



God is spirit, and those who
worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship
with Pastor Steve

To the Least of These

Often in our quest to define certain types of worship we will use terms such as Mosaic Worship, Davidic Worship, Lifestyle Worship, Evangelistic Worship, Messianic Worship and others. We often associate worship with music, singing, dancing, shouting, banners and preaching. Certainly these terms and expressions of worship are valid as we attempt to put into words how we should respond to the God we love, however there may be yet another aspect of worship that is easily overlooked.

During my recent open heart surgery to replace my aortic valve and subsequent stay in the hospital, I was overwhelmed by the number of people who showed me and my family acts of kindness. Beginning with the hospital staff as well as other family members and friends, we were made to feel loved and genuinely cared for. Many people called to let us know they were praying. Others made visits to the hospital. Some sat with my family during the six hour preparation and operation. Still others brought food to my house to feed my wife and kids while others gave us money for various expenses. It was truly an example of the body of Christ in action.

I am convinced that these acts of kindness shown toward our family were in deed acts of worship toward Christ. Christ is the head of the church and we as Christians are his body. So, any act, for good or ill, that we perform toward members of Christ's body is rendered unto Christ (1 Corinthians 8:12). Worship is attesting to the "worth ship" of Christ. As we minister to members of Christ's body we express the value we place on Christ himself. That is why the Apostle Paul was so stern in his rebuke of the Corinthians for the way they were conducting the Lord's supper.

Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

1 Corinthians 11:20-22

The purpose of the Lord's Supper was for the church to remember the body of Christ which was broken for them and the blood of the new covenant that was shed for them. In doing so they would proclaim the Lord's death until he returns (1 Corinthians 11:24-26). However, the Corinthian church had made a mockery of the celebration in that, not only had they despised the Lord himself, they had also despised the less fortunate among them and in doing so had not properly discerned the Lord's body. Paul goes on to say, *For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.* (1 Corinthians 11:29-30)

Jesus himself conveyed the message that men would be judged according to how they treated members of his body. In essence he said that those who treated his brethren well were indeed sheep and those who did not minister to his brethren were considered goats.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was

thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? And the King will answer and say to them, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.

Matthew 25:31-40

Jesus goes on to say to the goats, *Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.* (Matthew 25:45) He then pronounces judgment on the two groups; eternal punishment for the goats but eternal life for the righteous (sheep).

The Apostle James goes as far as to attach acts of kindness to the proof of our faith. He said, *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.* (James 2:15-17) The writer of Hebrews tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). We must conclude, therefore, that if we do not please God we cannot truly worship him. However, God is pleased, and may I add worshiped, when we confirm our faith through acts of kindness toward members of his body.

Finally, there is this whole love thing. The Apostle John conveys the message that eternal life is dependant on our loving the brethren (1 John 3:14-15). He goes on tell us what it means to love the brethren.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1 John 3:16-17

John goes on to ask, . . . *for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* (1 John 4:20) The answer is obvious; he who does not love his brother cannot love God. We prove that we love God and the brethren each time we lay down our lives, with a pure heart, so that we can meet the needs of the brethren. Acts of love toward the brethren equals acts of love toward God. Acts of love toward God equals acts of worship.

So, as John says, *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* (1 John 3:18) Might I add; Let us not worship in word and tongue alone, but also in deed and truth.