

## What the Gospels Show Us About Worship

**A. Learning from How People Worshipped Jesus (Matthew 8:1–2)**

**B. What Jesus Taught About Worship (John 4:20–26)**

**C. Learning from How Jesus Worshipped (Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 26:30)**

### **A. Learning from How People Worshipped Jesus: Matthew 8:1–2**

Many people in many situations worshipped Jesus.

- The wise men (Matthew 2:11)
- A leper (Matthew 8:1–2)
- Jarius (Matthew 9:18)
- The Gadarene Demoniac (Mark 5:6)
- The man born blind (John 9:38)
- The disciples in the boat (Matthew 14:33)
- The Syro-Phoenician Woman (Matthew 15:25–27)
- Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany after the resurrection (Matthew 28:9)
- The disciples after the resurrection (Matthew 28:16–17)
- The disciples at the Ascension of Jesus (Luke 24:53)

Think of the whole picture:

- Jews and Gentiles
- Men and women
- In Israel and outside of Israel
- Synagogue rulers and lepers
- Wise men and demoniacs
- On the land and on the sea
- Those who were with Jesus all the time and those who just met Him

### **How a Leper Worshipped Jesus – Matthew 8:1–2**

When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

a. **A leper came and worshiped Him:** Despite his desperate condition, this man not only begged Jesus – he also **worshipped Him**.

i. “The Greek verb is *proskenein*, and that word is never used of anything but *worship of the gods*; it always describes a man’s feeling and action in presence of the divine.” (Barclay)

b. How did the leper worship Jesus?

- He **worshipped** Jesus by coming to Him, honoring Him as the One who could meet His otherwise impossible need.
  - He **worshipped** Jesus with his posture, probably bowing or kneeling before Jesus.
  - He **worshipped** Jesus with the word “**Lord**,” honoring Him as master and God.
  - He **worshipped** Jesus with his humility, by not demanding but leaving the request up to the will of Jesus.
  - He **worshipped** Jesus with his respect of the power of Jesus, saying that all that was necessary was the will of Jesus, and he would be healed.
  - He **worshipped** Jesus with his confidence that Jesus could make him more than healthy; Jesus could make him **clean**.
- i. “The leper rendered to Christ divine homage; and if Jesus had been merely a good man, and nothing more, he would have refused the worship with holy indignation.” (Spurgeon)
- ii. “Those who call Jesus ‘*Lord*,’ and do not worship him, are more diseased than the leper was.” (Spurgeon)

## B. What Jesus Taught About Worship – John 4:20–26

“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

a. [4] **Our fathers worshipped on this mountain**: It is possible that this was a genuine source of confusion and a stumbling block to her, but it is more likely that this simply was an evasion, trying to avoid the issue of her many prior husbands and her current non-husband.

i. If she offered an argument about places of worship here, Jesus didn’t take the bait. Jesus was more interested in winning a soul than in winning an argument.

b. [22] **You worship what you do not know:** The Samaritans believed that Moses commissioned an altar on Mount Gerazim, the mountain of blessing – this was their justification of their system of worship on that mountain. But like all faith that tries to combine elements of different religions, they **worship what they do not know**.

i. **You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship:** “Both his ‘ye’ and His ‘we’ are emphatic. He sets Jews and Samaritans in sharp contrast. And He associates Himself quite definitely with the Jews.” (Morris)

This is something that could be said about many worshippers today. They worship, they have an experience, but it isn’t really rooted in any knowledge of God.

- This isn’t good.
- We wouldn’t think this is good in a human relationship.
- This has the potential for danger.

c. [23] **The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father:** Jesus pointed her to a time when worship would no longer be focused on *places* (neither Jerusalem nor Mount Gerazim). The greater work of Jesus would bring a greater, more spiritual worship.

i. Dods said of this promise, “One of the greatest announcements ever made by our Lord; and made to one sinful woman.”

ii. The prophets of the Old Testament often spoke of the day when all nations would worship the God of Israel. The people of Israel thought that meant they would all convert to Judaism, but in the new covenant and through the apostles and prophets, God revealed something new, something that was unannounced in the Old Testament: the church, bringing together Jew and Gentile into one new body.

d. [24] **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth:** With these words Jesus described the basis for true worship: it is not found in places and trappings, but **in spirit and in truth**.

i. To worship **in spirit** means you are concerned with spiritual realities, not so much with places or outward sacrifices, cleansings, and trappings.

- The Jewish people in the days of Jesus were very focused on the temple in their worship. It’s easy to see why – the temple was awesome. It was unique in the ancient world – a temple without a god (an idol).

- Temples, liturgical forms, ceremonies, vestments, rituals – these may have a place among Christians in worship, *but only as they facilitate worship in Spirit*. If they contribute to worship in Spirit, they do good. If not, there can be a lot of harm in them.

ii. To worship **in truth** means you worship according to the whole counsel of God's word, especially in light of the New Testament revelation. It also means that you come to God **in truth**, not in pretense or a mere display of spirituality.

- I'm fond of saying it like this: you need to bring the real you to the real Jesus. You'll only know the real Jesus by spending time in His word; by meeting Jesus in His word.

iii. Years ago this thought, this desire to worship God in spirit and in truth was put into words that for decades was on the back of the church bulletin at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, when Chuck Smith was the pastor. This is from the back of the old bulletin at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa:

- **We believe** the only true basis of Christian fellowship is Christ's (Agape) love, which is greater than any differences we possess, and without which we have no right to claim ourselves Christians.
- **We believe** worship of God should be spiritual. Therefore, we remain flexible and yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct our worship.
- **We believe** worship of God should be inspirational. Therefore, we give great place to music in our worship.
- **We believe** worship of God should be intelligent. Therefore, our services are designed with great emphasis upon the teaching of the Word of God that He might instruct us how He should be worshipped.
- **We believe** worship of God should be fruitful. Therefore, we look for His love in our lives as the supreme manifestation that we have been truly worshipping Him.

iv. I think that says a lot about what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth.

### C. Learning from How Jesus Worshiped (Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 26:30)

## 1. Jesus Showed Worship is Relevant to the Joys of Life (Luke 10:21-22)

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

a. [21] **In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit:** Jesus was genuinely excited. Literally, the ancient Greek says He was *thrilled with joy*. This singular specific example of Jesus rejoicing was over the work of His servants. God *delights* in using the weak and foolish things of this world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

i. This is the only occasion in the gospels where it is specifically said that Jesus rejoiced. It stands alone; yet we should not think that Jesus never rejoiced other times. Commentators point out that this speaks of “exceptional rejoicing and exultation.” Jesus rejoiced *strongly*; but He also rejoiced *deeply (in the Spirit)*.

b. [21] **I thank You, Father:** Jesus’ joy made Him break out into prayer. He praised God the Father for His wisdom, for His plan, and for His own unique relationship with God the Father.

- Jesus thanked the Father, not praising His own work.
- Jesus thanked the Father for His wise, sometimes unexpected plan.
- Jesus thanked the Father for the fellow servants in His midst.
- Jesus thanked the Father for the simplicity of His servants.

i. Jesus spoke of His unity with the Father ([22] **All things have been delivered to Me by My Father**).

ii. Jesus spoke of His special relationship with the Father ([22] **no one knows who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son**).

iii. Jesus spoke of how God allows us to have some part in that special relationship ([22] **and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him**).

c. [21] **That You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes:** Jesus rejoiced that *unlikely* people were taught of God and used by Him. The **babes** were the seventy; simple believers who received real wisdom from the revelation of God.

- He had to send the simple, because the wise of this world would never go out as lambs among wolves.
- He had to send the simple, because they would not change the message.
- He had to send the simple, because He wanted to reach the simple.
- He had to send the simple, because they would do the work in His name.
- He had to send the simple, because they would rejoice over the work.
- He had to send the simple, because they would give the praise to Jesus.

## 2. Jesus Showed Worship is Relevant to the Pains of Life (Matthew 26:30)

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

a. [30] **When they had sung a hymn:** We don't often think of Jesus singing, but He did. He lifted His voice in adoration and worship to God the Father. We can endlessly wonder what His voice sounded like, but we know for certain that He sang with more than His voice, and He lifted His whole heart up in praise. This reminds us that God *wants* to be praised with singing.

i. "These words, interpreted by a reverent imagination, present one of the most wonderful pictures... They sing, and it is impossible to doubt that He led the singing." (Morgan)

ii. It is remarkable that Jesus could sing on this night before His crucifixion. Could we sing in such circumstances? Jesus can truly be our worship leader. We should sing to God our Father – *just as Jesus did* – because this is something that pleases Him; and when we love someone, we want to do the things that please *them*. It really doesn't matter if it does or doesn't please *us*.

b. **Sung a hymn:** It is wonderful that Jesus sang, but *what* did He sing? A Passover meal always ended with singing three Psalms known as the *Hallel*, Psalms 116-118. Think of how the words of these Psalms would have ministered to Jesus as He sang them on the night before His crucifixion:

- *The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!"* (Psalm 116:3-4)
- *For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.* (Psalm 116:8-9)
- *I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD now in the presence of all His people.*

*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. (Psalm 116:13-15)*

- *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD. The LORD has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the LORD. (Psalm 118:17-19)*
- *The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. (Psalm 118:22-23)*
- *God is the LORD, and He has given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You. (Psalm 118:27-28)*

i. "When Jesus arose to go to Gethsemane, Psalm 118 was upon his lips. It provided an appropriate description of how God would guide his Messiah through distress and suffering to glory." (Lane)

ii. "If, beloved, you knew that at—say, ten o'clock tonight, you would be led away to be mocked, and despised, and scourged, and that tomorrow's sun would see you falsely accused, hanging, a convicted criminal, to die upon a cross, do you think that you could sing tonight, after your last meal?" (Spurgeon)

Jesus not only told us how to worship, He Himself worshipped, and in the most pressing of circumstances. Yet, Jesus also promised to sing with His people.

### **Hebrews 2:10–12**

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, [12] saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

In heaven, in the great assembly of God's people of all generations, all lands, all tribes, all languages, it is certain that we will worship Jesus.

However, Jesus will also worship *with us*. Prophetically, in Psalm 22:22 Jesus said:

- **In the midst of the assembly** [that's us]
- **I** [that's Jesus]
- **will sing praises to You** [that's God the Father].

Jesus isn't done singing praises. He receives praises, but also sings them.