WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.

We use the word worship frequently. According to the bulletin, this is a Worship Service. Tonight we have a community worship service here at the church. But if you were to describe Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal and Catholic worship services, the differences would be significant.

The Wikipedia article on the Asbury Revival begins this way: “The 2023 Asbury revival was a Christian revival at Asbury University in Willmore Kentucky. The revival was sparked by students spontaneously staying in Hughes Auditorium following a regularly scheduled chapel service on February 8, 2023. Following the gathering, Asbury President Kevin Brown sent out a brief two-sentence email. ‘There’s worship happening in Hughes. You’re welcome to join.’ ”

So what does the word worship actually mean? The Greek word most often translated “worship” is *“proskuneo,”* which literally means “to kiss toward,” and which seems to imply kissing the feet of the one worshiped. It is often used following a Greek word which means to fall down.

Revelation 4:9&10a Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever.

Revelation 5:14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Revelation 19:10a At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.

Body language is what we say non-verbally when we communicate with someone.

Leaning back in your chair with arms and legs crossed signals resistance. Getting down on your knees with your face to the ground communicates surrender and trust.

Our English word worship is derived from the Old English word which essentially means to declare the worth of someone. That this is an essential part of what worship is seems obvious from the descriptions of worship in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 4:10&11 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Revelation 5:12 In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.”

Worship Is Not About a Place

John 4:19-21 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.”

John 4:22-24 “You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

True Worship Must Be in Truth

Mark 7:6&7 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:” ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ ”

Worship without Confession and Repentance is Worthless

Malachi 2:13&14 Another thing you do: You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them from your hands. You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Isaiah 59:1&2 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

(See Isaiah 1:11-17) Verse 14 Your New Moon feast and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

Our Text

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.

“Therefore…in view of God’s mercy.” In chapters one through four Paul has explained that we are all sinners deserving God’s wrath but God in His incredible grace has sent His Son to die on a cross to make full payment for our sins. He has further explained that we receive forgiveness of sins, apart from doing anything good to deserve it, simply by believing the Gospel that he defines in I Corinthians 15:3&4 as, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

He has explained in chapters 5-8 that God has, as Peter puts it in 2 Peter 1:3, His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Because of this God through Paul urges us to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.” We are being urged to “offer our bodies as a living sacrifice,” to give up our rights to do as we wish and obey God, even if it means rejection by our culture and/or even persecution.

The NIV correctly translates the Greek in saying “bodies” (plural) and “sacrifice” (singular). There is no meaningful surrender to the will of God in our life, without doing it as a functioning part of the body of Christ. We are to be holy, separated unto God, and pleasing Him.

“This is your true and proper worship.” The word translated worship here is *“latreia,”* used in Hebrews 9:1&6(NASB) Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary….Now when these things have been so prepared, the priest are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship.

What Have We Learned

The primary meaning of the word most often translated worship in the New Testament means to show surrender and trust by the worshiper’s body language.

Worship is “worthship,” declaring that God is worthy of adoration and praise.

Worship is not about a place but must be in “spirit and truth.”

Worship without confession and repentance is worthless.

God has forgiven us and given us everything we need for life and godliness.

In view of that true worship is offering ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice.

May our partaking of the Lord’s Table be an act of true and proper worship.