

LEAD! C.10 World-Changing Worship

In Which We Give Up the World for God, So We Can Give God to the World

Worship is simultaneously the most personal and the most all-encompassing of all human experiences. True worship is to encounter the Divine Presence in the very depths of our being, in a posture of absolute stillness and submission.

Yet such an encounter doesn't merely empower and inspire us; it also requires us to manifest that same Presence amidst the frenzy and confusion of this present darkness (cf. [Ephesians 6:12](#)). Even to those we think least likely to respond...

Memory Verse: "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."
-- [John 4:24](#) (NKJV)

Assigned Reading

1. [Richard Foster](#): [Celebration of Discipline](#)
 - 11. Worship
2. [Donald Whitney](#): [Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life](#)
 - 5. Worship
 - 6. Evangelism
3. [Eugene Peterson](#): [A Long Obedience in the Same Direction](#)
 - 4. Worship: "Let's Go to the House of God!"
 - 16. Blessing: "Lift Your Praising Hands"

Anecdote

Read [2 Chronicles 7](#). How does Solomon worship?

Bible

[John 4:1-42](#)

Our story begins with Jesus on the move:

^{4:1}Therefore, when the Lord knew that the [Pharisees](#) had heard that Jesus made and [baptized](#) more disciples than John ²(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

The religious leaders of the day were not very happy him, so Jesus decides to head back home -- even if means passing through the [wrong side of the tracks](#):

⁴But He needed to go through Samaria. ⁵So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

[Samaria](#) was even further down the social ladder than [Galilee](#). Though originally part of David's Kingdom, Samaria went its own way after Solomon (cf. [1 Kings 12](#)), and was all but obliterated after the exile (cf. [2 Kings 17](#)). The Jews of the day didn't really

consider it part of Israel, despite the strong historical connection:

⁶Now Jacob's [well](#) was there. Jesus therefore, being [wearied](#) from [His] journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Jesus for his part seems more interested in the well as a source of water than a historical landmark:

⁷A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a [drink](#)."

⁸For His [disciples](#) had gone away into the city to buy food.

Though (as he presumably knew) such a request is far from ordinary in these circumstances:

⁹Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a [Jew](#), ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus' response is striking. He neither accepts nor rejects her criticism, but takes her to a different place entirely:

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you [living](#) water."

This contains several excellent lessons on how to do evangelism. First, avoid getting dragged into common controversies. Second, pique people's curiosity:

¹¹The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹²Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

Her response is probably more incredulous than sincere. Still, Jesus answers her, though only indirectly:

¹³Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will [thirst](#) again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

This sounds good to her, though she is still probably skeptical:

¹⁵The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Jesus may give His living water freely, but we still have to pay the price of owning up

to our own thirstiness [C.1]:

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your [husband](#), and come here."

¹⁷The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'

¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke [truly](#)."

Ouch. That probably explains why she came to the well at noon by herself, rather than in the cool of the day with the other women.

She is duly impressed by His knowledge of her:

¹⁹The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a [prophet](#)."

Though instead of obeying His command, she poses her own riddle:

²⁰Our fathers [worshiped](#) on this mountain, and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Scholars disagree about whether this is a sincere question or a religious-sounding distraction. Significantly, though, it harkens back to the distinction between Jews and Samaritans she talked about earlier. The divide was not merely cultural but spiritual, and a deep source of shame and resentment among Samaritans.

As someone who had suffered more than her share of shaming, she may well have raised the issue preemptively, more fearing than hoping for an answer. Either way, she got more than she bargained for:

²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

This is an astounding teaching coming from a Jew. Jesus simultaneously both affirms and obsoletes the Jewish understanding of worship. [C.2]

²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

²⁴God [is] Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

As usual (cf. [Matthew 5:21](#) et al), He calls us to go beyond mere forms and conventions in order to directly experience the authentic Name of God. [C.3] What is unusual is that He shares this profound insight not with the religious leaders, or even His disciples,

but a doubly-outcast Samaritan!

The radical nature of his teaching causes her -- either in bewilderment or hope -- to raise the "M" word:

[25](#)The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

Which Jesus accepts, long before making a similar admission to any Jew:

[26](#)Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am [He]."

The disciples, as usual, are not merely clueless but cowardly:

[27](#)And at this [point] His disciples came, and they [marveled](#) that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

In contrast to the woman, who is filled with enthusiasm and boldness [C.4]:

[28](#)The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, [29](#)"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" [30](#)Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

While the living water is starting to pour forth, the disciples are still worrying about lunch:

[31](#)In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

[32](#)But He said to them, "I have [food](#) to eat of which you do not know."

[33](#)Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him [anything] to eat?"

Jesus, however, has [bigger fish to fry](#):

[34](#)Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His [work](#)."

[35](#)Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

[36](#)And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

[37](#)For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' [38](#)I sent you to

reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

And reap they do:

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I [ever] did."

⁴⁰So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

Not only because of the woman's testimony, but because of what they themselves experienced [C.5]:

⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word.

⁴²Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard [Him] and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Can those we invite to meet Christ say the same?

Conversation

1. What did God tell you about yourself when you first met Him?
2. How must our evangelism also reflect yet transcend our religious heritage?
3. When is our worship not in "Spirit and truth"?
4. Why was the witness of the Samaritan woman so compelling?
5. How can our evangelism -- and worship -- bring about a direct experience of Christ?

Decision

- Repentance: What false wells have you used to quench your inner thirst?
- Action: Ask God to open your eyes this week to see His harvest.
- Worship: Surrender your spirit to God's Spirit, that you might worship Him with your whole heart.

Explore More

- [Worship – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Praise – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Samaritans – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [How to Share Your Faith](#)
- [Servant Evangelism – About Servant Evangelism](#)
- [What Is Prayer Evangelism?](#)
- [YouTube – Here I am to Worship](#)

For Next Week

For next week, read [Proverbs 3](#). What can guide us in the right way?

Memory Verse: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct[a] your paths."* – [Proverbs 3:5-6](#) (NKJV)

References

1. **Blue Letter Bible.** "[John 4](#) – New King James Version." Blue Letter Bible. 1996–2009. 17 May 2009. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?t=NKJV&b=Jhn&c=4> >
2. **New King James Version (NKJV)** Copyright © 1982 by [Thomas Nelson, Inc.](#)


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