



Sunday, February 26, 2017

## Week 5-pt 2: Sowing Worship...Drawing Attention To The One Who Most Deserves It

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**“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”**

A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

<sup>1</sup> And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. <sup>2</sup> Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Rom 12:1–2 NLT-SE)

**“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”**

John Piper

### **THREE PERSPECTIVES ON THE GOD WE WORSHIP**

- **He who was** (Is 6:1-5), **and is** (John 3:26-34), **and is to come** (Rev 4:1-11, “on earth as it is in heaven”).

“I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,” says the Lord God. **“I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.”**...<sup>17</sup> **When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead.** But he laid his right hand on me and said, “Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave. (Rev 1:8, 17–18 NLT-SE)

- **“The Almighty God” ~ HE WHO WAS...**<sup>1</sup> It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. <sup>2</sup> Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> They were calling out to each other, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!”

<sup>4</sup> Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> Then I said, **“It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies.”** (Is 6:1–5 NLT-SE)

- **“The One from above” ~ AND IS...**<sup>26</sup> John's disciples came to him and said, “Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us.”

<sup>27</sup> John replied, “No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.’ <sup>29</sup> It is the bridegroom who marries the

bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. <sup>30</sup> **He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less**

<sup>31</sup> “He has come from above and is **greater than anyone else**. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is **greater than anyone else**. <sup>32</sup> He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! <sup>33</sup> Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. <sup>34</sup> For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. (John 3:26–34 NLT-SE)

- **“The One sitting on the throne” ~ AND IS TO COME...**<sup>1</sup> I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, **“Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.”** <sup>2</sup> And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it. <sup>3</sup> The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—like jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow. <sup>4</sup> Twenty-four thrones surrounded him, and twenty-four elders sat on them. They were all clothed in white and had gold crowns on their heads. <sup>5</sup> From the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder. And in front of the throne were seven torches with burning flames. This is the sevenfold Spirit of God. <sup>6</sup> In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal. In the center and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. <sup>7</sup> The first of these living beings was like a lion; the second was like an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth was like an eagle in flight.  
  
<sup>8</sup> Each of these living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying, **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty— the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.”**  
  
<sup>9</sup> Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever), <sup>10</sup> **the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one sitting on the throne** (the one who lives forever and ever). **And they lay their crowns before the throne** and say,  
  
<sup>11</sup> “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they **exist because you created what you pleased.**” (Rev 4:1–11 NLT-SE)

## WHEN WORSHIP BECOMES ABOUT SOMETHING OR SOMEONE OTHER THAN GOD

- **When our worship becomes more like witchcraft** (1 Samuel 14-15)
  - When insecurity goes unchecked.
    - When Saul comes on the scene in 1 Samuel 9, he is **insecure** and **self-deprecating**.
      - “I’m only from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel, and my family is the least important of all the families of that tribe! Why are you talking like this to me?” (1 Sam 9:21 NLT-SE)
    - This manifests itself again in chapter 14, when Jonathan had eaten honey during a time when Saul had placed his army under an oath of fasting. **Saul was more willing to put Jonathan to death for his transgression than to admit his own mistake in leadership.**

- “Jonathan has won this great victory for Israel. Should he die? Far from it! As surely as the Lord lives, not one hair on his head will be touched, for God helped him do a great deed today.” So the people rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death. (1 Sam 14:45 NLT-SE)

- **Insecurity is just another word for pride. An insecure person is a person who is preoccupied with themselves:** how they look, how they appear to others, whether or not they are accepted by their peers.
- Many times, **insecurity is linked to perfectionism**, which is yet another word for **pride**.

Any time we are more **focused on ourselves** than on God and others,  
we run the risk of nurturing pride in our hearts.

- When **fear** drives our decisions.
  - As the story in 1 Sam 13 opens, **Saul is about to go to war against the Philistines**. He wants to offer a sacrifice before they enter into battle, but after waiting 7 days, Samuel still hasn't arrived. His troops were getting restless and start walking away from him.
  - Saul starts sensing he is losing the confidence of his troops and makes a fatal error. **He offers the sacrifice himself**. Out of fear, he begins to operate in a level of authority that was never meant for him.
  - **Fear is a lack of trust in God's leadership** in our lives and a refusal to live under His authority. When we refuse to live our lives under God's divine authority, refusing to accept the human authorities He has placed over us, **we are living in rebellion** and **our authority is weakened**. In Jesus' encounter with the centurion in Matthew 8, we can see human authority demonstrated appropriately
    - <sup>8</sup> But the officer said, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, ‘Go,’ and they go, or ‘Come,’ and they come. And if I say to my slaves, ‘Do this,’ they do it.” (Matt 8:8–9 NLT-SE)
  - The truth is **our authority is strengthened when we choose to submit** to someone with more authority than ourselves, but this kind of submission requires trust. **Fear usually reveals a lack of trust**; At times, fear is a **refusal** to trust.

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- When **disobedience** becomes acceptable.
  - Throughout this story **Saul's fear and insecurity are leading him to disobey God**. Eventually, God calls him out on his **witchcraft**. The Word says that **Saul's so-called sacrifice to God was really self-worship!**
  - God sends Saul into battle against the Amalekites. In 1 Samuel 15:3, He commands Saul to “**completely destroy the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.**”
  - In verse 9, we see that instead of killing King Agag, Saul and his men capture the king and keep “*the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.*” He spares the evil King's life, keeps the best of the spoils and then in verse 13, Saul has the audacity to say to Samuel, “**I have carried out the Lord's command!**”
  - When Samuel **confronts his disobedience**, he defends himself by saying that the things they saved back were to **sacrifice to the Lord**. Wrong! In fact, verse 12 says, “*Early the next morning Samuel went to find Saul.*”

Someone told him, “Saul went to the town of Carmel **to set up a monument to himself**; then he went on to Gilgal.” (1 Sam 15:12 NLT-SE)

- **Saul actually sets himself up as the one to be worshipped!** His glory is short lived, because Samuel receives a word from the Lord for Saul that will change his life forever...
  - <sup>22</sup> “What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup> **Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.**” (1 Sam 15:22–23 NLT-SE)
- One commentator says, “Saul's life is a warning to the church of what happens **when we think we can defeat the enemy outside of us without first having defeated the enemy inside of us.**”

The truth is, if we fail to defeat our own **insecurity, fear** and **disobedience**, we may find that our response to God is more rebellion than worship!

### WHAT IS IT THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY SOWING?

- We are sowing **BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING**
  - **True Worship...is God-Centered.** “Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.” (Psa 95:6 NLT-SE)

R.C. Sproul says, “As fallen creatures, it is one of our most basic and fundamental inclinations to worship something, or someone, **other than** the true God.”
  - **Speak...**about Him in a way that **reflects** His true character...Singing, shouting, declaring , prophesying, confessing, repenting, etc. He is worthy to be praised!
    - Great is the Lord! **He is most worthy of praise!** No one can measure his greatness. (Psa 145:3 NLT-SE)
    - And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is **true**, and **honorable**, and **right**, and **pure**, and **lovely**, and **admirable**. **Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.** (Phil 4:8 NLT-SE)
  - **Bow...**before Him, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
  - **Yield...**Intentionally, take steps to **yield** to His will.
    - **I take joy in doing your will**, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.” (Psa 40:8 NLT-SE)
    - He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. **Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.**” (Matt 26:39 NLT-SE)
  - **Defer...**to **His leadership** in our lives.
    - Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. **May your gracious Spirit lead me** forward on a firm footing. (Psa 143:10 NLT-SE)
  - **True Worship...is not musical, but more positional.** We are sowing the keys to relationship with God and each other?
    - Are we living a life of **humility**? Jesus *never* spent time trying to convince people to follow Him. He made the invitation and proceeded forward. It was up to them whether or not they followed. **If we sow worship, we will harvest humility!**

- Are we **serving**, more than wanting to be served (John 13)?
- Are we open **about our faith**, or mostly silent because we're afraid of looking foolish or making a mistake? (1 Pet 3:15)
- We are sowing **THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL HOPE**
  - **The past...**God does not just release people from their past, with the **hope of restoration**, but many times **releases us into our future**, seeing the move forward as a **creative endeavor** in our lives.
    - I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer 29:11 NLT-SE)
  - **The present...**Not focusing only on meeting the needs of the present, but carving out a place in our hearts for a **future with God**.
    - We know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. (2 Cor 5:1 NLT-SE)
  - **The future...**We are preparing and equipping people **now** to embrace what will yield receive **eternal rewards tomorrow**.
    - <sup>23</sup> Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. <sup>24</sup> Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. (Col 3:23–24 NLT-SE)
    - <sup>17</sup> Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup> Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. <sup>19</sup> By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. (1 Tim 6:17–19 NLT-SE)
- We are sowing **the power of love**
  - *Because God is who He says He is...***change** is inevitable and **nothing is impossible!** (Luke 18:27)
  - *Because God is who He says He is...*when we are weak, **He is strong in and through us**. (2 Cor 12:9-11)
  - *Because God is who He says He is...*He will never ask us to do something He will not give us the **resources**, **courage**, and **strength** to complete. **God pays for what he orders!** (Joshua 13)
  - *Because God is who He says He is...***LOVE WINS!** (James 2:13)