

April 9, 2017

The Nature of Worship Psalm 103:1-5

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Many worship each Sunday, but do they _____ what they're doing? Some churches have forgotten God and _____ their worship into musical productions. What does God _____ in worship? The Bible gives us God's standard of _____. We want to practice the truth so we search the Scriptures.

When churches assemble to worship, God is _____ with His people. The Lord Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). What do you _____ about being in the presence of God? Right now, what if you _____ yourself in the very presence of God? Perhaps it is frightening. Revelation 1:17 says John _____ at the Lord's feet "as though dead." Perhaps it's exciting. Perhaps it _____ your conscience to be in God's presence. You may be thinking like Isaiah of the _____ of your life and realize that God knows all about them. Perhaps God's presence is comforting, reassuring in the midst of your _____. Perhaps being with God makes you want to say "thank you."

Worship is a spiritual matter; and true worship exhibits a sense of _____ and reverence in the presence of the DIVINE. The word "worship" (*proskuneo*) means "throwing oneself on the ground to _____ respect and awe." Many Christians today have little sense of the difference between what is _____ and what is common. God has always expected to be treated as holy in worship.

Some people think God ought to be happy and thankful that He received _____ worship from us at all. People who act like that _____ the grandeur and the majesty of our great God who created us. God isn't obligated to us; we are completely _____ on Him for life, for salvation, and for our future.

Our reading today comes from a psalm of David, Psalm 103:1-5.

We must take the holiness of God _____. To be holy means that one is separate or set _____ from others. To be holy means to be set apart for a special and higher _____. Something that is holy is _____ in that it has no contamination. We must never _____ what is holy as if it were something common. God is not just holy; He is _____ holy. He is _____ of reverence, of awe, and of adoration. For instance, the Lord's name is so holy that one must never take it in _____.

Holiness requires the absence of _____ and the presence of righteousness. God's holiness means that He is absolutely _____ in being and in nature. He is completely pure and righteous in His _____ and in His _____. Holiness, on the one hand, implies entire freedom from moral _____; and, upon the other, absolute moral perfection. The God of the Bible is utterly holy—He sets the _____ for morality. Unlike the Roman and Greek _____, He's not warlike, adulterous, or spiteful. Unlike the gods of the _____ cults that were popular in the

first century, the God of the Bible is not bloodthirsty or promiscuous. He is the _____ and _____ God of mercy and justice who cares personally for His followers.

First John 1:5 says, “God is _____, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” There’s nothing impure or _____ about God. Habakkuk 1:13 says about God, “*Your eyes are too pure to _____ evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor.*” Our God, whom we worship and serve, is holy. He is sacred, not common; pure and clean. We can never _____ Him as if he were human, or weak, or flawed. He is holy and perfect, far above us!

Isaiah describes what it’s like to come into the presence of a holy and awesome God. **Read Isaiah 6:1-5.**

How we _____ God in worship matters greatly. We should not presume that God will accept whatever we have to _____. God distinguishes between what He desires and what man _____ up. Just because someone _____ something an act of worship does not mean that God accepts it. What men think is worship may not be what God _____ as worship.

To worship God acceptably, we must ask God what He _____ for worship. True worship always thinks of _____ the One Whom we worship. Only God can determine what acceptable worship is. After all, He is God and He’s the One that we’re worshiping. Shouldn’t He have a _____ in how we worship?

Read Leviticus 10:1-3. This event is in the Scriptures, so that we might _____ from it. Nadab and Abihu were the sons of Aaron, the nephews of Moses. For several days before this incident, they had participated in their own consecration and the consecration of the tabernacle with many _____. Ten times Moses had given them instructions, telling them what the _____ commanded them to do. They did just as the Lord commanded until they decided to _____ on their own authority. Carelessness didn’t excuse Nadab and Abihu; hearts wanting to praise the Lord didn’t excuse them from going _____ the authorized commands. They acted on their own and paid a very dear _____. They presumptuously took their firepans and placed incense in them. Then they went to an unauthorized place to get “strange” _____ for their incense. It was unauthorized fire, illegitimate fire. They offered up something _____ than what God had instructed. The Lord didn’t _____ them to do this and didn’t give them permission to use “strange” fire. God punished them for acting on their _____ authority. God has never accepted worship that _____ what God’s instructions are, but does what some man invents. People sometimes forget God’s desires; they turn their attention to what people like and what they want.

The Lord Jesus, in Matthew 15 and Mark 7, clearly condemned using the _____ of men. The Lord said that when people follow the traditions of men, they _____ the commandments of God. According to their tradition, they were taking the _____ that should go to support their elderly parents and declaring it “Corban” or devoted to God. By pronouncing this money Corban, the Pharisees could use this money _____ in worship, so they would look good. The Lord said, “So for the sake of your tradition you have made _____ the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ‘This people honors me with their _____, but their _____ is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matthew 15:6-9).

When people act on their own, they show that their hearts are not right with God because they haven't _____ to Him. Listening to men rather than listening to God makes our worship _____. Why? Because in listening to the teachings of men, we _____ listening to God. We treat God as _____ than men. We haven't given Him the holy place in our hearts that He _____.

In Colossians 2:20-23 the Bible says, "If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with the use)—and it's in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? And he says these are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence."

"Self-made" religion happens when people act on their own authority and do not _____ what God teaches. God doesn't permit "self-made" religion, because it _____ to show Him the reverence that He deserves. It may appear to have _____ to people, but God detests it. People may _____ what they call worship; they may think it draws a great crowd; but forms of worship that ignore God's teaching and originates in the mind of men _____ God's will. True worship to God always comes from listening to the _____ of God.

God wants _____ His people to worship Him and praise His name. He seeks for _____ worshipers. True worshipers worship Him in _____ and in _____. The New Testament has no special _____ of worshipers such as the Levites under the old covenant. According to 1 Peter 2:5 all Christians are members of a holy priesthood and their place is "to _____ _____ spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

The churches in the New Testament did not have choirs or special music. They all sang from their _____ as a congregation. To worship means "to adore or to pay divine honors as to a deity; to reverence with supreme _____ and veneration. They did not fall for the notion that worship was for _____. Worship was how they _____ of themselves to God rather than what they _____ from the people around them. They didn't think of themselves as an _____ or spectators. They came to worship not to see a _____.

Early churches didn't have theatrical performances, light shows, or bands. They didn't hire professional musicians to _____ for them. There's a difference between worship that comes from the hearts and lips of everyone in the _____ and a performance that comes from professionals on the _____. The Bible says, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of _____ to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). God doesn't choose the musically _____ for worship but exclude everyone else.

To worship is to revere God; but to entertain means "to engage the attention with anything that causes the time to pass pleasantly; or to _____." Entertainment is "an interesting or amusing thing, as a _____ or performance." Entertainment, in and of itself, is not _____. But God never intended for entertainment or a performance to _____ the worship of the church. The purpose of worship is to _____ God, and in many places what some call worship focuses not on God but on the performer or performers.

Some churches today contain very little worship to God and a great deal of show to _____ a crowd. Performers become religious "stars." We now have an entire entertainment _____ devoted to Christian praise music. Why have we made a commercial enterprise out of worship? Why have we focused on the talent of the performer, glorifying _____ rather than glorifying God?

Worship is an expression of reverence and adoration toward God. Worship is our _____ to a gracious and holy God, and it needs to be placed in this context if it is to be properly understood. It is right to remind ourselves in church that we are not the _____. God is! He is there to _____ our praise and adoration. We have met there to _____ Him. Our task is to “_____ Him.” This is why we can never, never, never _____ our worship by turning it into entertainment. We must glorify God and Him _____.

Some folks don't find any value in Biblical worship; they prefer something _____ exciting or appealing. They think worship should be for their benefit; and so they come to worship to “_____” rather than to “_____.” There are certainly many things in church that bless our lives; but we get _____ of worship what we _____ it. One man endures worship and leaves _____ and empty, while another leaves _____ and refreshed by the experience.

Why? The man who leaves empty has his mind on _____, while the man who leaves blessed has concentrated on _____. He's taken _____ to count his blessings, to remember the cross, to meditate on what God has done, and to be thankful. He can see the value of _____ songs of praise. He values speaking to God in _____. He grows spiritually by _____ Christ in the Lord's Supper. He cheerfully _____ of his means! He loves to _____ God's counsel in the Word, because he loves God. Love makes the difference. Worship is _____ our love, our praise, our adoration, our thanksgiving, and our commitment to our gracious God in heaven. Oh, what a _____ it is to praise Him.

Before we worship, let's _____ our hearts and spirits to praise and glorify our God. Let's enter worship with praise and thanksgiving. In worship let's _____ ourselves to God with loving hearts. When we leave worship, let's show Him we love Him by _____ holy lives. The Bible says, “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable _____ with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

God seeks people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. God seeks for you to make your heart _____ with Him. We truly worship when we _____ the right Person, doing the right thing with the right heart. Does the worship where you go to church _____ God? Is that worship according to the _____ of Scripture or does it involve the traditions of men?

Is your heart right with God? To get your heart right, you must approach God in _____ and _____. You must be willing to _____ Him in all things. You must be willing to _____. This is to give up what is sinful and human and to embrace what is Divine and what is true to God's will. With your faith, love, and repentance, you must be willing to _____ Christ as the Son of God and to be _____. Baptism is the time when the blood of Jesus Christ _____ away your sins according to Acts 22:16.

When you're baptized, the Lord causes you to be _____ again into the family of God. He forgives you, adds you to His church, and gives you eternal life. Such blessing ought to make you want to worship and praise Him all the days of your life. Please attend worship at one of the churches of Christ in your area. They strive to worship according to the teaching of God. They focus on worship, not performing; and they want everyone to participate. They would love for you to worship with them in spirit and in truth.