

26th  
November

# Worship – Christ the King Sunday

What is Worship?

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## **Romans 12 1-2**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

## **1 Chronicles 16 8-11, 23-29 (NIV)**

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Splendour and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place.

Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.

## **Amos 5 21-24**

**21** "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.

**22** Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

**23** Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.

**24** But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

As you would have spotted on your service sheet today is Christ the King Sunday,  
also known as the Feast of Christ the King, a recent addition to the liturgical calendar, having been brought about in 1925 by Pope Pius XI.

The Pope witnessed a turbulent time in the world's history with dangerous dictatorships emerging in Europe and beyond.  
He saw respect and reverence for Christ's authority waning in the midst of all the unrest of the times.

So in response, Christ the king Sunday was set with the intent to reaffirm and refocus faith and respect in the kingship of Jesus.

Of course it is not just the Pope who recognised that Christ is the King.  
We read of Christ referred to as the King many times in the Bible.  
You have just hear one such passage from John 18.

In Jesus case the title of Kingship doesn't refer to the status of an earthly king,  
That's what many of the Jews had been expecting – someone to overthrow the Roman rule and be earthly king of Israel.

Jesus came as the spiritual king; with His kingdom in heaven, not just confined to earth.

I doubt that any of us here need a special Sunday to remember that Christ is our King and savior.  
But perhaps we do need a special Sunday to consider what it is to worship our King and Savior –  
Today we are looking at the Worship thread - the 4<sup>th</sup> in our series of talks about threads that run through the Bible.

And here we are all gathered together representing that thread, a thread that flows seamlessly from Genesis to Revelations.

However, coming to church once a week does not necessarily make us good Christians - showing support for our faith until we next decide to come here.

Especially if you consider that -

We can come to church, but not really worship.

We can sing songs, but not worship.

We can listen to sermons, but that doesn't mean we have a life of worship.

We can even serve others but without worshiping.

Amos showed his understanding of this in our passage – where he basically said to the people that although they appeared righteous, he could see through their show and pretence.

So, how much have people changed since the time of Amos.

Well - Listen to this recent survey of reasons people gave as to why they go to church – this is the top 5.

- I feel like something bad will happen if I don't.
- I go to hear teaching that brings me closer to God.
- I worry others will disapprove if I don't.
- I enjoy worshiping God.
- It's what I do on Sundays.

It's clear from those statements that there are those who go to church for the wrong reasons and don't understand or practice, true worship.

So - let's think about

Why, why do we worship?

And then

How, how should we worship?

## **Why & How**

To answer why, we need to begin at the start of our thread, and go right back to the very beginning of the Bible.

In the beginning God created a wonderful world and when He was happy with His creation, He created the human race.

Not just to exist on this amazing planet but He created us for a purpose.

His purpose for us was **and still is** - that we live a life in a relationship with Him.

He loves each and every one of us and wants us to complete that relationship by loving Him back through worship.

When God created us He built into us the desire to worship, it's in our DNA like the desire to eat, drink and Love.

And He has asked us, through Moses giving the Ten Commandments and again through Jesus, when He answered the question, which is the most important commandment.

God asked us to - **'Love Him with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind.'**

Sadly – Far too many people misunderstand this request from God and treat it as a demand.

Stephen Fry in an interview on "The late show" was asked what he would say to God on arriving at the pearly gates.

A toned down part of his reply, is that he would say to God *"**you** are totally selfish, **we** have to spend our life on our knees thanking **you**, what kind of God are you".*

All too often people make little or no effort to understand God and His love for us. For them their understanding of God is a **miss** understanding. But you and I know that God quite literally is Love, everything about Him is Love.

And He couldn't have demonstrated His amazing love for us more than when we 'man kind' messed up. What did God do.....He gave his one and only son to die for us on the cross.

God knows that if you love someone you will not force them to do anything against their will and so He gave us the choice to love Him back .....or not.

That Mr Fry is **not**.....most definitely **not** a selfish God.

So assuming you have made the choice to be in a relationship with God and to love Him back –

can I ask you to think later today,

- About how you show Him,
- what you do that reflects God's love for you,
- and what sort of relationship you have with Him.

Perhaps it will help you to put that relationship into perspective if you would consider the following.

If a man and woman embarked on a new relationship and it only consisted of physical desires, then you would be right to say their relationship must be very shallow.

**However**, if they were **both** constantly,

- Wanting to be with each other,
- Texting, talking,
- Putting one another first,
- Were always faithful to one another

Then we would probably be right to assume they were .....

**in love.**

Similarly if you are to look closely at your relationship with God would you feel that it is somewhat shallow,

**OR** do you live your life with God as you would with someone you really love.

- As someone you wish to talk to,
- share everything with,
- always put first and are faithful to.

Sadly, us human beings have a problem,

Well we have lots of problems but relevant now are 2 of them.

Firstly, we are not that good at relationships

- I happen to know this first hand because over the last 20 years I have been blessed with a very patient..... and persistent wife who is happy to point out to me the mistakes I continue to make in our relationship.
- Quite often as it happens.

Fortunately for all of us, God is even more patient with us in what must often be a very one-sided relationship.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> problem that human beings have is that  
The same desire to worship God,  
The desire that God has built into all of us  
Is also a big weakness.

A weakness because the problem for so many of us is not **just** how much we worship God but also **Who.....** and **what** else we worship.

We know that church attendance is not exactly booming across our country and many churches close every year because most people put..... the who and what they worship before God.

To them - God creation is more important than the God who created it.

They allow God creation to be more important than the God who created it.

Meaning that since as far back as we know people have created and worshipped, imaginary God's and idols, be it wooden statues, golden calves, their possessions, even celebrities or royalty.

They have directed that inbuilt desire to worship towards the creation of their own material Gods.

People are and have always been willing to worship things of this world.

So we have to continually make conscious choices, to put God above everything else this world has to offer.

And each time we do that, we are giving Him honour, glory and praise. We are **worshiping** Him.

And now we find ourselves answering the second question

**"How do we Worship".**

We heard in our reading from Paul's letter to the Romans –  
*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

Paul says to we should offer our bodies as a living sacrifice because of what God has done in our lives.

Meaning give our whole lives, every aspect of our lives, to God.

And what's so special about what he asks us to do, is that it is **not** an order.

An order that we are forced to obey ..... it is a choice.

In the same way –

- It is a choice to come here today.
- It's a choice to devote yourself to reading the Bible.
- It's a choice to pray.
- It's a choice to remember the death of Jesus in the breaking of bread together.

And most importantly - we have a choice to set aside times

**other than Sundays**

to make God and serving Him a priority in our lives.

Stephen talked about "Kim Jong Une" and how awful it must be in countries where leaders force people to worship them –  
Where people are killed or imprisoned for not doing so.

That is **false** worship demanded by cruel, controlling people.

Without choice worship is meaningless.

God gave us the freedom to make the choice, because He desires true worship.

And there can be no true worshipers of Him without freedom and choice.



In the verses before our reading from 1 Chronicles 16 – The Ark of the Covenant had just been recovered and is back in Jerusalem – David has had it placed in the tabernacle and he now decides to stop and worship.

We then hear part of one of David's Psalm's, it is psalm 105 and is known as a "call to Worship Psalms"–

*Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.*

and a few verses later we read

*Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.*

Always – meaning **all the time**,

and I would add "in **always**" meaning making everything we do an act of worship.

That's easy to say and is something that we are unlikely to achieve without the help of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus talks of this help when in John chapter 4 – we find Him talking to a woman at a well, He says to her

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.*

To worship God in truth is simply to worship Him through the Holy Spirit and through the truth you know about Him.

The more you know of God and the more you draw on the Holy Spirit, the more it will be the desire of your heart to worship.

Both Romans 12 and John 4 lets us know that worship involves our whole lives. Our bodies, our minds, and our hearts.

And the result of real worship is that God is given praise, honour and glory in reverence for who He is and what He has done.

There is something else very wonderful that happens when we give our lives to God.

It's that through worship and God's love in us, everything else and every other person in our lives will receive the love of God through us.

### **So Why and How – do we worship**

**Why** – because we are made to worship, and it is up to us to either choose to worship the things that we put a false value upon or To choose to worship God who created us, loves us enough to sacrifice His own son for us and desperately wants to be in a real loving relationship with us.

**How** – By committing ourselves to God  
By being in a true relationship with Him.  
By giving all of our gifts, talents, abilities – our lives, back to God, not because of obligation, but because we love Him.  
And not just today but every waking moment of our lives.

Before I close – I have a suggestion for you for each night this week or every week if you wish.

When you're lying in bed trying to get to sleep could you please ask yourself this,

**“When God looked at me today did He see acts of worship”.**

Let us pray –

Thank you Lord that you created us, that you love us and that you want to be in a relationship with us.

Lord as we come closer to you we learn from your written word, about how we should live our lives and the people you want us to choose to be.

Sometimes Lord we can feel that we have a long way to go.

Sometimes Lord we can become disillusioned by what we should be doing, saying, and how we should be living.

We know we can't do this alone so we ask Lord for the help of your Holy Spirit, to guide us and empower us as we submit ourselves to you in adoration and Love.

We ask this in Christ our King's Holy name  
Amen