

# The Local Church 4 - Part 3

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the significance of worship as a collective expression of love for Jesus, highlighting preparation and the role of the Holy Spirit in worship settings.*

**Duration:** 9:18

**Scripture:** Psalm 95:6, John 4:23

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Heart Preparation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the essence of true worship, where believers gather to pour out their hearts in adoration to the Lord Jesus Christ, expressing their love for Him. It highlights the significance of worship as the purest form of expressing love for Jesus and the joy found in being completely devoted to Him. The speaker reflects on the beauty of worship meetings and the importance of preparing hearts for worship by meditating on God's Word and hymns.

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## Transcript

Well, I think that's teaching, don't you? I think that's preaching. I don't think it's worship. Now don't misunderstand me.

I don't deny that somebody sitting in that audience could be lifting his or her heart to the Lord during that time. I don't doubt that. I'm not saying there can't be remnants of worship, but the service itself is not a worship service.

What is a worship service? It's when God's people come together and pour out the overflow of their hearts as they muse on the Lord Jesus Christ, as they lift their hearts in worship and adoration to him. It's expressing love for Jesus. Sometimes I hear a young fellow get up in a meeting and just tell the Lord he loves him.

I think, well, that's the purest form of worship, isn't it? Just to be able to say that. Spurgeon said, no joy on earth is equal to the bliss of being all taken up with love to Christ. No joy on earth equal to that.

If I had my choice of all the lives that I could live, I certainly would not choose to be an emperor, nor to be a millionaire, nor to be a philosopher, for power and wealth and knowledge bring with them sorrow. But I would choose to have nothing to do but to love my Lord Jesus. Nothing, I mean, but to do all things for his sake and out of love to him.

Spurgeon had the heart of a worshiper. Incidentally, you can tell a worshiper when you meet him, can't you? I love to meet young people, fellows and girls, and they open their mouths and the Lord Jesus comes out. Do you know what I mean? They speak about the Lord Jesus.

I think that's good. It tells you what kind of pastures they've been feeding in. In worship, we gather to Christ.

I spoke about that previously, and I believe that's true. We gather together to worship the Lord Jesus. He is the attraction there.

He is the center of our affections. And I want to say this, dear friends, and it wasn't original with me either. If you don't like worship, you won't like heaven, because that's going to be the great activity of heaven.

You go through the book of Revelation and from beginning to end, you hear the hosts of heaven raising their voices in a great crescendo of praise. It starts off and it increases all the way through the book of Revelation until the very final scene. Some of us can look back in our lives to a time when in our local assemblies, there was only one service on Lord's Day morning.

It was a worship service, and it would begin maybe at 10.30 and continue to 12. And that whole morning was just dedicated to worshipping the Lord Jesus. You may not agree with me.

I oftentimes wish we could go back to that. I really do. I oftentimes wish we could go back to that.

Just reserve that section of the week. What has come in is a preaching service has come in at the 11 o'clock service, and then worship has been downgraded. But I personally feel it's too bad that that happened.

There are a lot of meetings I don't like. I don't like business meetings. I oftentimes think that business meetings are an enormous waste of time.

Don't you? Not much is accomplished by them. There are a lot of other meetings I don't like, but I want to tell you this meeting I really love, the worship meeting. When we gather together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God is moving, and heaven comes very low.

I tell you, I don't want to miss it. I don't want to miss it. I remember hearing about a meeting in Philadelphia years ago.

It came time for the breaking of bread and the passing of the cup. And this dear old godly man, he got up to give thanks for the bread, and he walked forward to the table, and he fell down to his knees to pray. And people who were there that day, they thought, they'll never forget the awe of that moment when the Lord was not visibly present, but very present, just the same, and the hearts of God's people were lifted up in praise to him.

Now, he never did that again. If he ever did that again, it probably would have been phony, but that's the way the Spirit of God led him. It's wonderful to be available to the Spirit of God in worship to do as he would have us to do.

It's very good for us to be preparing for worship for the worship meeting on the Lord's Day. I don't know if you ever think about this. Maybe the thought is just to go there and share what thoughts come to your mind.

I think it's a very good thing to prepare for worship during the week, meditating on the Word of God. And then Saturday night's a wonderful time to take your hymn book and your Bible and read some of those hymns. They say what you might feel, but you could never put them in those words.

On Calvary we've adoring stood and gazed on that wondrous cross where the holy spotless Lamb of God was slain in his love for us. How our hearts have stirred at that solemn cry while the sun was enwrapped in night, Eli, Eli, Lamb of God, most blessed, most awful sight. I recommend a good use of Saturday night preparing for the Lord's Supper with your hymn book and your Bible.

God said in the Old Testament, none shall appear before me empty. He doesn't want us to come to that meeting with empty baskets, but to be meditating on the Lord. And then we come to the meeting and we see how the Holy Spirit is leading in the meeting.

And then if he's leading in a certain trend and our meditation has been on that, certainly it's a wonderful time for brothers to share that. In the worship meeting, ministry should be all about the Lord Jesus. He should be the center.

It's not really the time to give a testimony or to share some bizarre event that betook you over the week. In fact, I think it'd be a very good thing for us in our worship to try to keep the perpendicular pronoun out of our worship altogether. Keep I, me, my, our, and just talk about the Lord Jesus.

That would be a great discipline of grace to do that. Remember me, he said. Show forth my death till I come.

Well, you say, what do you do if somebody in the meeting gives out a hymn and it's not in the Spirit? Well, you've been in a meeting like that, haven't you? Where the Spirit of God seems to be moving along a certain direction and somebody gets out the hymn on the Jericho Road, there's room for just two, you know. But that has nothing to do with the purpose of the meeting, does it? So what do you do? Well, they asked an old brother that. They said, what do you do when somebody gives out a hymn that's not in the Spirit? He said, I sing it in the Spirit.

And I like that. Rather than rebuking the young brother for his immaturity or something like that, just sing it in the Spirit and hope that with the passing of time that he'll be able to correct that. In public worship, when a brother, and this is, I say this especially for the young brothers, in public worship it's good to speak we, we thank you instead of I. You say, why? Because when you're getting up to worship, you're speaking for the assembly.

And when you close and say amen, the assembly says amen and that says we have made that worship our own. So I think it's good. That's why in the little flock hymn book, all of the hymns were changed to use the pronoun we because in collective worship, that is the way to do it.

Now we want to move on to another subject that's related to all of this, and that's the subject of prayer. Is prayer important in an assembly? Well, first of all, I'm going to tell you a story. Years ago, in an eastern city,

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