

JESUS' ORDER OF WORSHIP

Text: Matthew 5:23-26

INTRODUCTION: The highest hour in the life of the Christian is the hour of worship. The act of worship is the center of this Church. Actually, the Christian's entire life is to be an act of worship, for worship is not only sitting quietly in a building with hands folded. The Biblical meaning of worship is servitute, it means to labour, to service--the service of God. Worship is the state of a hired labourer or slave rendering serviceto his master.

But the highest hour for the fellowship of this Church is when it meets together to worship God. The Bible gives this command, "not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together."

We are careless worshippers. Some of the greatest sin is committed with regard to the worship of the Church. We sin against the worship of God in two manners. First, by our absence. Some have not been in this church for two years, showing their coldness, indifference, and spiritual unconcern. It is a manifestation of their lack of love for and fear of God. If you do not intend to attend the worship services of this church then do not join it.

We sin against the worship of God also by our attitude. We show a lack of interest, respect and reverence--clockwatchers, whisperers, gossips, etc.

How should our worship service be conducted? Jesus, in these verses, is giving us the correct "order of worship."....First, be reconciled.."

I. JESUS PUTS OBEDIENCE BEFORE EXTERNAL ACTS OF WORSHIP.

Verses 23,24-

It isn't so much what you do, as it is what you are.

1. Verse 20 is the theme of the whole sermon. Jesus is describing what the Kingdom of God really is--it is the right of God to rule in your life, more than outward observance of rules and regulations.

(1) The Jews took delight in the precise performance of the appointed ritual. There was an increased concentration on the traditional ritual of worship at the expense of its spirituality. (The prophets)

(2) They decreed that no act of offering could be interrupted, thus laying the emphasis on the offering instead of the heart.

2. Jesus is saying here that all outward forms of worship and service are meaningless if the heart is not right.. obedience first.

(1) Obedience to the law Jesus has just laid down--anger with a brother. The inward condition is to take precedence over all outward actions. "ought"--something, anything against you.

Worship ought to be a time of heart-searching - Confession of Sin.

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INTRODUCTION: "The highest hour in the life of the Christian is the hour of worship. The act of worship is the center of this Church. Actually, the Christian's entire life is to be an act of worship, for worship is not only sitting quietly in a building with hands folded. The biblical meaning of worship is servitude, it means to labour to achieve--the service of God. Worship is the state of a hired labourer or slave rendering services to his master.

But the highest hour for the fellowship of this Church is when it meets together to worship God. The Bible gives this command, "not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together."

We are careless worshippers. Some of the greatest sin is committed with regard to the worship of the Church. We sin against the worship of God in two manners. (First, by our absence. Some have not been in this church for two years, showing their coldness, indifference, and spiritual unconcern. It is a manifestation of their lack of love for and fear of God. If you do not intend to attend the worship services of this church then do not join it.)

We sin against the worship of God also by our attitude. We show a lack of interest, respect and reverence. Clockworkers, whisperers, gossip, etc.

How should our worship service be conducted? Jesus, in these verses is giving us the correct "order of worship".... First, be reconciled...."

I. RECONCILIATION BEFORE EXTERNAL ACTS OF WORSHIP.

Jesus is giving us the right order of worship. He is describing what the Father of God really is--it is the right of God to rule in our lives, more than outward observance of rules and regulations.

(1) The law of delight in the quiet performance of the spiritual. There is a right order of worship at the expense of its application. (The prophets)

They desired that an external order would be interrupted, thus taking the emphasis off of the heart.

2. Jesus is saying here that all outward forms of worship and services are meaningless if the heart is not right.

(1) Obedience to the law Jesus has just laid down--anger with a brother. The inward condition is to take precedence over all other things. "Overt" something, saying against you.

the unexpressed condition of the heart endangers the soul as well as the unexpressed deed.

Amos 5: 21 - they
went thru the ritual
the next day cheated their
neighbor.

- a. God looks at the heart and no act of worship is acceptable to Him that comes from a heart which is guilty of unconfessed wrong to another.
- b. In our worship we ought to recall there, as nowhere else, any sin lying on our conscience. Worship ought to be a time of heart-searching as we come before God.

(2) This reveals the close connection between worship and offering and our everyday life.

[You cannot get your life into an offering envelope.] God demands more than that.

3. The purpose of this offering was to atone for sin--but for it to be effective, restitution had to be made. The sacrifices could not avail for a man unless he was first reconciled to his brother--this became a barrier to worship

III--the Lord's prayer, and the parable of the unjust steward.

4. There is a great danger of making certain ceremonial rites cover up moral failure. We often avoid every twinge of conscience by saying, "After all, I am worshipping God." We are balancing one thing with another, thinking this good will make up for that bad.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me!"

I John 3:20--"If our heart condemns us, God is greater than the heart is our heart."

III. JESUS EMPHASIZES THE URGENCY OF OBEDIENCE.

Verse 25-

- 1. The little word "therefore" at the beginning of verse 23, points to the terrible penalties as one reason for this urgency.
- 2. In this verse the imagery is borrowed from the ancient legal custom of dealing with debtors who could be remanded to prison until that paid the last cent of their debt. "Before it is too late"

3. This has a two-fold application:

- (1) This is a piece of practical advice. Bitterness breeds bitterness. The accuser is the angry brother. We must be humble enough to confess that we were wrong and make apology.
- (2) There is a more ultimate meaning here. It is significant that both debtor and creditor are depicted as on their way to the judge. We are always on our way to the JUDGE. Every infraction of God's will and law, when it is without confession and repentance must finally reach his court.

- a. This urgency is because of our relationship to God. This is our position. We must always think of ourselves as before God, the Judge.
- b. The adversary becomes the disobeyed will of God. The same fire that warms also burns. The cross cries for our salvation or condemnation. The love of God when rejected, turns into the wrath of God.

III. JESUS REVEALS THE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE
Verse 26

1. The solemn formula--"Verily, I say unto you."--Jesus looking to the future judgment and tells us what He saw.
2. Once we fall under the punishment of the Divine Judge there is no end to them until the last penny of the consequences of our disobedience has been paid. To delay obedience, and still more, to delay the abandoning of disobedience, is madness in view of the storm that may at any moment burst on the heads of the rebels.--"lest at any time.."
3. The Scripture knows of no possibility of escape. "How can it be paid?" Payment is impossible.
4. Jesus is saying that the man whose religion is only a performing of outward acts is in danger of hell--there is no real heart obedience to Christ.

There can be no real worship of and service to God until the heart is bowed in obedience to the Law and will of Christ.

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