



Sermon Series Notes

“Worship in Light of the Kingdom of God” (Acts 28; Heb.12:28-29/The Kingdom of God, Part 4)

Danny Hodges - NT3652

Summary of last weekend NY’s communion service:

- Look back video can be viewed via the website
- Over 2,000 recorded decisions for Christ in the past 7 years
- Exhortation – Give, Serve, Fellowship, Leaven out of your life
- Giving goal 2016 – Payoff lowest loan

As a result of two statements the apostle Paul makes in Acts 28, the Lord has launched us on a study of the kingdom of God. Read Acts 28:23b & 31.

We have talked about what the kingdom is, where the kingdom is, kingdom conflict, the kingdom one day coming to earth, the amazing truth that we are Jesus’ kingdom representatives here & now, and of course that Jesus is the key to enter the kingdom. We also looked at the lessons from Jesus’ kingdom parables in Matthew 13. And last time we studied who is the greatest in the kingdom.

Today our focus on the kingdom springboards from Hebrews 11:28-29.

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Reverence = Caution, circumspection, discretion.

Eph.5:15 (KJV); My first vacation with Wendy’s family (before we were married), her dad asked what this verse means, Wendy said walk “carefully,” to which her dad responded proudly and affirmatively. I remember thinking, this girl’s way too smart for me to be hanging out with, she knows the Bible better than me! (And she still does).

Nadab and Abihu (Lev.10:1-2); II Sam.6:7 (Uzzah); I Cor.11:27 (irreverence at the Lord’s table);

Awe = Wonder, admiration, amazement, surprise, astonishment.

The context of Heb.12:28-29 is the stark contrast between the Old Covenant (Law) and the New Covenant (Grace). Read Hebrews 12:18-27, then verses 28 & 29 again.

Have you ever really meditated on all God has done for us through the New Covenant?

- The capital of the kingdom we are now citizens of, the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev.21). It makes the Emerald City of the Wizard of Oz look like a shack!
- Thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly; Why are they so joyful? Rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7).
- Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven
 - We are God's "preeminent people."
- Made perfect, washed whiter than snow, never to face judgment!
 - II Cor.5:21
- A kingdom that cannot be shaken; Not just will not be, but *cannot* be.

In light of the reality that we are recipients of a kingdom so glorious, let us **worship** God acceptably with reverence and awe.

Same word is translated worship in Acts 7:7, 42; 24:14; Phil.3:3; Heb.10:2.

But the word is sometimes translated **serve**.

- Matthew 4:10 Jesus said unto him, "Away from me Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'
- Rom.1:25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen.

So what can we conclude from this? That there is a connection between one's worship of God, in light of all He has done for us, and one's service to God, in light of all He's done for us.

Isaiah is a great example of this. See Isaiah 6:1-8

The greater vision one has of God, and the greater appreciation for all He has done for us, the more expressive will be that person's worship of Him, and the more willing will be there service to Him.

Today I want to focus more on the expression of worship than the various ways we may worship the Lord through serving. Serving was emphasized when we recently looked at Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

The example the Lord led me to that will encourage and challenge us in our worship expression is found in Luke's gospel, chapter seven. It is also found in Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, and John 12:1-8. Read Luke 7:36-47.

This woman worshiped the Lord with reverence & awe! What was it that enabled her to worship in this way?

- A keen awareness of her sinful condition

- This is something that Simon the Pharisee lacked; note v.39; See Luke 18:9-14; Paul the apostle once had the same perspective, but after really coming to know Jesus, he would as an aged saint write I Tim.1:15-17 (Read). People that have the most difficult time seeing the true condition of their hearts are religious people who base their righteousness on legalistic standards & a comparison of themselves with others. See Phil.3:3-6. Some examples of this kind of righteousness? Circumcision, fasting, tithing, giving to the poor, synagogue (church) attendance, studying the Scriptures (see John 5:39-40). Still today the number one response I get when I ask people why God should let them into heaven is “I’m a pretty good person.”
 - Self-righteousness is in itself sin. So is selfishness, covetousness, lying, pride, judging others wrongly, having lustful thoughts (any thought that is not pure), making anything or anyone a priority over God, all these are sin.
 - Matt.7:11 (Thursday am devotions); See Rom.1-3, noting 3:9-18, 21-24.
 - Isa.64:6...all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...
 - If we ever doubt how much God loves us, just look at the cross. But if we ever doubt how sinful we all are, just look at the cross.
- Genuine repentance
 - John’s account of this event reveals for us that this woman was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. John also tells us that Jesus said Mary did this in connection with Jesus’ burial. So it could be that her tears were because she knew he was about to go to the cross, and she is very distraught. But Luke’s account tells us Mary was a “sinful woman,” so even if she is weeping because she knows Jesus is going to die, I have to believe her tears also reflect her repentant heart.
 - II Cor.7: 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret...
- A servant’s heart
 - No limit on depth of humility; She washes Jesus’ feet with her tears, kisses Jesus’ feet.
 - Not only ultimate humility, but the ultimate in expressive worship; Worship means to kiss; Psalm 2:12 Kiss the Son....
 - Pharisees were not servants; See Matt.23:4-7, 11-12
- No limit to what she was willing to sacrifice for Jesus
 - This perfume was very costly, as the other gospel accounts of this event confirm.
 - David, II Sam.24:24, “Shall I offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing?”
 - Zaccheus gave half his possessions to the poor, and paid back those he had cheated 4 fold!
 - Rom.12:1-2
 - If one’s commitment is lukewarm, their worship will also be lukewarm; See Rev.3:15-16; Malachi 1.
- A lack of intimidation in worship
 - To really worship the Lord in reverence & awe, one has to come to a place there they are more God-conscious than man-conscious.
 - See II Sam.6:14-23

- A longing for intimacy with Jesus
 - Most scholars believe this woman was a prostitute. At the very least, she had lived a loose life with men. In this culture, women only let their hair down in the presence of their husbands. This woman had no doubt let her hair down with lots of men. And her immoral lifestyle had separated her from any intimacy with God. But now she desires an intimate relationship with God, through the relationship she now has with Jesus.
 - “My intimacy with Jesus is dependent upon my life of purity in the world” (God gave me this as I was walking in the hallway at the CC offices Thursday am).

- All glory in life goes to Jesus
 - I Cor.11:15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?
 - Phil.3: 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame...
 - This sinful woman, as a result of her repentant heart, was now leaving the “glory” of her old life for the “glory” of salvation.
 - I Cor.10:31 Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.

There is one aspect of this worshipful expression that is especially interesting, and it has to do with the anointing of Jesus’ feet after they were washed. The custom of the day was to anoint distinguished guests with perfumed oil. This was kind of like us putting on deodorant or perfume today (“freshening up”).

- Ruth 3: 3 Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes.
- II Sam.12: 20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped...

Jesus was refreshed by this woman’s worshipful expression. There’s nothing that refreshes the heart of God like someone who worships him with reverence and awe, in light of who He is, and all He’s done for us.

Some people do not express themselves in worship to the Lord because they do not have a keen awareness of their sin, are not repentant, don’t have a servant’s heart, are intimidated, have no longing for intimacy with Jesus, are unwilling to yield all glory to Him, have limits on how far they will go in humbling themselves before Him.

But perhaps some people do not express themselves in worship simply because they are ignorant of the biblical examples and admonitions on how to express themselves. So before I’m done I’d like to share some of those with you.

Biblical expressions of worship:

- Dancing
 - Ex.15:20 Miriam and the women after the Red Sea crossing; I Sam.18:6 Israelite women after David killed Goliath;
 - Psalm 30:11; 149:3; 150:4; Eccl.3:4; Jer.31:13; Luke 15:25.

- Clapping

- Expresses approval, praise, & also thanks
- Psalm 47:1...Clap your hands, all you nations, shout to God with cries of joy.
- Shouting
 - An expression of joy, triumph, or exaltation
 - Psalm 20:4-5; 33:2-4; 71:23; 95:1; 98:4,6; 100:1; Isa.12:6; 24:14; 26:19; 35:2; Zech.2:10; 9:9.
- Lifting hands
 - Expresses need, dependency, surrender, connected with a vow or promise (“I solemnly swear to tell the truth...”); Can also be physical gesture in simply blessing the Lord.
 - Ex.9:27-29; I Tim.2:8; Psalm 63:4; 106:26; 134:2; 141:2; 143:6.
- Bowing
 - This is the most common universal act of respect and submission.
 - Gen.41:42-43; II Sam.14:22; I Kings 8:54/Matt.12:42; Phil.2:9-10/Isa.45:23; Rom.14:11.
 - Abraham’s chief servant after finding Rebekah for Isaac (Gen.24:12-19, 26-27, 50-52); The Israelites after Moses communicated the Lord’s concern for them (Ex.4:29-31); Passover (Ex.12:26-27; Moses from the cleft of the rock (Ex.34:5-8); David & Isreal at the dedication of the Temple (I Chron.29:20); Ezra at the building of the Temple (Neh.8:5-6); The Magi (Matt.2:11).
 - Psalm 95:6; Rev.4:11; 5:14; 11:16; Neh.8:6; Luke 5:6-8.
- Prostrating Oneself
 - Rev.4:9-11; 11:16
 - Abraham after God told him Sarah would have a son (Gen.17:17); A joyous faith response.
 - Luke 5:12 A man covered with leprosy before Jesus; Tremendous need for mercy.
 - Num.20:6 Moses and Aaron in response to the grumbling Israelites; Desperate prayer.
 - Joshua 7:1-6 Joshua after the men were killed at Ai; Job after the initial tragedies struck his life (Job 1:20-21).

CONCLUSION

- Hebrews 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.
- We are never too old to express ourselves in worship. You can worship holding on to a walker, in a wheelchair, from a sickbed, etc.