

Becoming True Worshipers

by Brian Long

True worshipers know and love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and worship him with reverence and awe.

Duration: 35:54

Scripture: Psalm 50:15-22, Isaiah 6:1-8

Topics: "Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes the vision of the prophet Isaiah, where he saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. The preacher emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the reverence and awe that should accompany our relationship with Him. Isaiah's encounter with God led him to recognize his own sinfulness and inadequacy. However, God cleansed Isaiah's lips and called him to go and proclaim His message to the people. The preacher encourages the audience to seek a fresh encounter with God, knowing that it will lead to praise, worship, and wholehearted service.

Transcript

We're going to turn to the gospel of John, chapter four, and I want to speak to you about becoming true worshippers and that true worshippers know the one they worship. And this goes right along the lines of what Alan shared with us. We.

Many of us can say we know Jesus, but really. In comparison to who he is and all there is to know of him, we know so little, but he wants us to know him more and those who are true worshippers. This is what the father is seeking.

Our little brother Alec read the scripture earlier. The father is seeking for those who will worship him in spirit and in truth. He is seeking for such worshippers even today.

God looks upon us and he's seeking for individuals who will worship him in spirit and in truth. Now, let's just read these verses again, if we may. This woman who is a Samaritan woman, verse 19, many of you already know the story.

This is a woman who had been married five times and the man she's living with now is not her husband and Jesus on purpose, knowing that this woman would be at the well at this hour of the day in the middle of the day when no other no one else came to get water. She came at that time because she was a

woman of shame. She had been married five times and was now living with the man.

But Jesus loved this woman and he was coming to meet her at the well to offer her living water. Now, I'm not going to preach about that this morning. I want to preach about specifically something that Jesus said to her.

Verse 19, the woman said unto him, Sir, I perceive that our prophet, our fathers worshipped in this mountain. And you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her woman, believe me, the hour cometh when you shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the father.

The woman was taken up with the place of worship. Our fathers, she's saying Jesus are or she didn't know who he was, but she's saying to him, our fathers worshiped on this mountain. We worship on this mountain.

But you Jews say that Jerusalem's the place to worship. She's taken up with the place of worship. Should we meet in a building? Should we meet in a barn? Should we meet in Jerusalem? Should we meet up on this mountain? And Jesus is saying, in essence, you have it all wrong.

It's not about the place. It's about the person that we worship. It's not about whether you're meeting in Jerusalem or meeting on a mountain.

Jesus is saying here the hour is coming when you will neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem worship the father. But he says in verse 22, you worship, you know, not what we know, what we worship for salvation is of the Jews, but the hour cometh and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth, for the father seeketh such to worship him. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Here's my first point. True worshipers are not taken up with the place of worship, but rather with the person we worship, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, namely God, the places of little to no importance compared to the person of God whom we worship. When God seeks for true worshippers, as he's doing even this very moment, he's not seeking as to whether they are worshipping him in the Baptist Church or the Methodist Church or the Pentecostal Church.

God has his true worshipers in all of those places, but he's not taken up with. Oh, good. They're worshipping there are good.

They're worshipping there are good. They're worshipping over here. It's not about the place.

I say again, what is he seeking for? He's not seeking for that. He's not he's not marveled by some gathering in a building and some gathering in a barn. It's not about the place.

What is he looking for? He's looking into the hearts of his people and he's looking for those who are not taken up with the place, but are taken up with him, those who are worshipping him in spirit and in truth. That's what he's looking for. Those who are taken up with Christ.

Now, God is the object of true worship, not the place of our gathering. True worshipers worship only the one true and living God wherever and whenever they gather, they know the one that we worship. Notice what Jesus says to this Samaritan woman in verse twenty two.

This is this this first part of verse twenty two arrested my heart last night. I've read this many times, but it was as if last night the spirit of God just got a hold of my heart with with these words of Jesus. When he looked at this Samaritan woman and he said, you worship, you know, not what.

You worship, you know, not what, in other words, you don't know. Who you're worshiping, you don't know what you're worshiping, you worship, you know, not what. Now I bring that home and I make it personal, Lord, do I really know the one that I'm coming to worship? Do we know the one we're coming to worship? We all can say, well, I know Jesus, but many of us, it's just I know about Jesus.

I know what somebody else has told me about Jesus. Do you know him, though? Do you know the one that you're coming to worship? This woman was a Samaritan and the Samaritans worshiped God. I put that in quotes.

They quote, worship God. But in great ignorance, because while they claim to worship the most high God, they were also at the very same time worshiping idols and all kinds of other false gods. If you want to write in your notes or in your margin, Second Kings, chapter 17, 17th chapter of Second Kings tells us how the Samaritans worshiped Jehovah only as the god of the land.

You see, to them, it was all about the place. If we are in Jehovah's land, then we must worship Jehovah. If we go to a heathen land, then we'll worship those heathen gods.

They were taken up again with the place, not with the person. Second Kings 17:33 says that the Samaritans feared the Lord and served their own gods. Now, they didn't really fear the Lord, did they? They feared the Lord in this sense, they would say something like this.

We believe that Jehovah is the most high God. Yes, let's fear him. But we have all these other little idols and false gods to help us out in the little things, too.

There's a mixture. Let's worship both. And God says what in the first commandment, the first commandment? God said here, oh, Israel, the Lord, our God, is one.

And you shall love the Lord, your God. Remember, we talked about love last week over and over again. You shall love the Lord, your God, with what? All your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.

It's our heart that God is after. It's it's a love relationship that God is after. And he doesn't want a divided heart.

He's seeking for those who will worship him in truth, which means there's no pretense here worshiping him with all of their heart. But these Samaritans, there was a mixture going on. They worshipped Jehovah, they said, but they also worshipped false gods.

They didn't know what they worshipped. And that's why Jesus could look at this woman and say, you know, not what you worship. You're worshiping in ignorance and listen, brothers and sisters.

To to worship God ignorantly will eventually end up in idolatry. To worship God in ignorance is ultimately to end up in idolatry. A.W. Tozer said the essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of him.

The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of him. We need to know the God that we worship and God wants us to know who he is. And here's the thing.

The more you know God, the more you will worship him. To know God is to worship him, to have an encounter with the living God. You can do no other.

You can do no other than but to stand in awe and adoration and reverence. Once you meet the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal way, you can do nothing else but worship him because he is worthy of worship. He is great.

The question really comes down to this, who is God? Who is the God you worship? Is he the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Is he the God of Elijah and the God of the Apostle Paul and God of of that early church? Is he the most high God of heaven and earth, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is he the God of the Bible? Or is he something else that we've just created in our mind? Here's the burden of my heart. God wants us to know him and to know him is to worship him. He wants us to know him.

And if you know God, my friends. If you have an encounter with God, you cannot possibly refer to him again as the man upstairs. How irreverent is that to speak about the most holy God who created heaven and earth? Before whom angels fall down at his presence and cry, holy, holy, holy to call him the man upstairs or the big guy in the sky, I don't even like to say that.

To know God is to stand in awe of him, it is to worship him with reverence and awe. Who is God? I want to tell you, many people have this perception of God that he's just about a half inch bigger than themselves and they want a God that they can manage. They want a God that is safe.

They want a God that they can box in. But, you know, and I know if you know the God of the Bible, the most high God, you cannot box him in. You cannot manage him.

He is an awesome, awful and we always use that word awful as something bad. What is awful mean? It means to be full of awe. He is an amazing, awful.

Glorious, majestic, holy God. And so to know him is to worship him, he is not altogether such a one as ourselves, like so many people think he is now turned to Psalm 50. And I want you to see this with your own eyes.

Psalm 50. Who is this God we come to worship? Psalm 50 will begin in verse 15. It's God speaking here.

He says in verse 15, verse 15, and call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me. But unto the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes or that thou shouldst take as my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee? When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentest with him and has been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil and thy tongue frame of deceit.

Thou citizen speakest against thy brother. Thou slanderous thine own mother's son. These things has thou done.

And I kept silence. Now underscore this. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.

You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself, but I will reprove you and set you in order before your eyes. Now, consider this. Ye that forget God, you see what God's saying? You have forgotten me.

You do not know me. God is saying you thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself, but God is saying I'm not. You thought that because while you were committing all these sins and I kept silent, that I was just winking at your sin, that I was just like you.

But he's saying I'm not altogether such a one as yourself. I'm not just like you consider this. You that forget God.

And then he says, lest I tear you into pieces and there be none to deliver. Is that the God you worship? And no. There's many people that would want to take that verse out of the Bible.

He is an awesome God, and we are to fear God. We're to stand in awe of him. Now, once you come to know him through Jesus Christ, you have a personal relationship with him where he becomes your father and there's a love relationship.

But here's my point, brothers and sisters, when we come to worship God, we must do so with reverence and awe. Could it be that God is not who you're perceiving him to be? Could it be that he is greater and far more glorious and grander than you can even comprehend him to be? I tell you, he is. He's way beyond what we can imagine him to be.

He's way beyond what we can even fathom him to be. So again, I ask, who is this God that we come to worship? And I want to submit to you, he's the God of the Bible. He's the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And he is the very God that Isaiah saw in Isaiah chapter six. And that's where we're going to turn today. Isaiah chapter six.

This is our God. This is the one we worship. Isaiah chapter six.

Turn there with me. Hmm. Isaiah chapter six.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and his train filled the temple. Every time I read this, I think I don't even have the ability to read this correctly, to read this right. What what is going on? Can you imagine sometimes we become so familiar with the the words of Scripture? This is the word of God.

This is a genuine account. Isaiah said in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne. It must have been a vision.

I don't know exactly how it happened, but he saw the Lord. Can you imagine if Isaiah the prophet came in here right now and said, listen, folks, in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. Would that put you on the edge of your seat? Tell us, Isaiah, what did you see? What did you see? He said, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings and with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet and with two he did fly. And one cried unto the other and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

And the post of the door moved at the voice of him that cried and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, woe is me, for I am undone because I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts, then flew one of the seraphims unto me,

having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.

And he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this is touch thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged. Also, I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I, send me. And he said, go and tell this people.

Now, who is it that Isaiah saw? Let's look at this first verse. I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne. This speaks of the sovereignty of God.

I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and the train that is the train of his robe filled the whole temple with glory. Does that sound like someone who's about half inch bigger than yourself? Does that sound like some kindly old grandfather in the sky that winks at sin? No. Does that sound like some Santa Claus, jolly old Santa Claus? It's just more than obliged to give you your request.

No, this is the sovereign Lord God omnipotent. He is in control of all he is sitting upon a throne. You will never see God wringing his hands.

You will never see God scratching his head, wondering what he's going to do next. You will never see God at his wits end. You will never see God baffled by anything.

Our God, the most high God, is God of heaven and earth. And he sits upon a throne and he is high and he is lifted up. He is exalted.

How do we worship him? Number one, we must worship him with reverence, I say again, reverence and awe. And this is what's missing. I'm telling you, this is what's missing in so many churches today.

So many who profess the name of Jesus Christ, reverence for our God is missing. It's missing in the lives of many who profess to know Jesus. Jesus, we must not forget.

That our God is God and he is to be feared and he is to be revered and he is to be adored and stood in awe. Let me quote A.W. Tozer again. Tozer said the man who has passed the veil and looked even briefly upon the holy face of Isaiah's God can never be irreverent again.

There will be a reverence in his spirit. And instead of boasting, he will cover his feet modestly. He's referring to those seraphim.

Now, verse two says above it stood the seraphim. Each one had six wings and with two wings they were covering their faces and with two wings they were covering their feet and the other two wings they were flying. Now, what are these seraphim? Seraphim were angelic beings.

The word seraph literally it comes from the root word in Hebrew that means fire or burning ones. These are magnificent creatures, angelic creatures that God had created. They are blazing with the fire and glory of God.

They have six wings. If we were to see a seraphim right now, it would take our breath away, folks. We would be on our faces trembling before what we have just seen.

And yet these magnificent angels. Would not even uncover their faces and would cover their feet in the presence of God, why? Because they know whom they worship. You remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, you know not what you worship.

I think you would have to say to many professing Christians, you know not who you worship. He's the most high God. And even angels cover their faces and even angels cover their feet.

That that's a picture of reverence. I have a friend who pastors in India, godly, godly man, but he said something that we might not understand in our culture, he said in the in the Middle East and the culture of the of the days in which Jesus walked the earth, he said the most irreverent. Uh, he used another word and I can't remember what it was, but in essence, the most irreverent thing you can do is to show someone your feet.

He said, you just don't do that. And so here even these seraphim are covering their feet and flying. They are worshiping God with reverence and with awe.

He's not who many are perceiving him to be. He's seated upon a throne. Now, what else do these seraphim say and what do they do? Said with two wings are covering their faces and two wings are covering their feet and with the other two, they're they're flying.

And one cries to another. The scripture says, holy, holy, holy is the lord of host. Lord of host means the lord of all the angelic armies, the lord almighty.

And they say in the old Hebrew scriptures, it says that six times, three times for each person of the trinity, holy, holy, holy is God, the father, holy, holy, holy is God, the son, holy, holy, holy is the Holy Spirit. And so there's the revelation tells us that they do this day and night without ceasing. Have you ever wondered how is it they never get tired of crying, holy, holy, holy is the lord almighty.

I believe I've said this before, that it's as if every time they cry, holy, holy, holy, God, who is infinite, he's infinite, gives them even another revelation of his holiness and of his glory. And they have to say it again, holy, holy, holy. So for all eternity, God is taking them deeper into his presence and opening their eyes even more.

I believe it will be like that when we get to heaven. We will never, ever arrive and say we've got God. We know all there is to know about him.

But for all eternity, we will worship and adore him and we will get to know him more and more and more and more and more and more. And there will be never any end. This is our God.

Do you know whom you worship or like the Samaritan woman, you know, not what you worship. He is a holy God. That's the second thing we learn here.

He is a holy God. And any encounter with God will be a holy encounter. This is the nature of God, just as ice is cold and water is wet and fire burns.

So God is holy. This is his nature. Everything about God is holy.

What does that mean? To be holy means to be set apart. The scripture says that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. To be holy, to say God is holy means that he is the absence of all evil, any evil.

He is the absence of any imperfection. He is the absence of darkness because he's light. He's the absence of anything impure or unclean, any kind of sin or evil, because God is holy, holy, holy.

He is absolutely perfect. Absolutely holy and pure. Habakkuk said, Thou art of pure eyes than to behold evil.

You cannot even look upon iniquity. The prophet Habakkuk said of God, he is a holy God. And what happened to Isaiah when he here he is seeing all of this? Can you imagine seeing the Lord sitting upon a throne is the train of his robe fills the temple with his glory.

And he hears these seraphim cry, holy, holy, holy, and at the sound of their voice, their voice is so powerful, the door, the post of the door literally shake and begin to tremble. The whole temple must have shaken. And what does Isaiah say? Oh, it is he.

He that literally means I'm finished. He says, woe is me, for I am undone, I am finished, it is over for me because I am a man of unclean lips, he knew exactly where his besetting sin was and it was in his mouth. You know what the holiness of God does, it always illuminates the sinfulness of man.

And in the holy presence of God, I can think, boy, I'm a pretty good old boy until I have an encounter with the holy, holy God. And suddenly I'm not just a sinner in an indefinite sense of the word, I am a man of unclean lips or I am a man with a divided heart or I am a man with unclean hands. I am a man who has gossiped.

I am a man who has slandered my brother. I am a man who has spoken evil of someone else. I am a man who has been unloving.

I'm a man, whatever it may be, adulterer, thief, blasphemer, drunkard, whatever it is. But there's no questioning. Am I a sinner in the holy presence of God? We suddenly know that we are sinners in the holy presence of God and we confess our sin very specifically.

That's what Isaiah did. He had an awesome encounter with the living God. Here's my point, brothers and sisters.

Again, I say it. Do you know whom you come to worship? He is the almighty sovereign God. He is the holy God.

And it's so perfect and pure. He is a holy God. But you know who else he is? He's a merciful and gracious God, because this same Isaiah who cried, woe is me, for I am undone.

I'm a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the king, the lord of host. Suddenly, he said, one of these seraphim came flying to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from off the altar. And with this live coal, he touched my mouth and he said, see, this is touched your lips and your iniquity is taken away and your sin purged.

Can you imagine how grateful Isaiah was? He thought for sure he was a dead man. He thought for sure it was over for him. And some of us have experienced that.

We have experienced what it is to be so deep into sin and darkness, we see no way out. We see no hope. We say it's over for me.

And God, in his mercy, God, in his love, God, in his grace, takes today, not a live coal. Isaiah was forgiven and cleansed on the basis of this live coal that came from off the altar. But what is the live coal a type of? Who is the live coal type of? Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice for our sins, God took his only begotten

son.

He loved the world so much he gave his only begotten son, sacrificed him on a cross for the forgiveness of all of our sins. And we are forgiven today based upon whom? Christ alone. No other way to be cleansed.

No other way to be forgiven. But through Christ alone. Think of being Isaiah.

One minute he's saying I'm finished to the very next moment. God saying you're forgiven. Now, some of us have experienced that many of you have experienced what it is to know.

The separation that comes because of sin, separation from a holy God, and you know what it is to experience the mercy, the wonderful mercy and amazing grace of God to have been saved and cleansed and forgiven. I'm clean, I'm forgiven when I was undone and on my way to hell and God had mercy upon me, he gave his son to die for my sins. Here's the point.

What kind of response then? Should there be from those who have been forgiven and shown such mercy? The very response of Isaiah, when he said the next thing he said, I heard was the voice of the Lord and the voice of the Lord said, whom shall we sin? Who will go for us, he says, and whom shall I send? And Isaiah said, here am I, send me. You know why? Because once a person has experienced salvation, once a person has encountered the Lord Jesus Christ, they can think no other. They can do no other but to worship him.

They will want to pour themselves out at the feet of Jesus in worship. They will want to give him their all. One of my favorite hymns is when I survey the wondrous cross and the last verse says love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life and my all.

When I see how much Jesus has loved me, when I see how much Jesus Christ has forgiven me and I see how magnificent and majestic and holy and almighty God, words fail me to try and describe God. But when I see all of that and I see the love and compassion and forgiveness that he's shown me, I can do no, I cannot think about doing anything else but worshiping him and giving him my whole heart and all of my love and all of my adoration and all of my service. Again, not out of religious duty, as we talked about last week, but why? Because I love him.

And why do I love him so? Because he first loved me. That's why. Do you know whom you come to worship, the Samaritan woman, she didn't at first.

Woman, you know, not what you worship. But after that, at the end of their conversation, she says, I know that the Messiah is coming someday. And he will tell us everything.

And Jesus Christ. Looks at her in the eye and says, I that speak to you. And he.

You are taking up whether you should worship on the mountain or in Jerusalem. When the truth is, is not about the place, it's about the person who is standing before you. And that woman left her water pot and she left her old sinful lifestyle and she became a missionary for the Lord Jesus Christ.

She received that living water from Christ and she was never the same again. And that's what happens when you encounter God, you can never be the same again. I say again, the father is seeking for true worshipers this morning.

Does he find in you what he's seeking for? Does he find in you what he's seeking for? Let's pray. Father, God. And.

You are an amazing. Almighty. Wonderful God.

And Lord, the truth is, the reason we oftentimes don't worship you rightly is simply because our thoughts of you are way too low. Our opinions of you are way too shallow. Lord, you are beyond description, as the song says, you are beautiful, beyond description, too marvelous for words, too wonderful for comprehension, like nothing ever seen or heard.

Who can grasp your infinite wisdom? Who can fathom the depth of your love? You are beautiful beyond description, majesty enthroned above. And I stand, I stand in awe of you. I stand, I stand in awe of you.

Holy God, to whom all praises do I stand in awe of you. God, it is amazing to me that you who needed nothing chose to create us, chose to save us, chose to redeem us so that we could enter in to a love relationship with you, but a relationship whereby there is reverence and awe and adoration. Lord, as a preacher, sometimes I feel so not sometimes I always feel so inadequate.

To be able to proclaim who you are, God, the greatness of who you are, and so my only prayer, Father, even this morning, is that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you open our eyes, you illuminate our understanding, you open the eyes of our heart. And father, I pray for a fresh encounter with you for every single one who stands here before you today. God, would you give us a fresh encounter with you knowing that as you do, Lord, how can we but sing? How can we but praise? How can we but serve you? How can we but worship you with all of our heart and with all that is within us? We glorify you, Lord God, we praise you in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

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