**Worship**

Psa. 95:1-8a

Introduction:

1. Worship.

2. What is it? How is it defined in Scripture?

3. Sometimes we hear people speak of 5 acts of worship. What are these? Is worship limited to these 5 acts?

4. What does God want from us in worship?

5. Is worship something only done in public forums in a house of worship or is it something that can be done privately and individually?

6. The passage that we have just read calls on the people of God to sing, express thanksgiving and shout joyfully to the Lord in light of His greatness. It says, “Let us worship, bow down and kneel,” and it calls on us to “hear His voice.”

7. All of this and more are involved in worship.

Discussion:

I. First, let’s consider some of the words that are used in Scripture to better understand what worship is.

A. In the O.T. four Hebrew words are translated in the NASB with some form of the word

“worship.”

1. 7812—from a primary root meaning to bow down.

2. 5646—from a primary root meaning to work or to serve.

3. 4931—meaning to guard.

4. 5457—meaning to do homage.

B. In the N.T. seven Greek words are translated with some form of the word “worship” in

the NASB.

1. 4352—to do reverence to, bow down, prostrate.

2. 4576—to worship.

3. 2151—piety, godliness.

4. 2999—service.

5. 3000—to serve.

6. 2356—religion.

7. 4574—objects of worship; implying reverential awe.

C. Merriam-Webster says . . .

1. The English word in the verb form was first used in the 13th century meaning to honor

or show reverence for a divine being or supernatural power.

2. The noun form was first used in the 12th century.

3. It comes from the Old English word meaning “worthy of respect.”

4. The synonyms including revere, reverence, venerate, adore mean to honor and

admire profoundly and respectfully.

D. Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible defines “worship” as the reverent

devotion, service or honor paid to God, whether public or individual.

E. From these definitions we get a pretty clear picture of what worship is.

1. In light of the greatness of God it involves the reverence, the honor and praise that

we give to Him in recognition of WHO He is.

2. Some have tried to distinguish between the worship of God and the service we

might render to God, but such a distinction does not hold up to the language of

Scripture.

a. Service rendered to God is worship.

b. Rom. 12:1 says that we are to present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice to

God and defines this as our “spiritual service of worship.”

c. Heb. 9:1, 6 refers to what the priests of the O.T. did when they entered the

tabernacle as the service of worship (same word as Rom. 12:1).

d. Sometimes we even refer to what we are doing here today as “worship services,”

or simply “the service.” But our service to God is not limited to what we are

doing inside this house of worship.

3. Sometimes worship is cooperate, involving other people, and sometimes individual

and private, done in secret (Matt. 6:3, 6, 18).

4. Sometimes we hear people speak of 5 acts of worship: singing, praying, observing

the Lord’s Supper, teaching, and giving on the first day of the week.

a. These are certainly acts of worship done in assemblies with others, but

worship is not limited to public assemblies, nor is it limited to these 5 acts.

b. Such acts as expressing thanks to God, bowing before God, and living a life of

service to God, are all acts of worship.

c. While singing, praying, observing the Lord’s Supper, considering what His word

says, and giving on the first day are all special acts of worship, really anything we

do to show reverence, honor and respect to God is worship. Public worship is

not to be the only worship. Nor is private worship to be the only worship.

d. Heb. 13:15 refers to offering up a sacrifice of praise to God by giving thanks to

His name. It goes on to refer to doing good and sharing as pleasing sacrifices to

God.

II. Since worship is reverence and respect shown to God it is reasonable to give thought to what shows reverence to Him.

A. Psa. 2:11-12 says, “Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do

homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath

may soon be kindled.”

B. Mal. 1:6ff challenges the priests of that day.

1. They had not shown respect and honor to the Lord.

2. The offered animal sacrifices to God that were blind and lame.

3. Thus they had made the worship of the Lord into something profane. They offered

what they had stolen, what was lame and sick. They complained “How tiresome it

is.” Thus they defiled and despised the worship of God.

C. Such worship is not uncommon among men when they loose sight of the object of their

worship and forget how great the Lord is.

1. Our worship is to be offered in faith, that is, in faithful response to what God has

done for us. Cain offered the fruit of the ground and Abel offered the firstlings of

his flock. Heb. 11:4 says, “By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than

Cain.”

2. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire which the Lord had not commanded them

(Lev. 10). They died as a result. The Lord said, “By those who come near Me I will

be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.”

3. Not everything is suitable in worship. Israel made a golden calf and said, “This is

your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt” (Ex. 32:4).

4. Jesus quoted Isaiah saying, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heat is

far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the

precepts of men” (Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7).

5. Worship can be done in ignorance (Jn. 4:22). It is not “whatever we please.” It is

not “whatever pleases us.” It is about honor, respect and reference to the Lord.

By definition, worship that is not thoroughly God directed is not appropriate.

III. Worship begins with a recognition of the greatness of God and results in humility,

submission, adoration, servitude.

A. There are many behaviors that demonstrate such an attitude in Scripture.

1. Sacrifice would seem to demonstrate this attitude, but it is not the actual act of

sacrifice itself that is critical. The attitude behind it is more important. Saul

planned to offer sacrifice, but God said, “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam.

15:22). Worship without subjection of the will is no worship at all.

2. Worship is not just about certain behaviors.

3. It is about submission of our will to God.

B. Certain postures show respect.

1. Our opening passage said, “Let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the

Lord our Maker” (Psa. 95:6).

2. Kneeling is a reflection of the inner attitude of humility, submission, adoration.

3. Someone asks, “Do I have to kneel?” Well, it is less about the act of kneeling and

more about the inner attitude of heart.

C. Certain clothes may demonstrate respect.

1. Psa. 96:9 says, “Worship the Lord in holy attire.”

2. The priests of the O.T. had special garments they wore.

3. “Are special clothes required for worship today?” someone asks. No! BUT what

we wear can be communicative. It can reflect our attitude.

D. How we treat other people reflects our attitude toward God.

1. James says we use our tongue to bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse

men, who have been made in the likeness of God. These things ought not be this

way (3:9-10).

2. Jesus said, If you are presenting your offering at the altar and remember some sin

you have committed against another leave your offering and go, first be reconciled

to your brother (Matt. 5:23-24).

Conclusion:

1. We need to give great thought to our worship.

2. We need to recognize the greatness of God.

3. We need to respond with humility, submission, respect, honor and adoration.