



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

John 4:24

## On Worship with Pastor Steve

### Worshiping in Spirit

*For we Christians are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit and by the Spirit of God, and exult and glory and pride ourselves in Jesus Christ, and put no confidence or dependence on what we are in the flesh and on outward privileges and physical advantages and external appearances.*

Philippians 3:3 AMP

Jesus said, *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit.* . . . (John 4:23) The word spirit which Jesus used in this instance is the Greek word pneuma. Pneuma is defined as a current of air, breath or a breeze. It is used to describe man's spirit, God's spirit and even demon spirits. The fact that it is not capitalized in John 4:23 most likely indicates that the translators felt Jesus was referring to the human spirit. In most cases the translators used a capital "S" when speaking of the Holy Spirit. We know that Jesus was not referring to demon spirits.

So the place of worship is the spirit of man, but the means of worship is the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote, *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.* (Ephesians 2:18)

True worshipers worship the Father in spirit and by the Spirit. All exteriors are of no concern. It doesn't matter about our status in the church or the community. It doesn't matter how talented or untalented they are or how they look. All of those things will pass away. True worshipers don't take notice of themselves for their eyes are on the Father. Their ears are tuned in to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the worship leader and knows the heart of the Father.

Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit doesn't speak of his own accord but speaks what he hears from the Father. He has come to guide us into all truth, and he will guide us into the worship that best pleases the Father. God's spirit in us relates to God's spirit in God and leads us into his presence. The worshiper must listen to the voice of the Spirit. If he says sing, then sing. If he says dance, then dance. If he says lift hands, do so. If he says be quiet, then enjoy the peace and love of the Father. The more time the worshiper spends in the Father's presence, the more instinctive worship becomes.

Paul wrote to the churches . . . *but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.* . . . Ephesians 5:18-19. Colossians 3:16 says, . . . *teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.* . . .

What are spiritual songs? The phrase in the original Greek is 'ode pneumaticos; meaning songs of the breath of God. Spiritual songs are songs sung in or by the Holy Spirit. These songs are inspired by the Holy Spirit and are spontaneous and prophetic in nature. Sometimes spiritual songs are sung by the worshiper to God, and sometimes the song is sung by God through the worshiper. When God sings through the believer, God reveals his heart to his people. This is done to bring edification, exhortation and comfort to the church.

Singing in tongues is another way a believer can worship in the spirit. Paul, in his teaching on spiritual gifts to the Corinthian church says this, *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the result then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.* (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). In this passage Paul has equated singing in the spirit with singing in tongues.

Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit to all those who believe in him. In John 7:38 he said, *He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. John follows that by saying, But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, who those believing in him would receive; for the Holy*

*Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* So, out of the heart of a believer will flow rivers of the Spirit.

A true worshiper will have an ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit. This relationship will produce new worship responses because the Spirit continually gives fresh revelations of the Creator. These revelations will come because the true worshiper will not allow sin, nor lack of fellowship with God, to dam up the rivers of living water produced by the Spirit's presence.

As wonderful as the many expressions of worship are, they lose much of their meaning if the character of Christ is not being pursued by the worshiper. Worship is raised to a higher dimension when the worshiper has a passion to become like Jesus. Where there is no passion for Jesus, worship is reduced to an emotional experience. God does not accept worship that comes from the lips of those who have no desire to be conformed into the image of his Son. A true worshiper will worship God with the character of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reads, *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.* We do not belong to us. Jesus has bought us with his blood making our number one priority to love him and do his will. We are to love what he loves and hate what he hates. God not only desires for us to glorify him with what we say but also how we live.

In Ephesians 4:30-31 Paul exhorts, *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Christians grieve the Holy Spirit by allowing fleshly desires to choke out the work God desires to do in them. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*

In Galatians 5:22-25 Paul writes, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* He preceded this passage by describing the opposite of walking in the Spirit. He said, *The works of flesh are evident, which are; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envy, drunkenness, revelries and the like. . . .* (Ephesians 5:19-21)

Not only will those who practice these things not inherit the Kingdom of God, they will not be allowed to enter into God's presence in worship. A.W. Tozer wrote in his book *Whatever Happened to Worship*, "The very last thing God desires is to have shallow-minded and worldly Christians bragging on him."

To be a true worshiper one must worship in and by the spirit. To worship in spirit we must allow the Holy Spirit to produce worship through us by being sensitive to his direction. We must be willing to put man's agendas aside and seek God's agenda. To worship in spirit also means to allow the Spirit to conform us into the image of Jesus and produce spiritual fruit in us. Doing these two things will cause worship to become a way of life and not just a ceremony or ritualistic experience.