

Why Are We Here? To Worship God
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
August 16, 2026

Text: Acts 4:42-47 and Revelation 4:1-11

Purpose: Help the members realize that worship is not only a noun, it is a verb. We need to become a living sacrifice. That for all eternity we will give praise to God. Evermore we will worship God.

A gentleman entered a busy florist shop that displayed a large sign that read, "*Say It with Flowers.*"



The man walked in and said to the florist, "Can you please wrap up one red rose for me?" "Only one?" the florist asked.

"Just one," the customer replied. "I'm a man of few words." ¹



Over the past few weeks, we have been examining a few words to describe the five main purposes of the church. A few weeks ago, we examined the first purpose of the church which is **evangelism**.

Evangelism is sharing the good news concerning Jesus Christ and salvation found only in Him and inviting others to accept Him as their personal Savior. A second task of the church is **discipleship**. Once a person has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, then they need to enter into an extended period of teaching so

that they can fully know the message and teachings of Jesus. A third task of the church is **ministry**. *As we noted in last week's sermon, the purpose of the pastor and the teachers in the church is to prepare the members of the church for acts of service and ministry to the other members in the church as well as the community.* I can tell several of you were listening last week because you remembered the illustration I used from "Pastor Bob's" sermon called "Serve or Burn."

If you look at this picture, you will find **worship** is at the heart of the other four purposes. Today, we have come to explore the fourth purpose or function of the church: that is to **worship**.

Worship that is acceptable to God is a privilege for Christians. Worship is significant and should occupy a significant place in our life. After all, we are commanded to worship. It is a means of nourishing our spirit.

Worship helps us grow spiritually. It helps me keep my priorities straight. Worship is the avenue by which I can praise God for all He has done for me. It is a way for me to say thanks. Worship can be the time in our life when we simply shut out the other cares of the world and focus on God. ²

Sadly, many individuals don't feel the need to make worship a priority.

There are many ways we could explore the topic of worship. I wanted us for a few moments to examine some of the background of biblical worship.



Background in Biblical Worship

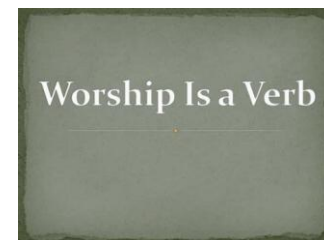


David Jeremiah makes the following observation about worship and this idea of wonder. There is a connection between worship and wonder.

Worship was never intended to be the sole work of the rational mind. The Apostle John, in *Revelation* chapter four, finds himself in the presence of the Almighty God, he discovered that there is a sense of awe and wonder that changes us forever.

Experience vs. Event

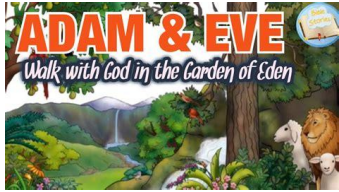
As I was preparing for this sermon this week, I came across an important question. "Is worship for you a noun or is it a verb?" If you remember from your English classes, a noun is a person, place or thing. Do you say, "I am going to the worship service."? Or do you say, "Come and join us at 10:30 when we have our worship service."?



On the other hand, worship can be a verb which implies action and participation. A verb is the "doing" word in a sentence. Many of you would say, "I am going to worship." I have even heard someone say, "We sure did worship Sunday!"

David Jeremiah asks the question, "Is worship for you an event or an experience?" Are you an outside observer watching, looking, judging, evaluating, measuring others when we gather on Sunday OR are you listening, agreeing,

participating, learning, melting into the worship experience? I believe for true worship to be experienced, you must become engaged, involved, and changed by an encounter with God.



Since the days of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, worship has walked a tightrope between lifestyle (a daily, continual walk with God) and liturgy (an orderly time set aside to meditate on the things of God). When God walked in the Garden with his first children in the cool of the day, Adam and Eve worshiped Him as we should – without interruption. The Creator and His creation experienced a continual, ongoing exchange of provision and praise. God provided everything Adam and Eve needed, and they responded with gratitude, reverence, honor, submission, and holy fear.

Yet soon after the sin of Adam and Eve, worship was transformed into an event. Later in Genesis we see their children, Cain and Able, bringing an offering to God. Sadly, one did not bring a proper offering of worship which caused jealousy to raise its ugly head, and one brother killed the other. Instead of worship being a continuous uninterrupted experience between God and man, sin necessitated the scheduling of worship to a time and a place.



Later, God established elaborate and detailed plans for Israel for how, when, and what they should do when they wish to worship God. In the Tabernacle, the

priests would bring offerings and sacrifices perpetually to God. The offering was mediated by a Priest that represented the people before God.



In the New Testament we are introduced to something different. Jesus Christ became our High Priest and He mediated the perfect offering to God on our behalf. Jesus became our sacrifice. Because of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence for believers, Christians are to view their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit and we are to be a Holy Priesthood. Our bodies are viewed as Temples of the Holy Spirit. To my great joy, we can experience God's presence anytime and anywhere. But like the priesthood of old, we are admonished to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together like some are accustomed to doing. We must come together for corporate worship.

Corporate Worship

I have noticed that it has become increasingly popular in our culture for individuals that claim to be Christians to exempt themselves from corporate worship.



A minister went visiting late one evening. He decided to go visit a member that had stopped coming to church. As the minister was talking with this man by the fire, he reached over into the fireplace with the tongs and removed a log from the fire and laid it on the hearth. The minister didn't say a word about the log, but continued to inquire about the

man's work, family, and other concerns. After about 30 minutes the removed log's embers had gone out. The minister again picked up the log and placed it back into the fire. It began to burn again. The minister stood to leave. As he did, the man had a tear running down his face. The minister never said a word about missing this man, but he didn't have to. The log had told it all. When we remove ourselves from corporate worship, we are like that log. We will grow cold. The man told the minister, "I'll see you Sunday."

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, *"And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Many people feel that since I went to church last month, I don't need to go this week. We desperately need corporate worship – the coming together of brothers and sisters in Christ – for a common purpose to worship God. We need each other.

Personal Worship



the idea that I can spend time with God while I mow the grass, drive to work, take a shower, or exercise. I am convinced that this practice is not a good substitute for a personal "quiet" time with God. Make sure that you are

As important as corporate worship is, I think personal worship is where we grow the most in our love for God. Some people have bought into

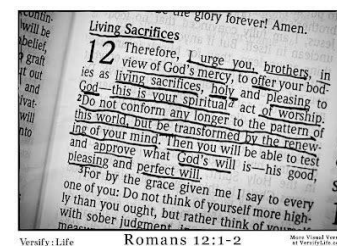


setting aside time to focus on prayer – reading your Bible – and reflecting on and worshipping God.

We need to Cultivate a Mindset of Unscheduled Worship

Every one of us has time during the day when we have unscheduled time or activities. Instead of turning on the television, or flipping through a magazine, or calling a friend, or dozing off, or shopping, we should make it a practice of redeeming the time to focus on the Lord.

Romans 12:1-2 says, *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect."*



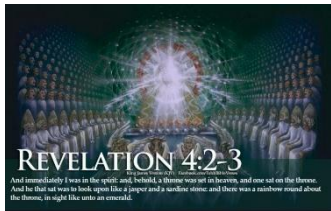
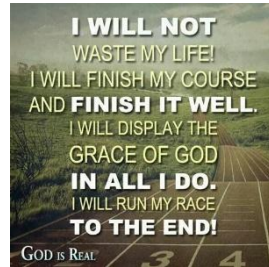
When we make the transition from bringing an offering as an act of worship, to becoming a sacrifice of worship, we will begin to reclaim the experience of worship which we have lost. Our sacrifice of worship – time, talents, and treasure are often all we can bring. But the sacrifice that God is truly seeking is the sacrifice of ourselves.



I must admit the transformation from spectator to participant doesn't come easy. My sins, and your sins, keep us from enjoying the closeness with God as we should. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just

and will forgive us of all unrighteousness. Then we can come boldly into the presence of God and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. But even then, our worship comes up short. The only time I know where true worship will be realized is when we are gathered into heaven around the throne of God in Heaven.

I have not finished my course in this life. My worship is not complete. But we all know someone that has completed their race and finished their course. I know just about everyone in this room knows someone that has completed their course in life. I have loved ones that have gone on to meet the Lord and so do you. I mention this fact to help remind us that we all are mortal and we all will die someday.



When we do, our eternal preoccupation will be centered on the Lamb of God who redeemed us with His precious blood. We can come to a point of acceptance with

our grief for those that are away from us. We also can come to a point of anticipation for our presence with our loved ones again and with our Savior and Lord. The passage of scripture that I read from the Book of Revelation gives us a glimpse into Heaven so we can know what we will see when we get there.

Pure Heavenly Worship

What we find is pure heavenly worship. One of the first things we find is ...

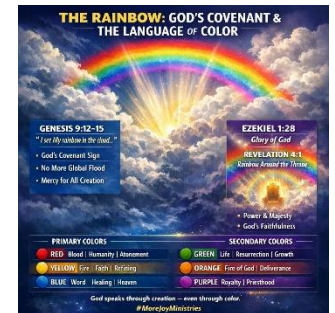


- I. **An Open Door** – twice in book of Rev. 1st time is found in 4:1 and the 2nd time is in 19:11
- II. **Voice like a trumpet**— (I Thessalonians 4:16) the trumpet of God calling His saint's home
- III. **“Come up here”** – this scene is up in heaven – in Response to Revelation 1:9
- IV. **Someone seated on the throne – that is God**
Throne mentioned 46 times in the book of Revelation – 14 times in chapter 4
- V. **The Stones of Jasper and Carnelian** (Exodus 28) were the first and last stones in the breast plate of the high priest

VI. A Rainbow Circled the Throne.

Emerald green – symbolizes life and the circle indicates eternity.

Remember Noah and the promise of the rainbow – our rainbows have seven colors and are only arches, the one in heaven is a complete circle.



Several years ago, I came across an old hymn written by Fanny Crosby. It is titled, “*Rainbow around the Throne.*” Every time I read Revelation chapter 4; I am reminded of this song.

Rainbow Around the Throne

By Fanny Crosby

When the clouds hang dark and heavy,
And the rolling surge we hear,
When no earthly pow'r can shield us,
From the storm that most we fear,
O 'tis then our Father's presence,
To the trusting heart is shown,
In a bright and glorious vision,
Of the rainbow round the throne.

Refrain

**O the rainbow round the throne!
Lovely rainbow round the throne!
Ever brilliant, ever sparkling,
Shines the rainbow round the throne.**

When we stand amid the conflict,
Of the battle raging high,
When the tempter seems to triumph,
and our ranks desponding fly,
With the fleetness of an arrow,
God's protecting care is shown,
In the brightness that descendeth,
From the rainbow round the throne.

Refrain

When the veil of time is lifted,
And the shadows melt away,
When we fall asleep in Jesus,
And awake in endless day,
When the battle march is ended,
And our cares and tears have flown,
We shall gaze, and gaze forever,
On the rainbow round the throne.

Refrain

VII. **Flashes of Lightning** – demonstrating His power

VIII. **Twenty-four elders**

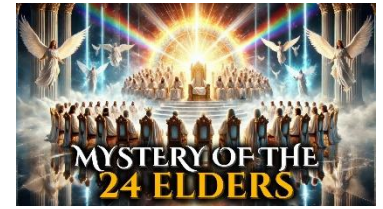
Option 1 – 12 tribes of

Israel + 12 apostles

Option 2 – the church

representative before God

like the 24 elders before the temple of God in the Old Testament



I think it is representatives of the Church

1 – by the praise on their lips Rev 5:8-9

2 – by the clothes on their bodies Rev 19:7-8

3 – by the crowns on their heads Rev 4:4

All promises to the church

IX. **Crowns**

The crown of incorruption

– 1 Cor. 9:26

The crown of Life

– James 1:12

The crown of Rejoicing – 1 Thes. 2:19-20

The Crown of Glory – 1 Peter 5:1-4

The Crown of righteousness – 2 Timothy 4:8



X. **Seven Lampstands** (Ch1) represent the Spirit of God

Notice it is no longer on earth – it is now in heaven

The church is taken out of the world – raptured

Church mentioned 19 times in chapters 1-3 while none in chapters 4-19

Only once in chapter 20 as the church returning with Christ back to earth

XI. **Four Creatures** – similar to the four creatures in Ezekiel 10:14-17 and the Seraphim in Isaiah 6:1-3

XII. **The song they sing eternally is “Holy, Holy, Holy”**



XIII. **The 24 elders worship the Lord and lay their crowns before God**

These 24 elders are representative of the church. We will be represented there worshipping around the throne.

Back to the Future

We are not there yet. But one day we will be there.

A few years ago, a group called *Mercy Me*, wrote a song called, “*I Can Only Imagine*.” This song speaks to the heart of many people, even non-Christians. There is something pulling every person’s heart to worship. Sociologists have identified this desire to worship and have even studied rock concerts and identified this desire to enter into worship – even if it is not the worship of God.

“I CAN ONLY IMAGINE”

By Mercy Me



I can only imagine, what it will be like
When I walk by your side
I can only imagine, what my eyes will see,
When Your face is before Me, I can only imagine, Yea

Chorus

Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel?
Will I dance for you Jesus? Or in awe of you be still?
Will I stand in your presence? Or to my knees will I fall?
Will I sing halleluiah? Will I be able to speak at all?
I can only imagine! I can only imagine! I can only imagine!

When that day comes and I find myself standing in the sun.
I can only imagine when all I will do is forever, forever
worship you!

I can only imagine, yea! I can only imagine.

Chorus

I can only imagine! I can only imagine!
I can only imagine! I can only imagine!
When all I will do, is forever, forever worship you!
I can only imagine!

Of all the scenes in the bible that I take the most comfort in,
it is this throne room scene of worshipping God. I take this
to be the ultimate in pure worship. There is nothing that
can compare to when we finally see Jesus, face to face.

LET US PRAY

God, You have prepared a place for us as believers.
We need to see and believe that the LORD GOD is Holy.
If we do not have a holy God,
 then we will not see Him worthy of our worship.
If we see God as one of us,
 then we will not Worship Him.
If we do not see God as holy,
 then we will despise Him.

There is still time to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Only those that have accepted Christ will be saved. Only those that have accepted the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world will be able to enjoy the worship of God there around the throne of heaven.

From these 11 verses in Revelation 4 we see the completeness of God.

We see his Holiness. We see his power.

We see into the future in a place called heaven – after the rapture of the church

Are you going to be in the group of people that will give praises to God that day?

Do you want to see the Lord? There is an open door to accept Him.

Revelation 3:20-22 reminds us:

“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant him to sit with Me on My throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on His throne.” He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit of the Lord says to the churches.”

Notes:

¹Mikey's Funnies – July 10, 2010 – A Flower Funny

² The Treasury of Bible Illustrations, page 421, The Meaning of Worship