

Remnant Life Church
February 23, 2025
Three Obstacles to True Worship
Job 31:24-28

The Apostle John, in the later years of his life, is on the island of Patmos

- He is the last living of the 12 and the only one not to die a martyr for preaching about Jesus
- This island is approx. 190 miles west of the coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea
 - He was banished there by the Roman emperor Domitian in 95 AD
 - It is here that he receives the visions that lead to the writing of the book of Revelation

Rev. 4:11 – *You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*

- Glory and honor are worship
- We all worship something because we were created to be worshippers
 - But only one object of our worship is fulfilling, is in accordance with His Word, and satisfies that created need
 - It is to worship God and God alone
 - Anything else becomes an obstacle to that
- This current series is not designed to stimulate you to worship
 - You are already worshipping
 - The question is what or who are you worshipping?
 - My goal is for you to come to the place of seeing that to worship anything other than the One True God is to function outside of who you were created to be
- One of the first things to understand is that worship does not begin with an activity of words or actions
 - Worship is first a condition of the heart
 - Because it is out of our hearts that our actions take place
 - Jesus said in **Matt 15:18** - *But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart...*
 - God also said through the prophet in **Isa 29:13** – *These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*
 - What is happening in many churches today - because we have been willing to compromise and allow culture to influence what we do (rather than the other way around) – is many are honoring God with their lips, but their hearts are far away

Last Sunday, we said that one of the primary obstacles to true worship is the mindset of many who attend church today

- Our culture has helped to create churches filled with spectators, not servants
 - A servant is one who gives of themselves without hesitation

- A spectator consumes and offers little if anything in return
- Billy Graham has been quoted as saying, *God is more concerned about the attitude of our hearts than the way we express it. Worship isn't supposed to be entertainment*
- Yet that is what corporate worship has become and it is to the detriment of not only the church itself, but those who come and never enter in to what worship was designed to be
 - In the words of the Psalmist – *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. (Pslm 29:2)*

This morning I would like for us to consider three specific obstacles that will keep you from worshipping in spirit and in truth

1. Worshipping a false God

- a. Now, I seriously doubt that any of your homes have idols in it
- b. There are likely no little statues with incense burners set up nearby, and if there are...
- c. But worshipping a false god is actually very common in our culture
 - i. It is most often the worship of material things – our possessions
 - ii. This is not to say that God condemns wealth or the possession of things outright
 1. Some of the richest figures in all of history we read about in the Bible
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Solomon
 - c. Esther
 2. What He does condemn, however, is the love of those things above Him
 - a. The first commandment God gave to Moses on Mt. Siani in **Ex 20:3** – *You shall have no other gods before me*
 - b. The second command then is the first instruction for worship
 - i. And it is a directive that nothing else is to be worshipped except God
 - ii. No one and nothing deserves worship but God
 3. But again, recall the quote by John Wimber
 - a. *Show me where you spend your time, money, and energy, and I'll tell you what you worship.*
 - b. This is one of the clearest indicators of what you worship, but it is also the one that most Christians conveniently ignore
 - c. Notice this is also about time and energy but let's consider the financial side of this since that is the one most people key in on
 - d. I am not saying that the church should be the recipient of all of your money, and neither does God, but I will ask this

- i. Do you tithe your income as the Bible tells us to?
 - 1. And it actually goes beyond just your tithe
 - ii. But whatever you answer is to that question, consider what you give to God and then compare that to what you spend in the other areas of your life
 - iii. Now, you tell me, what do you worship?
 - iii. This is nothing new
 - 1. In **Rom 1:21** the Apostle Paul indicts all of mankind for this tendency
 - a. He addresses the plight of all men and their fallenness when he writes...
 - b. *Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks*
 - c. To honor God means to obey His Word – in every area of our lives
 - iv. The story of Job is a familiar one yet he knew fully the foolishness of trusting in the things of wealth even though he was very wealthy

READ - Job 31:24-28

- v. To worship anything or anyone other than the One True God is false worship
- 2. Worship the One True God but in a disobedient manner
 - a. What does this mean?
 - i. It is the knowledge of the importance of worship but with the presence and influence of the flesh
 - b. In **Lev 10**, we read of Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron and the rightful heirs to the role of High Priest
 - i. But they allowed their greed and lusts to rule over them
 - ii. They were operating in the things of worship but in the sins of the flesh
 - iii. They not only lost their place, but they lost their lives
 - c. Saul was the first king of Israel
 - i. But he was an impatient man
 - ii. We read in **I Sam 13**, that Saul was waiting for Samuel to come and offer the sacrifice to God before battle
 - iii. But Samuel was taking too long so Saul took it upon himself to offer the sacrifice – a willful act of disobedience to God’s instructions
 - iv. As a result he not only lost the battle but he lost the throne
 - d. Then there is the account of Uzzah in **2 Sam 6**
 - i. This is admittedly a difficult one to understand
 - ii. Uzzah was a part of the Kohathite (CO-hah-thite) clan whose sole responsibility was transporting the Ark of the Covenant from one place to the other
 - 1. There were very specific instructions and rules given by God regarding how the ark was to be dealt with

- iii. On one such journey, the Ark, riding on a cart, started to tip and Uzzah put his hand on it to steady it
 - 1. God struck him dead on the spot for violating the law that said no person may touch the ark
 - 2. He disobeyed the law regardless of his intent
 - 3. His action could be considered an act of worship to protect the Ark, but he violated the law of God
- iv. To worship God means we do so in a way that is consistent with His nature and according to His Word
- v. Yet there are many who create their own worship experience that has nothing to do with God's Word and even less to do with giving God glory

3. Worship the One True God but with the wrong attitude

- a. This is likely the most difficult of the three
- b. Because it involves the condition of our heart
 - i. Do you give yourself fully when you worship?
 - ii. How many things are you allowing to crowd your mind?
 - 1. What am I doing later today, how did things go this past week, what do I have coming up?
 - iii. Are you allowing God to have just a piece of you while you are here?
 - 1. And even then, what is your focus
 - 2. Whether the band sounds good, how loud or soft the music is, or if anyone is missing a note?
 - iv. In Malachi God speaks to the people through the prophet and denounces their inadequate, half-hearted worship of Him
 - v. **Mal 1:6-10** - *It is you priests who show contempt for my name. But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?' "By offering defiled food on my altar. When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty. "Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the LORD Almighty. "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.*
 - vi. Their actions were right but their hearts were wrong and God would not accept their sacrifice
- c. And then let's take this one step further
 - i. This is not only about focus of your attention
it is also the condition of your heart toward others
 - ii. How many times have you come to church on a Sunday morning mad at someone?
 - 1. Forgiveness is the cornerstone of our relationship with God
 - 2. He forgives you of your sins when not one of us deserves it

3. He sent Jesus to die so that you could be reconciled to Him again and your sins forgiven
 - a. Yet how many will carry an offense with them even into church?
 - b. You will hold something against someone oblivious to the peril you have placed yourself in
 - c. **Matt 6:14-15** - *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*
 - d. There is no way to interpret or spin that to say anything other than exactly what it says
 - e. You will not be forgiven your sins!
4. This condition of your heart, perhaps as much as any other, will prevent you from worshipping God in spirit and in truth

Worship God alone, worship according to the Word, worship with a heart that is surrendered and free from anything evil in the sight of God.

Worship is not an event – it is a lifestyle surrendered to God and God alone

- That is why worship is not confined to a day of the week or a specific location
- Worship is an everyday occurrence in every circumstance and to every purpose of our lives