussion will be difficult.
  - You may have 3 people discussing worship, one of whom believes worship is an act, the second believes it's an attitude, and the third believes it's a combination of both.
  - Some may view worship as so vague that it defies definition. Others may view worship so subjectively that it can mean anything we want it to mean. Still others will understand worship to mean the way it is described in the scriptures.
  - This diversity of opinion is what makes discussion difficult.
- We won't spend a lot of time on the definition of worship, since we only have 45 minutes, but it is important to start somewhere...

## Slide 3:

We'll define the word in a minute, but first there are some important things to realize about worship...

- We're all created to worship. In every person, there exists an emptiness that only God can fill. People who do not fill this void with devotion to the true God will fill it with delusions.

Paul noted the four steps leading away from the true worship of God into pagan idolatry.

1. First came neglect of the worship of the true God.
2. Second, this neglect led to foolish speculation arising from their own deluded minds.
3. Third, these speculations took on forms of all kinds of idolatry.
4. Fourth, God gave them over to impure lusts, degrading passions, and a depraved mind, vs 24-28:  
"24Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen. 26Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. 28Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done."

## Slide 4:

- Although there are 10 Greek terms translated *worship*, we'll not need to focus on more than a couple of them.
  - Three of the terms appear only once, so aren't important enough to spend a lot of time on during this lesson. In a deeper study perhaps, but not in a 1-lesson overview of worship.
  - Nine out of the 10 terms mean "to venerate".

## Slide 5:

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  - This is where we get our word "liturgy", meaning "a prescribed form or set of forms for public Christian ceremonies". (American Heritage Dictionary)

**Slide 8:**

- It's easy to see from the 3 aspects of the definition of *proskuneo* that it's the humble attitude of reverence or respect on the part of the individual [worshiper] that makes the difference here.

**Slide 9:**

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- *Latreuo* is similar to *proskuneo* in that they both involve acts of worship, but in the case of *proskuneo*, it's the attitude of the individual that's important, while in *latreuo*, the focus is on the acts themselves. Both words are important in scripture.

**Slide 10:**

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Here, Jesus responds to Satan's third temptation, and he quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 – "Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name."

**Slide 11:**

- Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well was about both the attitude and the act of worship. Let's read the passage, then we'll notice some points from it.

**Slide 12:**

1. The Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerizim and the Jews on Mount Zion. Jesus showed that worship is of the heart rather than of a physical place. The true sanctuary of God is in the heart of the believer, not in some building made with human hands.

**Slide 13:**

2. God isn't some stoic, impassive deity; he wants to commune with his people in worship.

**Slide 14:**

3. Different people interpret the word "spirit" in v.24 a number of different ways.
  - Some say it refers to the "spiritedness" with which worship is expressed – excitement.
  - Others suggest "spirit" involves inspired utterances given by God – a miracle.
  - Worshiping "in spirit" refers to the spiritual communion which takes place when our spirit joins with God, who is Spirit.

**Slide 15:**

- "Truth" means both "according to scripture" (John 17:17 – "thy word is truth"), but also means "genuine; not counterfeit" (Matthew 15:8-9 – "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. <sup>9</sup>They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.")

**Slide 16:**

- Jesus focused more on the heart than the hands. Not that the acts are unimportant, but without the heart being in the right place, the acts are meaningless (Matthew 15:8-9, quoted on previous slide).

**Slide 17:**

Some people claim that “all of life is worship”. That may be true and it may not be true; it depends on what is meant and understood by the term “worship”. Let’s take a look at Romans 12:1-2.

- Notice 3 things from this passage:
  1. Paul contrasts the worshiper’s living body with a dead animal sacrifice. The animal is dead; the Christian’s body is alive. The animal is a physical thing; the worshiper is a holy being, “set apart for a sacred use.” The animal didn’t have a choice in the act; the Christian has total freedom to worship or not.
  2. The animal sacrifice should be good, acceptable, and perfect. The same applies to the conduct of the worshiper. We are not to “conform to the world”, but be “transformed by the renewing of [our] mind.” Notice the inside/outside change in lifestyle. It is a change from the profane to the holy; from death to living; from conforming to renewing.
  3. The phrase “spiritual service of worship” is a translation of *latreian*. As already noted, *latreuein* means “to serve or worship cultically, especially by sacrifice.” As the priests performed the ritualistic acts of worship daily in the temple, the worshiper should offer life daily as a sacrifice to God.