

All Age Worship Service, 28 July 2013

ONE ON THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

Things aren't always what they seem!

Interaction with the children and powerpoint images.

What's going on in the picture that seems odd or not what we'd expect.



There was a boy about 8 years old who accidentally killed a duck with his slingshot.

He was really upset about it, 'cause he knew his mother had said he wasn't to hurt any living creature, let alone kill it. So he buried it and thought that no one had seen it so he could pretend it never happened.

But his slightly older sister had seen it and she said she would tell on him if he didn't do her dishes as well as her own for ever.

And being only 8 or so he agreed because he was scared of being punished by his mother.

But finally he got so sick of doing dishes all the time and feeling crap about it that he told his mother what he had done.

She said: yes I saw it from the window and I've watched you do the dishes for weeks.

And I'm glad you've finally told the truth.

I think if I'd been his mother his sister might have got into a spot of trouble for what she did.

On the outside he acted as though nothing was wrong, but on the inside he knew he had done something wrong and he wasn't being honest with his mother or himself. His sister's manipulation made it worse until he stood up to her and said enough.

It's much easier to tell the truth and own up to your mistakes at the time than to let it go for so long until you feel really bad.

Otherwise you can be an orange on the inside and an apple on the outside...and that doesn't really work because it's not what you were made to be and it doesn't feel very good. If you get used to being dishonest you won't feel very peaceful...you'll just feel guilty and stink.

Always tell the truth and say I'm sorry as soon as I can are two heart values that I live my life by.

So when I go into a shop and I have five dollars and I buy a couple of things and the person serving me accidentally gives me too much change. Instead of going out of the shop and thinking yay I scored, I'll say to her: I'm sorry, I think you've given me too much change.

I've already decided to be honest. So when it happens I don't have to think about what I'm going to do...will I give the money back or keep it because it was her fault and she doesn't need to know about it. I will give the money back.

I won't go away with a guilty conscience and later on have to come back and give the money back. I sort it out right there and then.

What has this got to do with worship?

Psalm 51: 6

You long for truth in my innermost being;

in unseen places deep within me, You show me wisdom.

The Bible tells us that what we are like on the inside is one of the most important things that God is interested in. He wants us to be the same on the outside as we are on the inside. Not telling lies or fooling other people. In other words what we say and do should be what is happening in here.

Matt 15:8

These people worship me with their lips but their hearts are far away from Me.

When I was young, I used to see how loud I could sing the hymns.

On the outside I was singing and praising God, but on the inside I was trying to impress my Sunday school teacher with my voice and I wasn't listening to the words I was singing.

We can sing praises to God with our lips without engaging either our hearts or minds.

Matthew has something to say about that:

Psalm 44: 21

For He knows the secrets of our hearts.

The thing is God knows the secrets of our heart and what he wants more than anything is for us to be real with Him and not fooling ourselves or anyone else. But we are all really good at showing up to church and not really engaging. We may have stuff going on in our lives that is the complete opposite of having an open heart to God.

Also God wants us to be in right relationships with other people when we come to worship.

The reason is that our anger does not help us be real with God. It's like a blockage in the way...we are more focused on how someone else has mucked us around than on really being with God.

Matthew 5:21-24

"If you are angry with someone... and you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and offer your gift to God.

It's difficult to be a true worshipper when our hearts are far away from Him.

It's really important in as much as it's up to us, to be at peace with everyone.

I can't come to worship if for example I was really mad at someone, I would do everything I could to sort it out before I got here.

And once again in my heart that is a commitment...to be at peace with everyone, as much as I can, recognizing its not always possible to bring reconciliation because that takes two people.

Proverbs 4:23

Guard your heart above all else,

for it determines the course of your life.

When we are the same on the inside as the outside we will have peace.

Peace I leave with you said Jesus. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives. Don't let your hearts be troubled. John 14: 22. In Me you will have peace. John 16:33

"Knowing one's values, following them despite one's preferences, outside circumstances, other's less informed opinions, or even one's own shifting emotions is absolutely critical."

"Values are those ideas we ultimately want to live by, and need to keep ever before us lest we forget them in the midst of the challenges of daily life."

Last week we discovered that there were many words in Hebrew for worship and praise, over 50, yet our English translation does not translate those nuances.

There are yet again words used which have nuances we will miss in relation to how not to worship.

1. to bow down physically but not be submitted on the inside. In Daniel 3 the music is played and everyone has to bow to an image of gold that the King has made. But there were heads still standing up...Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in defiance of the order. The word used here is segad and is not used in the sense of true worship to Yahweh, its about an outward form of show. They were honest enough not to bow down physically...but we can be dishonest enough to be singing with our lips and be thinking about going to the beach when we get out of here.
2. Then there's the kind of worship where people use objects to worship. So making cakes and offering them on an altar to a god. It's about trying to please the god so it wont hurt you, so it will rain and the crops will bear fruit etc. Sometimes we can try to do something for God like being good which reduces our true worship to this. Trying to get God's favour.
3. There's a word for being busy serving God and trying to please Him, but not really being service from worship...more from trying to cover up things. Just do what you think he wants.
4. Then there's worship from fear...God will punish me, something bad will happen if I don't pray or sing, or somehow do the right thing.
5. How about worship so God will do something for me...I give this much, I fast every week, I say loud prayers...surely if I do these things God will bless me.
6. Ritual...doing things in a repeated pattern, going through the motions, following along after everyone else. But my hearts not in it.
7. Veneration...deep respect for God and all the church's values, devout, bringing my children to church but my heart isn't actually committed to God.

The Hebrew word for worship that contains all the right nuances and in Greek proskuneo: implies to bow down yourself, to prostrate yourself.

Not to bow down on the outside.

But to bow down on the inside. To yield my life to God's hands.

It's something deeper, a quality of the heart.

Cut out all the other crap and just simply say: I need you to ...

In essence worship is very, very simple. It is to humble ourselves before God.

It's not what we do, or sing. You can sing and still have pride in your heart.

You can give much and be very religious and still not connect with God.

You can play skillfully, but still not have humility in your heart.

The kind of worshippers the Father seeks are those who worship in spirit and in truth.

In your heart you bow down and acknowledge your need for God. You are honest.

That's true worship.

Not doing, singing or ...

But being real, raw and honest with God on the inside. Saying to God this is my life and I need you in it.

Out of this comes responses to God...serving Him and singing and exalting Him.

Acts?

Appoint elders in every town. Someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious. For a bishop, as God's steward must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

- 1. as we work in institutions and workplaces we are charged with being an example. We should not be living in blatant sin, in a clear disregard for God's commands for personal holiness.**
- 2. Our families and marriages should be spiritually and emotionally healthy.**
- 3. We need to be able to articulate the basis for our faith and lifestyle.**
- 4. Our holiness is not merely a private matter. . it should be an integrated expression of word and deed, cultivated in the context of church and peer support.**

The end goals of spiritual and psychological growth are- holiness and wholeness. Life does not demand perfection in either one of these areas, they are ideals and dreams but worth aspiring to.

Intimacy in Worship that we live our whole lives in the presence of God. He sees it all. If we approach Him in worship and our hearts are not pure or we are not willing to be vulnerable before Him, then our worship will be empty.

Doerksen also reminds us in the Integrity video that when we sing our songs without integrity then we risk God refusing them just as he did in Amos chapter 5. He is not pleased when we offer Him our worship from a divided heart.

In writing about integrity in his ebook, Dan said a couple of things about values that I think I may just have to frame and hang where I can see them on a daily basis. The first is this, "Knowing one's values, following them despite one's preferences, outside circumstances, other's less informed opinions,

or even one's own shifting emotions is absolutely critical." That is so rich! When I began to dissect each phrase of that quote, I felt conviction. I often allow what other people think, my mood, or what I want to determine how I handled situations.

Another statement that Dan made was, "Values are those ideas we ultimately want to live by, and need to keep ever before us lest we forget them in the midst of the challenges of daily life." Many times, I have allowed all the things going on around me to shape me instead of allowing my values to shape all the things going on around me.

Worship is first and foremost exaltation. The Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible that we translate as "worship" most often communicate an attitude of reverence, submission, and homage. In the act of worship, we are by definition acknowledging that someone or something else is above us and worthy of our affection, attention and adoration.

Biblical worship, then, involves exalting God above all other objects.

In other words, to truly enjoy God, to truly worship Him, we must express what is in our hearts towards Him.

The writer of Hebrews gives us a striking picture of what is taking place as the church of Jesus Christ gathers to worship Him.

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking." (Heb 12:22-25a, ESV)

What a picture! While this passage can refer to our continual state before God, it also informs us that when we start to sing on Sunday morning, we're not alone. In fact, we're simply some of the countless believers throughout history that have joined in on the song of adoration rising up before God's throne in heaven. We are experiencing a foretaste of worship in God's presence.

But what does it look like to encounter God in worship? We might think of the dedication of Solomon's temple in 2 Chronicles 5:14, where "the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God." Or we might associate it with the prayer meeting of the early Christians in Acts 4:31. "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken."

Such experiences demonstrate the power and kindness of God and are still possible today. However, we shouldn't assume that the only time God is around is when the room is shaking and we can't stand up.

Looking again at the passage from Hebrews, we read, "See that you do not refuse him who is speaking." Encountering God is a result of hearing God's Word with faith through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Scripture is not just "divine data" for our observation, nor is it "moldy truth." It is the living and active word of God that "is at work in those who believe." (Heb 4:12; 1Th 2:13)

We hear and proclaim God's Word as we sing. As our pastor expounds God's Word, God Himself is addressing our hearts. We are engaging with God as we share the bread and cup during communion. And certainly God is speaking to us through the gospel, the means by which we have come to know Him.

Let's not limit encountering God to the singing time or a physical sensation. If we look for experiences and goose bumps when we worship God, we'll end up frustrated, unfulfilled, and eventually disappointed. But if we faithfully and eagerly listen for His voice in His unchanging Word, we'll encounter Him again and again.

David Peterson says it well: "At the heart of Christian gatherings there should be a concern to proclaim and apply the truths of the gospel, to keep the focus on God's gracious initiative, to stimulate and maintain saving faith and to elicit appropriate expressions of that faith in the assembly and in everyday life. Prayer and praise are clearly worship when they are faith responses to the gospel." (Worship: Adoration and Action, ed. by D.A. Carson, pg. 83)

In other words, our songs of praise and adoration are "worship" as they focus us on the gospel and strengthen us in our walk of faith. When we view worship this way, we are edified, God is glorified, and the church of Jesus Christ is built up.

"Paul is clear that the presentation of our bodies is our spiritual act of worship. It is a significant Christian paradox. No worship is pleasing to God which is purely inward, abstract and mystical; it must express itself in concrete acts of service performed by our bodies."

In other words, worship isn't something we simply feel. Worship isn't the name we give some experience that we seek while singing, lifting our hands, or closing our eyes. It's something we DO with our bodies in all of life. We can worship God through our eating, drinking, typing, speaking, cooking, driving, and countless other ways. We worship God whenever we perform an act out of a desire to draw attention to His greatness, especially revealed in sending His Son as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

When Jesus encountered ten leprous men who cried out for help respectfully at a distance because of their condition, Jesus sent them to the priests (Luke 17:11-19). As they left the cleansing occurred. One returned, praising God and falling down to worship Jesus, offering thanks. That is worship - worship in the dust of the roadside.

The leper has shown four key worship attitudes. He had praised, and had given thanks. He also worshipped/adored Jesus, and had paid homage, throwing himself at Jesus' feet. He was regarded with the words, 'Rise and go, your faith has made you well.'

Segad

Let's look at the book of Daniel, Chapter 3. The first word in Hebrew is the word segad. It means to bow down before Him. Daniel 3:3, *"All the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then a herald cried aloud "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations and languages that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up."*

In the whole book of Daniel the word worship is the word segad. We are going to look at some of the Hebrew words for worship that is not that kind of worship that that we should give to our Father God.

Verse 6 *"and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."*

The Hebrew word for worship of God that carries the fullness of God's expectation and desire is the word shachah. The Greek word for worship is the word proskuneo. And both of them carry a meaning of bowing down. But it does not stop there only. It carries a greater meaning than that. We can see that there are other words that talk about bowing down. If the words shachah and proskuneo mean to bow down and that is all God desires then He could have used the word segad instead of using that special word shachah and proskuneo. The word segad means to bow down and pay homage to a dignitary or somebody higher than you. And it may not include your heart. It only physically refers to your body posture. I am sure a lot of people in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom didn't really want to bow before all those idols that he commanded. Some of them may do it unwillingly. Some of them may do it out of fear. After all the command goes out and says whoever does not bow down would be burned. A lot of people bowed down not because they respect that golden image or treat it as a god. They do it because if they don't do it they will fry. It is either bow or fry. And many chose to bow. But their hearts were not involved in that bowing down. Some may do it out of fear. Some may do it because they believe that Nebuchadnezzar has some supernatural power.

We have the story in Daniel 3 where the music was played and everyone has to bow. There were three heads sticking up, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They refused to bow. When the king gave them another chance, they still would not bow. The whole chapter 3 the word used is segad. The word segad is never used in a true sense of worship to our God. This tells us that God doesn't just want our outward form, our outward worship, our physical worship or posture alone although the words shachah and proskuneo include that.

Atsab

There is one in the book of Jeremiah 44:19 and the Hebrew word is the word *atsab*. The women also said, *“And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship (atsab) her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands’ permission?”*

Here is a worldly form of worship. And the word *atsab* is to make some objects an idol and to burn incense or give offerings. This is animism. Animism is the worship of objects, stones and trees. People become afraid just because somebody put an altar there. But the altars we read about in Genesis are not the same altars that we look at today. The altars they made were just plain stones to make blood sacrifices. But here it is to make the object god, as if the object has spiritual power. People would worship all kinds of things. They worship the sun, the moon and trees. All they did is *atsab* worship. In *atsab* worship you worship with things. It could be a food offering, an incense offering.

Notice that tithes and offerings are part of our worship. But they are only part of our worship. Yet some people think that worshipping God means to give Him something. If that’s our thinking, we only understood *atsab* worship and not *shachah* worship. On Sundays, we may not bring a doughnut or dumpling to the altar and burn some incense to God. But in principle if we think in our heart that doing something for God or giving God something is the essence of worship, then we are reducing worship to *atsab* worship. If God is your first love you want to give Him your life. But the essence of worship is not that. I give God my life and I bring to God my tithes and offerings because I love Him. It is the result of my worship. It is not because I worship Him with tithes and offerings. In other words, God doesn’t want a single cent from us. He wants our lives more than He wants our money. When He has our life and He becomes our Lord, we automatically surrender our tithes and our offerings to Him. It is the result or consequence of our relationship with God. But *atsab* worship builds upon sacrifices.

Some Christians have a concept of God in that way. They may not be like those that seek God who think that worship is something you do. They think the moment you put your face to the ground you are worshipping, you are fulfilling the act of worship. You thought that *shachah* and *proskuneo* means that is to worship God. In fact during the revival of praise and worship a lot of people misunderstand *proskuneo* and *shachah*. They think that if you do not touch your head to the ground you have not worshiped because of the word *shachah* and the word *proskuneo*. But they forget that there are other words that mean bowing down that may not include that kind of worship that they are thinking of. There is something deeper in *proskuneo* and *shachah* than we have thought. But yet, there are others who think that worshipping God is to do something. But God is saying, *“Be still and know that I am God.”* We are just not still enough for Him to deal with our life.

Abad

The word *abad* means to serve Him. Let’s look at II Kings 10. The word *abad* is used here to refer to Baal worshipers. Verse 21, *Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. Verse 22 Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal.*

The bible doesn’t use the normal word *shachah* in this reference. It chooses the word *abad*. The full essence of the word means to serve. What is the definition of worship in our life? Does it mean to bow down alone? Does it mean that we have to give Him something? Or does it mean that when we are serving Him that is my worshipping? No, if it's just pure service alone without love it is not that kind of *shachah* worship that God wants. *Abad* worship is the kind that only dwells in service. Just doing something all the time. Whereas in *atsab* is giving something. If you stop giving, you are not

worshipping. You notice that some of these definitions have reference to what is out there prevailing in the world. If they stop giving something to those idols it is tantamount to stopped worshipping. These are all definitions out there. For others if they stop serving they stopped worshipping. Bless God you can be a Christian and God has not asked anything of you. All He asks is that you give Him time to be alone with Him and that can be worship. You may not have done a single thing yet because you are a growing Christian and you are still discovering the things of God and yet you could be in tune with Him worshipping Him. It is not just service alone.

Then we move over to the new Testament and find a few extra words or what is secular definition of worship. Let's look at Acts 17:23. Based on what we have covered so far if your definition of worship is to bow down before God, it would be wrong because that is *segad not shachah*. If your definition of worship is to give God something, praise, songs, that will also be wrong. That will be *atsab*. If your definition of worship is to serve Him with all your heart, that still wouldn't be right. That would be *abad*.

Eusebeo

And here are some others in Acts 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, *"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious, for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.*

He found an object of worship. Here the word worship in Greek is the word *eusebeo* and it is not the word *proskuneo*. You can define *eusebeo* as reverential fear. And that's what those Greek fellows were like in Acts 17. They have many idols in the temple of their many gods from their Greek mythology. The strange thing is that as Paul was looking at all these idols, they did not affect him at all. *"Because greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.*

A lot of people get intimidated when they see a huge imposing pagan altar. Perhaps you are a construction worker and you are a Christian. You are supposed to clear a land or cut a tree. Then you come across a big tree and other workers are afraid of chopping down the tree because if they chop it down, the evil spirit dwelling in the tree will chop them down. If you are born again, washed under the blood, you will drive the tractor over the tree because your God is greater. All these things do not intimidate you. Some Christians are so weak they have such wrong teaching that they think that if they just walk by the idol they get demon possessed. That's wrong teaching. Paul walked right in the midst of that place there looking around because he was looking for souls. And all these demonic looking idols looking at him he is not even bothered.

When Howard Carter and Lester Sumrall went to China in their early journeys, they slept in the temple. The places they went to didn't even have hotels or inns and the only place open was a temple. They just slept there. They didn't get demon oppressed after that. Some people teach that if you go to pagan temples, you would get this pain and that pain on your body. What kind of teaching is that? We say that we have the living God who created the heaven and the earth. We say that we have found Him who controls the universe. And we are afraid of just a mere demon. Paul was right there looking around. Then he noticed that these people are afraid in case they missed out on any god. *"Lets build an altar and leave it empty. Let us dedicate it to the unknown god whom we do not know in case there is one more that we missed."* And Paul said, *"I have come to tell you about this unknown God."* He said this unknown God is the main God that they all should worship. He talked about Jesus and the resurrection from the dead. *Eusebeo* is a worship based on fear. If I don't worship him, he is going to punish me.

I am not making fun of it but it's just part of our Chinese culture. The Chinese have this "ti kuey" or kitchen god. On Chinese New Year's day the kitchen god supposedly goes to report to a bigger god above him about the family. And so, the Chinese have to serve this "ti kuey" with sticky cakes so that his mouth gets stuck and he won't be able to make any report. I used to ask my mother, "Doesn't he get any wiser after all these years? Every year we give this kitchen god sticky cakes to eat and if he is god isn't he smart enough not to eat those sticky cakes?" Then I realized that it has to do with tradition and culture. And much of our culture is not really based on the bible. Then my parents told me that this is tradition.

But let's listen carefully. Somebody somewhere long ago started those traditions. I mean if we start some new tradition today, one thousand years from now people will forget how it was started. When I started to know the Lord, I told my mother and said, "If I really love you and I have found what I believe to be the truth, I would tell you what I have found because I love you. In fact, I would love you more if I found the truth and share with you the truth, rather than following your traditions blindly." See in our Asian culture we wrestle with the thinking that if we don't follow our parents' tradition, it means we don't really love them. And I told my mom and said, "It is not because I don't love you. If I have found the truth and if I really love you, I would be telling you about it and trying to get you to it. If I don't really love you, I would just follow your traditions."

Some time later, my mother came to know the Lord. When she came to know the Lord, she had a dream. In the dream, she saw part of heaven. She was admiring the trees she told me. Even the leaves on the trees were so beautiful. She remembered in her dream that she was walking along a pathway. As she was walking in the pathway, something told her in her dream, "Your son has come by this way." I was that son. I had come to know the Lord earlier. I have gone ahead of her in the Lord. When she came to know the Lord, the Lord revealed to her that was the true way and that she was now joining the true way.

But most of traditional worship is based on fear. If I don't please those spirits and demons, they are going to harm me. And that is ingrained within the animistic culture, which has no religion. That is why even today in our modern times with all our scientific advancements, powerful technology, skyscrapers, right there in some corner under some tree, by the pavement is a little altar that some people built just in case the spirits of the place didn't like people disturbing them. It is a religion based on fear. And that is not the worship that God wants. It is eusebeo. Eusebeo is based on fear. If I don't worship God, something bad is going to happen. We all may look at the non-Christian culture and be able to define eusebeo.

But there is an element of that that still plays in Christian hearts and minds. The principle is still there and Christians can still end with eusebeo worship. How do we do it? Like that, if I don't worship God something bad is going to happen to me. If I don't say my prayers, something bad is going to happen to me. Now we know the blessing of God that comes when we do obey Him. But when we turn that negatively, we say that if we don't worship Him something bad is going to happen. When the bad thing does happen, you say, "I knew it's going to happen." And in fact, your faith is so built up in the wrong sense that when you didn't worship Him that day you would expect something bad would happen. That is eusebeo worship.

God doesn't use fear to force us to worship Him because our worship would not be true. If He had wanted us to worship Him that way, I tell you, He could easily have done it. Just make all the angels in the world appear with whips and swords. Everyone would worship God because one angel can slay a whole army. But that is not the worship He wants. That image of God is such we fear the big man upstairs with a whip. Every time you do something wrong you get the whip. "We better worship Him or else judgment will come." So, Christians can have a eusebeo form of worship. That is unscriptural. They worship God to avoid the wrong things happening to them. That is eusebeo worship.

Therapeuo

In verse Acts 17:25 is another word that is not normally translated worship but there is no other way the translators could have translated it. *Nor is He worshiped with mens hands, as though He needed anything since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.* The word here is a word that's seldom translated worship. It's the word therapeuo where we get the word therapy. In essence, it means healing, wholeness and also means a kind of service. But it means something else. Therapeuo speaks about worshiping God because of its therapeutic value. It's a bit selfish in that. We take worship like a medicine. "What God can do for us? Worship Him because He can do this and that for you." That's the opposite of eusebeo worship.

Earlier we saw in eusebeo worship, you worship Him so that He won't do something. Now you go to the extreme and say, "Worship Him so that He can do something." This kind of worship still isn't right. We worship Him because of the therapeutic value of worship. We get something out of it. We get healing, we get blessing, we get a tangible feeling of Him, we get encouraged. Yes, all those things happen when you really worship. But when we worship because of that it is not proskuneo but it is therapeuo, which is not the essence of what He wants.

Threskeia

Let's look at some more wrong forms of worship. Colossians 2:18 We are trying to define worship and so we are looking at all the wrong definitions the bible gives on worship. There is only one English word for worship but there are so many Hebrew words and Greek words that talk about the wrong kind of worship. Verse 18, *"Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.* The word worship here is not proskuneo but it's the word threskeia. Threskeia worship is defined to be religious observance or being religious about something. Sadly, if you think that is only true about non-Christians I want you to know that even Christianity ends up with rituals that are no more worship.

A lot of traditional churches have traditional rites. It is not proskuneo worship anymore. It is only threskeia worship where we follow some prescribed order in a bulletin - congregations bow down, congregation stand, sing hymn no. 288, Amazing Grace. Someone who is not even a worshiper of God plans the whole service beforehand in the church office. This can be classified as Christian ritual and some churches call it worship. Today in the praise and worship movement there is a tendency to revise some of these rituals. But if all is done is threskeia, it is still considered a ritual worship. We go through the motions and we call it worship.

But even some Charismatics are in danger of developing some Charismatic ritual. Recently I was talking to an evangelist who was a member of an outgoing Charismatic church. Then the pastor came under the influence of a prophet who is every extreme. The pastor looked to the prophet as the father figure. And the church began to take on a very hard and judgmental approach just like that prophet. He came to see me because he was thinking of leaving the church, which was his base. So I feel sad for the church and the people because when they come to church they are commanded to jump and dance. It was demanded of them. I believe in dancing to the Lord. I believe in active vibrant uninhibited praise. But never one time do we force anyone to do it. But when something is forced on people, it becomes a ritual.

Now being a leader is different. If I am a preacher, it is demanded of me that I know the Word and prepare myself to give the Word. If I am a worship leader, it is demanded of me that I must worship with my spirit, my soul and my body. But for the people who come as a whole there is no such thing

as any ritual. So, even Charismatics can have their own rituals. Time to sing in tongues. Time to clap hands. Anything can become a ritual. Threskeia worship is ritualistic worship. Clapping, dancing, singing and praising in tongues can happen in true worship but when they are structured rigidly instead of being open to the Holy Spirit then it becomes mechanical, empty and wrong.

Sebazo

Here is another one in the book of Acts 16:14, *"Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira who worshiped God."* The word worship is the word sebazo. And it means to venerate. To venerate is to pay homage and respect to. Now Lydia in Acts 16:14 had not come to know Jesus yet. But she had a deep respect for God in her heart. She would not take God's name in vain. She would not just loosely crack a joke about God in disrespect. When God's name is mentioned in general she is the type who really respected God. And that indicates her openness to God because she was already having some respect and direction toward God. Sebazo means that we respect God.

Now some need to have that kind of sebazo or respect for God because they don't have respect for God in the way they refer to God in their conversation and daily life. It looks more like disrespect in the way they talk about God. Like for example I can never talk to God like this, "Hi, God how are you keeping, man?" There are some in the streets saying, "Hi God I love you God." But they are baby Christians. Wait till you see the Holy of Holies with all the angels around God and the rainbow around His throne. And with His whole glory brighter than the sun and try to say, "Hi God."

In heaven, every word is so vital. I mean you dare not say anything except what God wants you to say. This is why in heaven those who have been there talk about a place where angels teach you the proper protocol of how to enter God's presence. We talk about entering His gates with thanksgiving; enter His court with praise. There is some more there. Wait until you go to the Holy of Holies.

There is a lot of Christianity that is based on fame rather than on depth. This means that if I were a celebrity and came to know the Lord, I would grab all the headlines and receive all the attention from Christian media. They may broadcast on television the way I pray, "Hi God." Just because I am famous doesn't mean I am deep. Although depth will lead to fame, not all fame is based on depth. Such Christianity that is propagated is what I call Outer Court Christianity. And Christian youths would think it is "cool" to talk with God that way. "If that Christian celebrity can do it, I can do it that way too." Wait a minute, Gabriel doesn't talk that way. Certainly, the four creatures around the throne don't talk that way. They don't say, "Hi God," they say, "Holy, holy, holy." We need sebazo to a certain extent. Sebazo helped Lydia to enter into the things of God. However, respect alone is not good enough. It didn't bring Lydia to salvation. Respect of God in your life will build a form of devoutness and outward holiness but in itself it is not good enough.

Sachah

Now let's look at the word shachah in Hebrew and proskeuneo in the Greek and see the full meaning of what it is. In Gen.22:5 ninety-nine times the word shachah has been translated as worship. *"And Abraham said to his young men. "Stay here with the donkey, the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."* The word used here is the word shachah, which means to bow down yourself. But it is different from segad. Segad means to bow down. Shachah means to bow down yourself. Remember Daniel, Chapter 3, it looks like the people bow down themselves but they were not. They were bowing down under threat for their lives. Bow or fry so they bow. Here shachah is God saying Abraham give me your son. Abraham

took the son himself; Abraham bound the son himself; Abraham sought to sacrifice the son himself. God never did it for him. He himself bowed down before God.

Let's take one more verse from the Old Testament, II Chron. 29:30 *"Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped"* (shachah). If shachah means bowing the head alone why didn't it just say and shachah. But it says, *"..and they bowed their heads and shachah."* It is because the word shachah speaks of something deeper. As I continuously search for the meaning of worship I come to one conclusion. Worship in its essence means to humble ourselves before God.

Worship doesn't mean all those things that we do. Worship is in our heart. You could do segad, you could bow down and your heart could still have pride. You could atsab or give something like the Pharisees and the Sadducees who gave things to the temple but they had pride in their hearts. You could be very religious about things like the Sadducees and active about it but they have pride in what they believe. So the Sadducees and Pharisees were always quarreling.

The essence of the worship of God is a humble heart. It's not just what you say. You can give God your tithes of a million dollars and it means nothing if your heart is proud - there is no worship. You can sing the loudest, play musical instruments skillfully but if there is no humility in your heart, there is no worship.

I have constantly checked on the meaning of worship as I looked at all the Hebrew words in worship. I prayed to God, "Lord, surely shachah means more than that." And I began to realize why the Father seeks such worshipers. He looks for a heart that humbles before Him. It is not just ritualistic worship threskeia. People sometimes have a ritual and they are proud of their ritual. They wear special robes in worship and they take pride in it. Worship has disappeared. All you have is threskeia. The essence of true worship is a humble heart. A broken and a contrite spirit He will not reject.

Now we notice why Isa. 64:4, *"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear nor has the eyes seen any God besides You. Who acts for the one who waits for Him."* Isa. 66:1 *"Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is My throne. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made and all those things exist." Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look. On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at My word."*

The essence and the meaning of worship is a humble heart. There is a Hebrew word and a Greek word for humble but shachah is an inward condition of the heart. When I began to research into the meaning of pride and humility in the bible, I found that God always opposes pride. It is not that He ignores you, He doesn't. I Peter 5:5, *"Likewise you younger people submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud."* God is not even going to ignore them. We thought that God ignores the proud and blesses the humble. He attacks, judges, pulls down, tears down, removes and resists the proud. Pride is the very opposite of the essence of worship. And God will not have any other gods before Him.

Do you notice that pride leads to self-worship? Nebuchadnezzar looked over his hanging garden. In spite of the warning from Daniel and a warning from a dream he looked at his hanging garden and said, "Didn't "I" build all these?" A voice from heaven judged him and declared, *"You will be turned*

into a beast and driven out to eat grass until you know that there is a God in heaven.” God opposes, tears down, removes and resists pride. But he loves to see people bowing down not only outwardly segad but shachah in their heart; they are contrite and they say, “God, we worship You.” The essence of worship is a humble heart.

Proskuneo

Look over at Matt. 2 at proskuneo. The Greek definition of proskuneo is to kiss toward, but look at it very carefully and you see the depths that are in line with shachah. Verse 9, *“When they heard the king they departed and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him gold, frankincense and myrrh.*

Now they also have gifts for Him but that was the consequence or result of the worship. We confuse between the result of worship and the essence of worship. You can give those gifts but if those gifts come from pride, worship is automatically gone out although worship involves giving ourselves to God. You can sing onto God and singing is part of worship but when it is not from a humble heart, worship disappears from the scene. The essence of it is humility. If humility is there, all those giving, singing and dancing are correct. They are kings from the East and they have come to look for the king of the Jews. And He was just a child. Look at such humility when they fell down and they bowed down before Him.

Proskuneo is not just kissing towards. You are at the feet of Jesus kissing His feet recognizing you are zero. I mean that is the feeling you will have if you are kissing somebody’s feet. The kissing on the toes and feet is one of the most humiliating acts. And you feel like you are dirt. You are nothing. That’s part of proskuneo. You are bowing down and kissing not standing up.

In Matt. 8:5, *“Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum a centurion came to Him pleading with Him saying “Lord my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented, And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.*

In other cross-references, you will find that the centurion was worshipful of Jesus as Jesus draws near his house. But look at his heart, don’t look at what he did. He considered himself unworthy when he compares to God. We are speaking about understanding how to humble ourselves before God and thus have true worship so that all the other consequences of our worship will be accepted before God. Proskuneo speaks about the humbling of our heart, our mind, of the bending of our wills to God. That is the meaning and definition of worship.

Remember the parable of the self-righteous Pharisee and the publican. They came to the temple and one was boasting, “Lord, I have done this, I have done that.” The other was beating his chest and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus’ question was, “Who do you think went out justified?” It was the publican. Two men went to the temple. One humbled himself before God and got touched. The other did not. Thank God for every other aspect of worship that we have. But the true essence of worship has to do with our heart. Is it contrite and humble before God?

