

WORSHIP GOD!

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by Philip W. Shields

Our formal western societies have all but lost the art of worshiping God. This message reveals God's desire to be worshipped, what worship is, when to worship, how to worship. We hope it changes your life – totally and completely – as you have your one-on-One with God.

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What would your answer be, if I asked you “**WHY do we go to the Feast Days each year** – and why do we “go to church on the Sabbath?” Besides the fact the feasts of God – including the Sabbath – are “commanded assemblies”, holy convocations, why would you say you “go to church”? Pause and think . . . write down your answers; the first things which come into your mind.

Greetings again, brothers and sisters, this is Philip Shields sharing another study that has helped me immensely. If these messages can help you, wonderful. I prefer to think of these as shared studies with those of like mind rather than a sermon where I'm preaching at a bunch of people. I preach at myself in all of these messages, as I need to grow in these same areas as everyone else does.

Now back to today's question: If one of your neighbors asked you why you go to the Feast, what would you say your PURPOSE was? And do you DO that purpose, at the Feast of Tabernacles?

HERE are some of the answers I got when I asked people:

“I go because I'm **commanded to go**. I go to learn more about God's word.” [the “I-go because I'm commanded to go” answer. Not a wrong answer. **Lev 23:1-2, 35**]

“I go to the Feast to **learn to fear God** more, and **to rejoice**.” (Certainly a correct answer based on Lev. 23:40; Deut 12:12-18; 14:23; Deut 16:14)

“I go to **picture the World Tomorrow**, the Millennium, and to celebrate in advance as we learn, feast, fellowship.” (This is correct too)

“I go to **be refreshed** for another year. It's a recharging for me and my family” (Not bad.)

“I go – I dunno – I just always have. My friends and family are all there and we have a good time. It's a family tradition” – this was the lamest answer, I felt.

There were other answers, but those were the most common ones I heard this year.

There was one answer I didn't hear! One answer seldom is given. I didn't hear it at all this year. I want to spend the rest of this study addressing the Answer I Didn't Hear. If I had an opening night message at the Feast, I would have given this one.

In the New Millennial reign of 1,000 years, the **reason the people will go up to the feast is clearly stated**. Perhaps we can learn from it.

Zechariah 14:16-17 “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up **from year to year to worship the King**, the LORD [YHWH] of hosts, **and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles**. 17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to **Jerusalem to worship the King**, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.”

The KING they will be worshipping during the Millennium is Jesus Christ! King Jesus is also GOD! Fully God, fully “THE” God, fully part of the One True God and worthy of worship.

HERE’S THE POINT: We “go to church” services and to the Feast of Tabernacles primarily for one thing that is like an umbrella over all the other SUB-reasons: **TO WORSHIP King Jesus!** Is this uppermost in your mind as you go to Feasts each year, or to Sabbath services? Do you consciously think: “I’m going ‘to church’ to WORSHIP my God today!” I think many of us think of “going to church” as an exercise in learning more, or hearing a sermon – but do we think in terms of bowing down in worship to our God?

GOD SEEKS OUR WORSHIP

When Jesus was teaching the Samaritan woman at the well, here was part of the dialog – **John 4:19-24**, as they got on the topic of worshiping God:

“The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers **worshiped** on this mountain, and you Jews say that *in Jerusalem is the place* where one ought to **worship**.” 21 ***Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.*** 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 **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.** 24 **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him MUST worship in spirit and truth.**”

You’ll see that worship is much more than praying, much more than going to church services, much more than hearing a sermon. Much more. Worshiping in spirit includes the fact we intimately have come to meet and know God and the worship is causing massive changes in our lives to a life of holiness. Worship is a bowed down heart, with a reverent mindset, prepared to pray to, sing, adore and praise our Great God – even as we learn more about Him.

Now let Jesus’ words sink in!

- ***New Covenant worship is not limited to a place, event, or time*** – though we of course also do some worshiping in certain locations and times, like the holydays and the Feast.

Remember the Old Covenant worshipers went to Jerusalem *to worship*. Worship was conducted in the temple or tabernacle. Even today, too many still think “worship” should be in a church building, or while kneeling at a pew inside a church building. Jesus said that’s no longer so!

As far as “worshiping in truth” goes – turn to John 8:31-32. Truth has to do with what God’s word actually says – and then obeying what we learn. Right doctrine is important, as long as we don’t use it as a tool to be divisive.

John 8:31-32 “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you **abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and ***the truth shall make you free.***”

One of the definitions of a true disciple: they abide, obey, and keep God's truths. I have a sermon you may wish to hear off the website titled "5 Signs of True Disciples".

More truth and understanding often is given to us by God as we abide in the word that we already see. When we refuse to obey what we see, the light of God's word gets dimmer – and we see less. "The light of the wicked goes out" – Job 18:5.

But back to the original question: why do we go to church or to the feast? (Of course you also know you and I *are* the church, the *ekklesia* of called-out ones).

The prophet Samuel's parents also went to Jerusalem every year "to worship" (1 Samuel 1:3).

Acts 8:26-28 "Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, **and had come to Jerusalem to worship**, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

Just before the Spring feasts:

John 12:20 "Now there were certain Greeks among those who **came up to worship at the feast.**"

Even after Christ's resurrection, note what Paul said:

Acts 24:10-14

"Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, 11 because you may ascertain that it is *no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship*. 12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess to you, that **according to the Way which they call a sect, so I WORSHIP the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.**"

When you are at the Feast, is "worshipping God" a conscious thought all 7 days and the 8th day as well? That is the theme of this message.

WHAT is "WORSHIP"?

Many church-goers think of "worship" as being the time of hymn singing. But worship is so much more. **The word "worship" is found often in the Bible – but nowhere clearly defined, except by its usage** of the word.

When we study every time the word "worship" is used in the Bible, we find the vast majority of those references refer to a time that includes profound **bowing**, even prostrating oneself on the ground at time, combined with an intensely humble prayer, which is then often followed by praise, song, and other activities – even adoration.

Now note this: "worship" in ancient Israel eventually turned into rote ritual acts of going to church, of praying, of offering a sacrifice, then going home and back to the same old life without change. **Frankly, not a lot different than modern "worship"** – we go to church, we sing, we pray,

we listen to a sermon – and we think we have worshiped God. Have we? ***You will soon see that God denounces that as often being meaningless worship to Him.*** Keep that in mind as we continue. *My point is this: merely going to church, merely praying, is NOT the worship God seeks from us. I want you to really get that! Mere church attendance and prayer is not worship.*

In the Old Testament, the basic word translated “worship” is used 172 times! It’s basic meaning is to “bow down”, with deep awe, reverence and respect. **In HEBREW** – in the Old Testament, the Hebrew is ***shachah*** (shaw-khaw’); a primitive root; to depress, i.e. *prostrate* ones self. (To lay flat on the ground!) It is translated in the KJV as “bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do reverence, make to stoop, worship.”

The word in Hebrew for worship, sometimes translated “bowed”, is also at times used for times of deep respect for even just mere humans – but in *those* cases *not* in the sense of worshiping them.

In the **Greek New Testament**, the key word for worship is “***proskuneo***”. It is used mostly in the gospels (26 times) in terms of worshipping Jesus mostly, and it’s used frequently in Revelation, again in terms of worshipping God and Jesus (21 times) and its used for false worship also of Satan and his representatives.

So the original meaning of “worship” was about bowing the head while praying, praising and adoring God. But with that in mind, **I want to show you that there are also many verses that show bowing one’s head right to the pavement, the floor, the carpet!** That is so unwestern, and that is why I want to recommend we start doing it in the privacy of our homes at least. It helps put one into a very humble attitude. I suggest you do your own study on the word “worship” after this message. Certainly they did *not* bow down to the ground every time. Sometimes they just bowed their head.

TRUE WORSHIP AS WE HAVE OUR MEETING WITH GOD

You’ll find that deep and proper worship often followed a profound meeting with God.

The first time the Hebrew word *shachah*, for “worship” is used in the Bible, it’s actually translated as “bowed”, and is found in Genesis 18. It is when Abraham meets God standing at Abraham’s tent door. ***I want you grasp deeply that worship happens when we truly meet God. I don’t believe we will worship fully until we’ve had our own dramatic meeting with God.***

Genesis 18:1-2 “Then the LORD ***appeared*** to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and **bowed himself to the ground.**”

We miss the word “worship” here in the English. It’s the word translated “bowed”. That’s ***shachah*** – usually translated “worshipped”. **Abraham meets God in Genesis 18.** He is so taken by the presence of Holy God that he immediately prostrates himself and worships. ***If you want to deeply worship, it is most likely to happen when you have your very own personal one-on-one meeting with God. God does that in various ways, circumstances and times. You may not literally see God, but you will know God is dealing with you – and you will worship! Sometimes God has to hit us with a 2x4 before we realize He is dealing with us. I know.***

When mere man meets holy God, the response in *godly* people is often one of intense worship, with face not just bowed toward the ground, but even on the ground!

In Genesis 24, when Abraham had sent his servant to find a bride for Isaac, we read how this servant reacted when he realized how much God had blessed his trip and led him to Rebecca:

Genesis 24:52 “*And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, **that he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.***”

Another example, at the dedication of the temple **Solomon** had built for God and was dedicating at the Feast of Tabernacles that year: Turn to 2 Chron 7. Solomon has just prayed a beautiful prayer of dedication, with his arms lifted up to heaven, (2 Chron 6:12) – and now continue:

2 Chron 7:1-3 “When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory **of the LORD filled the temple.** 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. 3 *When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, **they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshipped and praised the LORD, saying:*** For He is good, For His mercy endures forever.”

The Israelites met God on this day – and worshiped with their faces to the ground.

Brethren, here's a suggestion: if you haven't prayed in a while with your face right on the carpet, try it at least a few times a week to our Great God!

If you want to know HOW to worship, ask God to lead you to an encounter with Him, but in His mercy – and to lead you to a deep repentance and change in your life. Worship will follow! God promises those who seek Him with their whole heart will surely find Him (**Deut 4:29**) Seekers tend to also be worshipers. Certainly King David (**Ps 119:2, 10, 58**) sought God with his whole heart.

The disciples worshipped in this reverent way even after the Jesus' resurrection – in New Covenant times in other words.

Matt 28:8-9 after Jesus' resurrection:

“And they [the women disciples] departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. 9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘All hail’. *And they came **and held him by the feet, and worshipped him***”

Even awesome *spirit* beings around the throne of God worship with faces to the ground:

Revelation 7:11 “All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and **fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,**” (also **Rev. 19:4**)

We can't and won't properly and fully worship with bowed down hearts until we have met God. Personally. One on one. Intimately.

When we do, we will feel like taking off our shoes, bowing down to the ground and living a completely changed life that pleases Him. But of course we have to stay the course!

****One thing I see over and over in the Bible: those who seemed to most perfectly worship God were often men and women who had nothing to offer. They had been mean, cruel, felons, whores –rejects of the world – when God confronts them, and then we see God's glory in their lives.** They had nothing to offer God, so whatever they accomplished after their meeting with God was by HIS glory, was by HIS power. The world had rejected them. The average person out there wanted nothing to do with them. But God's glory is shown after their worst humiliation.

MOSES was such a man. He had been a great general for Egypt – conquering much of Northeastern Africa for Egypt. He was exceptionally handsome, a physically large and strong man with lots of talents and gifts. According to **Acts 7:20-35**, Moses must have had an inkling that he was going to be a deliverer. So at age 40 he goes down and probably thought this was going to be the time that Israel would rally around him (**Acts 7:25**) – but he was doing it all on his strengths and talents and in his vanity.

God could not use Moses like that. But God wasn't done with Moses yet. Moses kills an Egyptian and ends up having to flee for his life as a murderer, a felon. For 40 years he can only hide out in Midian, doing the despised work of a shepherd – humiliated, defeated, despised, a nobody, someone the "somebody's" didn't want around.

You know the story: Moses meets God in the burning bush. God tells him to show a little respect and take his sandals off. Moses bows and hides his face. **God finally could use Moses** – and this experience completely changed him. (**Exodus 3**). In our humiliation and in our rejection, GOD can finally be seen – when we take ourselves out of the picture!

Here's how Stephen described Moses' calling after his meeting with God:

Acts 7:35 "This Moses whom *they rejected*, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' *is the one God sent* to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush."

Are you rejected by man? I know the feeling. But don't give up on God just because mankind has given up on you perhaps. God's not done with you yet, if you and I will worship – fully, with bowed hearts and let HIS glory be your focus.

Isaiah was another who had his meeting with God – and felt he was a man of unclean lips. And he must have worshiped! (**Isaiah 6:1-5**). What did God do? He cleaned up Isaiah's dirty mouth and used him to write one of the most inspiring books of the prophets in the whole Bible.

Another man who had his meeting with God was a man who was physically very impressive – did all the right things. Nobody could find any fault in him – but I still think you can't read his own words about himself without getting the distinct feeling that **JOB** felt he was the epitome of what a perfect man was. Read **Job chapters 29-31** some time to see what I mean. He obviously thought he was a "somebody". The old men rose when he entered. The young men hid themselves. Those mocking him now were men he wouldn't have let be with his sheepdogs, he says. There's some vanity here. Job 31 especially- what a perfect man he felt he was! Count the number of times he says "I" in Job 31 alone! It's amazing. **Job knew all about God – but didn't know God Himself! He was like some of us - who know the Lord's book, but not the Lord Himself – not the Author!**

God could not use Job like this! Though he was outwardly perfect, he was full of himself! If he wasn't, why did Job say – after meeting God – “I abhor myself”? Why would Job say “I repent in dust and ashes” if he had nothing to repent of – as I’ve heard over and over in sermons?

It was only after really meeting God in the tornado, in the whirlwind – and God whittled Job down to size – that Job could finally say he could finally see God, understand God. We can't “SEE” God when we are full of ourselves, or full of self-pity, or full of sin!

Job 40:1-4 “Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:

2 “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it.” [God really smacked Job with that statement!]

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 “Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth.”

At this point, Job is coming to see himself correctly as he was seeing God. He is starting to repent not of what he had done, but of what he was: a human being who falls way short of the glory of God!

TRUE WORSHIP happens when we experience the gulf of difference between the perfectly holy God we serve and the human sinful selves that we are. However, IN the worship, God covers us with His righteousness and we become one with Him and therefore can stand before Him.

Job 42:5-6 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, *But now my eye sees You.*

6 *Therefore I abhor myself*, And repent in dust and ashes.”

It's at this point that Job finally is truly worshiping God.

When we see God, meet God, we will abhor ourselves – and now God can come into our lives, shining His glory, and He finally may be able to use us. We're out of God's way. I don't believe this happens deeply until we “see” God, and until we see ourselves. Think about that.

Paul said it so well – “in my weakness, am made strong!” Even Paul – who outwardly did all the things of worship says this. He was, after all, a zealous Pharisee. He did all the things a worshiper would do. But *only when Paul personally meets Jesus* on the road to Damascus, and Jesus knocks him off his high horse – could Paul finally truly worship God *and be a useful vessel in His hands*.

Let me say this again: you can do the outward acts of worship – and not be worshiping at all.

Let's read it in Acts 9, where he is still called “Saul”.

Acts 9:1-6 “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

5 **And he said, “Who are You, Lord?”** [this is the question we need to be asking too!]

Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (how awesome!)

Have YOU met Jesus yet? Have you had your one-on-one meeting with your Creator yet? So often it's only after one has hit rock bottom – like Moses, like Samson, like the woman caught in the act of adultery, like Paul... like so many.

*Brethren, we're not at church, we're not at the Feast, just to rejoice, just to have a good time, just to hear nice sermons, just to meet with brethren, just to see nice places, just to have nice meals. We're not even at the Feast just "to go to church". **We're here today, and at the Feast, and every day – to meet GOD, to then fall on our faces before Him and WORSHIP!***

The fisherman-disciple Peter, who had known and been with Jesus, did not "MEET" Jesus until a great miracle in Luke 5, when a Carpenter told a professional career fisherman "how to fish" better. When Jesus proved He was the Son of God by this incredible miracle of the fishing nets suddenly being full of fish, notice Peter's response:

Luke 5:8 "When Simon Peter saw it, he ***fell down at Jesus' knees [i.e. he worshiped]***, saying, ***"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"***

We can also worship IGNORANTLY, as the Athenians did – Acts 17:22-24 – as they worshiped the "Unknown God". Paul told them, "therefore the One you worship without knowing, HIM I proclaim to you." Paul is saying, even to us today – come to know God, see God, meet the true God – and then you can worship in truth. Don't worship a God unknown to you!

Now remember—we go to the feast and to church services to worship God. There is case after case in the Bible where worship and bowing reverently – even all the way to the ground at times - are used. ***I'm NOT saying we must always pray with our faces on the floor. Too many verses also show God can be worshipped with just a bowed head.*** But praying with your head on the carpet once in a while might be good for us westerners too.

Worship is worthless unless it changes us. Paul changed. Job changed. Moses changed. And they all did what God told them to do.

Matt 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, ***'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'***"

We can't be worshipers one day at week at church services – and be practicing lawlessness the other days. If we do, God will say He doesn't know us. I preach to myself. I've had to repent of that too. I was one who preached about God, and taught people – but was living in sins years ago which I couldn't seem to shake off. I hope and pray God has forgiven me now and has put those sins behind me. It's in our humiliation that sometimes we finally see God and He is able to finally use us in whatever way He wants – in spite of nay-sayers.

This is God's message from beginning to end: true Godly worship involves a changed life!

Isaiah 1:10-20

10 Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; **Give ear to the law of our God**, You people of Gomorrah: 11 "**To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices** to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. ["Your religious sacrifices don't impress Me"]

12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? 13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. **The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies --I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.** 14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. [WHY?] Your hands are full of blood.

16 "**Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.**

18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. 19 **If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;** 20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken".

We can worship in vain, for naught – if we're not changing, if we're not seeing God, if we're not putting our hearts into our praying, singing, fellowshiping, adoring – in our worship.

Matthew 15:7-9 "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:
8 "These people **draw near to Me with their mouth**, [they say all the 'right' things]
And honor Me with their lips, **But their HEART is far from Me.**
9 **And in vain they worship Me**, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

God wants our hearts! All our heart! Worship without our whole heart in it is meaningless to our holy God! Brethren, we're asleep! Let's wake up and give our holy God some meaningful worship that is with our whole hearts.

"Worshipping in vain" is worship that is rote, or just ritual. Our hearts aren't in it. You want to know **HOW to worship? Put your heart into** your praying, into your singing. We go to church as a ritual – or do we go to worship, consciously? When we pray in church, is it in deep worship, and are we consenting in our hearts with what is being said in prayer – or is it ritual? **According to our Lord and Master, what we are experiencing deep down in our hearts is the defining essence of godly worship, of true worship. ASK yourself: HAS your HEART been in your worship lately?**

TRUE worship is not just a bowed down head – but a bowed down HEART. One that acknowledges we are in the presence of perfect, holy God. And our hearts are in the worship! I recommend you try praying once in a while with your head right on the carpet, and you'll see how that affects your heart too.

In times of deep repentance, or even at times when I've felt abandoned by mankind, I've at times felt like my heart was shattered into a million tiny pieces – and in prayer I said, "Eternal Holy God,

you ask for my heart, my *whole* heart. Well, it's in a million tiny shards. I scoop them up and offer them all to you – if you can do anything with such a broken heart.” And God is there!

The other thing God says is that we worship Him in vain **when we make man-made traditions more important than God's word** – or what God's word plainly says! (**Matt 15:9**)

For example, why do we start church services with *hymns*? Why not start with humble bowed-down prayer *first*, and ask God to bless the entire worship service, including the hymns?

Another “for example”: Why do preachers do 95% of the speaking? Is that what you read in the description of services in 1 Cor. 14? Or is there not supposed to be a lot of give and take during the services? Even during Jesus' final supper with the disciples, there was a lot of give and take!

Why do ministers have to have **an exalted title** – like “Reverend”, or “holy father”, or “Rabbi” or even “Mr”- if that is a requirement in that church? Paul was simply Paul. Peter was simply Peter. We are all brothers and sisters! I would never call my physical brother “Mr. Shields”, let alone “holy father” or “reverend”. “Holy and reverend is *His* name”! (KJV **Ps. 111:9**). We are to call no man on earth, for religious reasons, father, rabbi, etc. (**Matthew 23:8-12** – please read it).

Worshiping thus becomes a relationship with our holy God, characterized by a bowed-down HEART in total surrender.

Be turning now to Psalm 5 please.

Coming before God – whether beside your bed in prayer, or whether singing hymns in church services – should always be with a reverent and very respectful attitude. Frankly at times we've let that slip. I have at times too, and have had to repent of it. Our western attitudes have made us sloppy about having a BOWED-DOWN heart.

Psalm 5:7 “But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your **mercy**; [A sense of knowing you want *mercy* – not justice! Knowing we don't deserve to be in His holy presence, or even among God's holy people] **In fear [in reverent awe] of You I will worship** toward Your holy temple.” **Verse 11** adds, “let them **shout for joy**”. When did you last shout for joy in worship?

Psalm 96:8-9 “Give to the LORD *the glory* due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts. 9 Oh, **worship** the LORD **in the beauty of holiness!** Tremble before Him, all the earth.”

If we understood this worship concept, how different would our Sabbath services be? How much more gusto would we have in our song service? How would we talk with one another? How would we be during the sermon? How would we *dress* before the King, for that matter?

THE ONE “ATTRACTION” at the Feast WE MUST NOT MISS

You know how at the Feast sites around the world, we often try to take in various “must see” attractions – for the kids or for ourselves. It could be a natural scenic wonder, or a place we know the kids would enjoy themselves, or a museum, a gondola ride to the top of a mountain, or some attraction the area is famous for.

Worshipping God should be so much on our minds that we **START** each day at the Feast visiting the one “attraction” we simply must not miss any single day: you know what that one destination attraction is? It’s coming before the throne of God, with our faces on the floor or the bed, as we kneel in conscious *worship* of our Great God. And we use this as a springboard to do this every single day for the rest of our lives. One of our purposes in life is to learn to WORSHIP GOD.

Worship is so much on our minds at the feast and every day that we should lead our families in prayer worship. When we get together with brethren, the worship of God and understanding of His word, fill our conversations. Worship is so much on our minds that God – and thoughts of God – permeate many of our conversations, and affects our behavior. Sure, we’ve all failed miserably in the past – as I have – but what counts is what we’re doing now. It’s how we end up that counts, with God.

When we’re taking our shower and getting ready, we’re thinking about going to WORSHIP the king. When we get the family ready, are in services, when we eat and breathe, when we sing hymns, when we take notes, when we preach, when we listen, when we take our children outside, when we load up the car, when we go to dinner at the Feast – ***whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we are doing all to His glory as we worship Him.*** (1 Cor. 10:31).

GOD’S TEMPLE IS BEING MEASURED

God – right now – is taking our measure, is measuring His church, which is the temple of God – as well as the altar, the ministers in other words – as well as *all* who are worshipping! Our time of judgment (**1 Peter 4:17**) is right *now*. God is *looking* for worshippers among His people! We are the temple of God (**1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:20-22**).

Revelation 11:1 “And there was given me a reed like unto a [measuring] rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” [“at” CHURCH]. Compare Rev. 11:1 with **Ezek. 40:3-5; 42:15-20** on your own time.

Brethren, WE are God’s holy temple today. We don’t need to go to temple. We’re it! **We are also the priesthood of believers today**, offering up spiritual sacrifices of worship. What are those spiritual sacrifices God is pleased with? **We are also the sacrifices!** Are you seeing why Jesus said the time *now is*, when true worshipers won’t need to go to Jerusalem to worship, for God wants us worshipping in the spirit, and in the truth!

I’ll list in my transcript the scriptures which say we are God’s temple, house of god, a holy nation of priests and our very lives are holy sacrifices.

We are the New Covenant temple – 1 Cor. 3:16-17

We are the “house of God”, the “House of Prayer” for ALL nations – **Mark 11:17** (watch for a coming sermon on “Are you a house of prayer?”

1 Timothy 3:15 “you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in ***the house of God, which is the church of the living God***, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (also 1 Peter 4:17). Jesus is the HIGH Priest over this house of God (Heb. 10:21).

WE are all a holy nation of priests in the New Covenant, not just the ministers --

1 Peter 2:5 “**YOU also**, as living stones, are **being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”.

WE are now also the holy sacrifices. We present ourselves as living sacrifices (**Rom. 12:1-2**). Paul calls the church brethren “an acceptable offering” to God (Rom. 15:16). Paul called **his own LIFE** – about to be sacrificed as a martyr for God – as an offering about to be poured out to God, like a drink offering (**Philippians 2:17**). Amazing – but an example for us all.

So when we're the priest, the sacrifice, and the temple –do you see why Jesus said what He said!?

Jesus changed the focus away from the group doing outward acts of animal sacrifices in a temple to our personal act of obedience, prayer and good deeds – from a whole heart devoted to bringing our heavenly Father and Savior glory.

We no longer have an earthly city that is more special than any other. Paul was inspired to say it better than I am. That is why we don't any longer have to go to Jerusalem for the Feast.

Hebrews 13:13-16

*“Therefore let us go forth to Him, **outside** the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For **here** we have **no continuing city**, but we **seek the one to come**. 15 Therefore by Him let us **continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of our lips, **giving thanks to His name**. 16 But do not forget to **do good and to share**, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”*

*Got it? NEW COVENANT WORSHIP is **PERSONAL**. From our HEART. Our sacrifices are giving thanks and praise to God **IN every circumstance**, at ALL times, knowing we are HIS. Paul was inspired to say we should “**Always be giving thanks for all things** in the name of Jesus” (**Colossians 3:16**). No reference to time, place or service. It is a sacrifice sometimes to give up how we're humanly feeling in so-called “bad times” and thank God anyway! From the heart!*

*Other sacrifices include doing good, sharing – even at times when we have very little to share. Paul told the Philippians their money they had sent was “a fragrant aroma and acceptable sacrifice to God” – **Philippians 4:18**.*

Notice God is well pleased with that kind of worship. (Be looking also for a message on our website soon entitled “Is God well pleased with you?”) Do you think God is well pleased only with Jesus, His beloved Son?

ONLY THE ONE TRUE GOD CAN BE RIGHTLY WORSHIPPED

One thing is clear: only the One True GOD can be rightly worshiped. Remember Jesus told Satan, “**Worship GOD**, and **Him only** shall you serve” (**Matt. 4:10-11**). When John was so awed by everything that he tried to worship an angel, the angel said, “No, don't. I'm just a fellow servant ... **worship GOD.**” (**Rev. 22:9**).

Satan and his false prophet and beast power, and idols and pagan gods are also “worshiped”– but that is false worship.

The very first commandment says “I am the LORD your God. *You shall have NO other gods before Me.*” (**Exodus 20:1-3**). No other gods, plural, ever.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says the Lord our God is ONE. The Hebrew *there is “echad”* – but that word “one” – in spite of what Jews want to believe, is often used in the Bible to describe a oneness that is perfect. Adam and Eve said he and his wife knew their goal was to *become ONE* (echad) – **Genesis 2:24**.

The term “One true God”, or even “GOD” when referring to the true God, applies to more than God the Father. It also applies to Jesus Christ, who is the Word, and is “echad”, or ONE, with God the Father and always has been (**John 1:1-3; John 17:21**).

And that is why Jesus was also worshipped! *It would have been a SIN for Jesus to let himself be worshiped if He was anything other than part of the One True God.* And Jesus WAS worshiped, over and over and over, as a flesh-and-blood man, because He was also God in the flesh. If you need convincing that Jesus while a human being was worshipped – and therefore had to be God even as a human – see **Matt. 2:10-11; 8:2; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; John 9:35-39**. Even the angels were commanded to worship Him at His birth – **Hebrews 1:6**.

If Jesus was not fully part of the One True God, then He would have to be a separate god, and we’d have “gods” instead of ONE God. Get this, brethren: **JESUS IS NOT “A” GOD. HE IS GOD.** *Jesus is never described as “A” God, but GOD.* Fully, completely, without reservation, He is part of “THE God” of the Bible – even though His Father is a higher authority.

WHEN DO WE WORSHIP?

When done properly, if we truly understand worship, this attitude of a **bowed-down heart** and head permeates **everything we do**, all the time. We want to do what Jesus would do in every situation. In fact, we begin to realize that we understand what Paul said – “*whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God*” (**I Corinthians 10:31**).

When we are true worshippers, we are aware that every single thing we say and do is either a positive or negative reflection on God. I’m sharing this because I think many of us need to wake up and *admit* we fall short here – including me very much so - - and we must become true worshippers.

In plain English: We normally think of “worship” as when we’re praying, often bowed down, but worship **is also anything we do that is focused on bringing glory to God!!** Anything!

When you’re an encouraging person, especially if God is in the picture in our conversation, that is a form of worship. ***Worship is not limited to praying, not limited to singing or praising. It’s MUCH, much more – since God is in us, and since we’re now HIS TEMPLE – think of this: a temple was always a temple, all the time. WE should always be a worship temple, all the time. Our lives are acts of worship all the time, with everything we do.***

Paul says, everything we do is to bring God glory as we worship him when we eat, when we drink, when we do anything! Everything I do and say is either bringing God glory – or shame.

Even **our weddings** – should be worship services to the One who made marriage. Someone said they felt my daughter Heather’s wedding “was non-stop worship from beginning to end”. That pleased me immensely. I felt the same way also about my other daughter’s wedding.

Are we getting the point? The feast, and in fact our whole life, is not just a time of secular fun – it's a time of devout worship, God-centered awareness, over and over and over and over! The concept of worshipping God fills our minds, is center stage in our lives, ***and by the time we come home from the feast we know we didn't just have a few good sermons, a few good meals – we WORSHIPPED! And we worshipped A LOT, non-stop!!*** Even as we did some sightseeing and fun things for the family – GOD was center stage, and our children heard His name many times a day....

At the feast, we should be able to say we never stopped worshipping. We worshiped a LOT! Or did we?

AWARE We're in GOD'S PRESENCE

True worship of God happens when people become aware they are in God's awesome presence. Elisha was such a man. Remember the story of asking God to open his nervous servant's eyes – to see that they were protected by thousands of warrior angels in fiery chariots? Do you and I live with that awareness? That angels hover over and around you this very minute? Do you children realize that?

Kids, listen: right now, there are angels who are assigned to guard you, protect you, and watch over you – and report to God about you! (**Matthew 18:10**) YOU children have your own angel! Become aware of that. realize that. That angel is probably hovering over you this very second, smiling, as we acknowledge their help and their presence – and let's thank them, and thank God *for* them.

******God wants us to grow in awareness – that with God's HOLY spirit in us – we are not just standing on holy ground – but since we are made from the dirt of the earth, you and I ARE holy ground! Are we growing in the awareness that everything we ARE – and therefore everything that follows from our being – everything we DO – must be holy and an act that reflects on GOD and His Way and on His family!***

How would we worship at church services, or at the FEAST, if we could literally SEE our King on stage? If He was standing in front of us during **hymn singing** – how would you sing? With gusto? Or daydreaming, not even realizing what the words are? How **would you dress?** How would you **pray?** How carefully would you listen to the sermons? As from God – or from someone you consider boring? I've had to ask myself too!

When we pray – are **our whole hearts** in the praying? Paul even says **“lifting up holy hands in prayer”**? In some churches, you'd be accused of being “charismatic” if you did that. Solomon did. Paul apparently did. I think it's a wonderful way to pray sometimes. Read the examples in ***Nehemiah 8:6, Psalm 141:1-2, Psalm 134:2 and 1 Timothy 2:8.***

Nehemiah 8:6 “And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. ***Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands.*** And they **bowed** their heads and **worshiped** the LORD with their faces to the ground.”

Psalm 141:1-2 "LORD, I cry out to You; Make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. *2 Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*"

PRAY with affectionate reverence. SING with your whole heart. You should read the passages about how some of our forefathers sang: their praises could be heard a Long ways off - read **Ezra 3:10-13** and **Neh 12:43**. *These early worshippers shouted for joy as they worshiped God as the new temple foundation was being laid. **I Sam 4:5** says when the ark came back, they shouted so loudly the earth SHOOK! Now THAT'S a hosanna! **1 Kings 1:40** says at Solomon's coronation the earth seemed to SPLIT from the noise of the jubilation!*

***We can whoop it up at a football game – but let's be told we are heirs of God, and we shrug it off and get bored!!! What's wrong with that picture!? Our forefathers weren't ashamed to shout out "PRAISE the Eternal" out loud. But boy, we do that today, and you'll get accused of being Pentecostal or something! Nothing is right or wrong unless God's word says so. **And God's word gives us many examples of animated worship! Let's wake up and worship the king! In song, in prayer, in praises, with arms lifted up if we're led to do so! Ps. 100:1 says to make a joyful shout, a joyful noise, unto the LORD! Do we? WHY don't we?**

The "multitude of disciples rejoiced and praised God with loud voice" at Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:37).

I feel our western worship is much too corporate, too formal, too stilted. God enjoys being worshiped in song, in praise, in prayer, with musical instruments, even in celebration with great joy! Brethren, do your own study on how God's people worshipped – and on what God enjoys as we worship Him – and then don't be shy to do it! God is measuring us, His temple now, to see if we are true worshippers or not.

So, next feast – and every day until the next Feast -- think about being here to *worship*. And we shall not be worshipping in vain.

Don't forget, "the hour is coming, and NOW IS, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship him."

Let us do as David teaches, and as we sing in church, "Oh come, and let us WORSHIP Him".

Let's worship with gusto, with holy reverence, and with our hearts passionately in it -- as we seek to praise, worship and bring Him all the glory and adoration possible!

As we do, we remember – worship results in a holy change. It causes our hearts to bow.

Worship is what we are and feel inside toward our Great God as we sing, pray, praise, adore, listen to sermons, participate in activities – all to the glory of God.

Now let me ask again: why do you "go to church", go "to the Feast", etc.? TO WORSHIP! Now – go worship! Be worship! And go meet your God.

Until next time, this is your brother and fellow servant Philip saying good bye.
