

A Church worships in Spirit and Truth (1 Chronicles 16:7-31 and John 4:19-26)

19-Jan-25

1 Chronicles 16:7-31

⁷ That day David first appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the Lord in this manner:

⁸ Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

⁹ Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

¹⁰ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

¹¹ Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.

¹² Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

¹³ you his servants, the descendants of Israel,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

¹⁴ He is the Lord our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.

¹⁵ He remembers his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand generations,

¹⁶ the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac.

¹⁷ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant:

¹⁸ "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion you will inherit."

¹⁹ When they were but few in number,
few indeed, and strangers in it,

²⁰ they wandered from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.

²¹ He allowed no one to oppress them;
for their sake he rebuked kings:

- ²² “Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm.”
- ²³ Sing to the Lord, all the earth;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
- ²⁴ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous deeds among all peoples.
- ²⁵ For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- ²⁶ For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
- ²⁷ Splendour and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his dwelling place.
- ²⁸ Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- ²⁹ Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come before him.
- Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.
- ³⁰ Tremble before him, all the earth!
The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.
- ³¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!”

John 4:19-26

- ¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”
- ²¹ “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ 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. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

Intro/Marks of a Church

In January, we will be going through a **four-part series** giving **4 marks of what a Church** looks like.

Obviously, there are **many things a Church does** but...

[Slide-4 Marks]

The **4 marks** we’re looking at in **January** are:

1. A Church – **Teaches and Preaches** – which we did the first week
2. A Church – has **Biblical Fellowship** – which we did last week
3. A Church – **Worships in Spirit and Truth** – this week
4. A Church – **Commissions and Sends** – next week!

3rd mark of a church then is - a Church - **Worships in Spirit and Truth**

Worship in Spirit and Truth (John 4:19-26)

[Slide-Worship in Spirit and Truth]

- In our NT reading from **John 4** – the **context** is **Jesus** is in the town of **Sychar** (v5) in **Samaria**
- **Samaria** is located in the **middle** of **Israel**
- In **722BC** when the **10 tribes of Northern Israel** were exiled to Assyria – the **King of Assyria sent foreigners to Northern Israel** who **intermarried** with the **remaining Israelite population** - living around the city of Samaria
- As a result of this intermarriage the **Samaritan's religion** was a **hybrid of Judaism and idolatry** from those foreigners
- Because of this - the **Samaritans were universally despised by the Jews**
- In this passage - Jesus **breaks all cultural barriers and conventions here** – he **talks to a Samaritan**, he **talks to a woman in public at the well**, and he **talks to a someone of a different religion**.
- Jesus is able to put aside these differences to establish common ground
- That's a lesson for us – if we want to help people to see the truth about God and His Son, Jesus – **we need to set aside our differences and prejudices** – so we can have a conversation, build a relationship with them and share the Good News of Jesus.
- Earlier in the passage – in the part we didn't read – **Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a drink of water**

- The **Samaritan woman** is **surprised** that Jesus being a Jew would even talk to her – a Samaritan woman
- **Jesus then turns the conversation to a spiritual one** – saying – he **can offer her “spiritual” “living” water** – to give her **eternal life**.
- The **woman** is **keen to have some of this water**
- So, Jesus tells her to **go and get her husband first and come back** (v16)
- The woman says that she doesn't have a husband (v17) – and Jesus tells her - **He knows – in fact - He knows that she's had 5 husbands and the man she lives with now is not her husband** (v18)
- The **woman** correctly **identifies** that **Jesus is a prophet** – and then **she points out a difference between her Samaritan religion and the Jews religion** (v19)
- The **Samaritans worship on the mountain in Samaria** [**Mount Gerizim**] – whereas the Jews worship at the Temple in Jerusalem (v20)
- Jesus uses this difference – to share what true worship should look like – He says in verse 23 *“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**”*
- What Jesus is saying is that true worship of God is not tied to a geographical location or tied to customs or traditions.
- What Jesus is saying is things like: the **location or place we worship** (a church or a hall or a house) – **the style of worship** (traditional or modern – formal or casual) – **the music** (old hymns or modern – piano or band) – the **frequency of**

the Lord's Supper – what we wear – all of these - **are NOT as important as worshipping in Spirit and Truth**

- But what does Jesus mean by **worshipping in Spirit and Truth**?

Let's explore what Jesus means by exploring these two words – **Spirit and Truth**

1st then **The Spirit**

The Spirit

[Slide-The Spirit]

When Jesus refers to worshipping in the Spirit – He's referring to the Holy Spirit – **God's Spirit** – that people receive **when they truly believe**.

Jesus mentioned this in **John 3** when He **talks** to the religious leader – the **Pharisee** – **Nicodemus**.

Jesus tells Nicodemus - ***no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again (v3) – and - no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit (v4)***

But how do we get to be ***“born again”*** and ***“be born of the Spirit”***?

Well – **the Apostle Peter** tells us in Acts 2:34 – ***“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”***

So, it's only when **we genuinely repent of our sins** – and believe **that Jesus died on that cruel cross for our sins to be forgiven** – and then get baptized to show **that Jesus has washed away our sins** – it's only then - that **we receive the **Holy Spirit****.

[If you are someone here today who hasn't repented of your sin and put your faith in Jesus – today is a good day to do so]

And the Apostle Paul confirms in Romans 8:11 – “*if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ*”

So, anyone, who believes in Jesus has the Spirit dwelling inside them – and it's the Spirit that empowers people to live a godly life.

Which begs the question – what does the Holy Spirit do – when He dwells inside us?

According to Jesus Himself – **the Holy Spirit** “*teaches us all things*” and “*reminds of what Jesus taught*” (John 14:26) and “*testifies about Jesus*” (John 15:27) and “*proves the world to be wrong about sin*” (John 16:9) and “*guides us in all truth*” (John 16:13)

So, by having the Holy Spirit living in us – we can truly live Godly lives and worship God in the Spirit!

And according to the Apostle Paul – in **Galatians 5** – when we walk in step with the Holy Spirit – we will turn away from sinful desires – and **display the fruit of the Spirit** – which is - *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23)

Application

[Slide-Fruit of Spirit]

So, for us it means that **we must walk in step with the Holy Spirit** – and not in step with our fleshly sinful desires!

As we look at that list of the fruit of the Spirit – **which ones are we having trouble with?**

Let's be honest with ourselves? Let's **ask God to help us with the ones we are struggling with...**

Love – is our love unconditional or conditional? Is our love sacrificial? **Do we love our enemies** as Jesus taught (Matthew 5:44)

Is our love – **all about self-interest** – do we love – **so we get something in return?**

Joy – Is our joy in life based on external circumstances like good health, success, wealth and pleasure. When things go wrong – **does our joy go out the window?** Whereas the Bible teaches us – **to rejoice always** (1 Thes 5:16; Philippians 4:4) – because we know **God is always good** – and because we know we have the certain hope of Heaven because of Jesus

Peace – Do we have peace in our hearts – or are we consumed with anxiety, turmoil and fear? The Bible teaches that **God doesn't give us a Spirit of fear** (2 Timothy 1:7) and that the Spirit gives us God's peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7) – and teaches we can be content in every

situation because God is in control and He gives us His strength (Philippians 4:12-13)

Patience – Do we tend to be impatient, quick to get angry and frustrated – or do we remain calm and patient – trusting in God’s plan for our lives – trusting in His perfect timing!

Kindness – Are we kind to others or are we critical, harsh and uncaring? Do we think of others or only ourselves?

Goodness – Are we looking to always do good – or do we wish others harm, get jealous of them, lack sympathy – are we honest or dishonest – are we greedy or generous – are we judgmental or understanding?

Faithfulness – what are our relationships like? Faithful, loyal and reliable – or are we flaky, unfaithful, disloyal and unreliable? Are we hypocritical – faithful when we’re face to face with people – but talking about people behind their backs?

Gentleness – Would people describe us as gentle and humble – or harsh, dominant and aggressive – do we bully or manipulate people to get our own way?

Self-Control – do we easily give in to temptations that break God's word – are we prone to be impulsive and self-indulgent – do we have a lack of restraint – when it comes to - food, anger, spending, sexual desires, addictive behaviour (like social media, technology, alcohol, drugs) – do we gossip, use foul language, or consume ourselves with negative thoughts?

When we worship in the Spirit – we practice the Fruit of the Spirit.

Questions

Application

Perhaps – at morning tea or when you get home – ask someone who knows you well – if your game – **these two questions**:

[Slide-Questions]

1. *When you look at my life, which of the Fruit of the Spirit do you see me reflecting most, what stands out to you?*
2. *When you look at my life, which of the Fruit of the Spirit do you think I am struggling with and need to work on?*

(pause)

The Truth

2nd then – the **Truth**

[Slide-Truth]

Truth means that something is a **FACT** and a **REALITY**.

But - **truth** is a bit **tricky** these days

We seem to have allowed truth to become a casualty

We hear people talking about “*alternative truth*”

And people now have their own version of the truth – which seems to be

‘whatever makes them feel good or happy’ – that’s their truth – even if it doesn’t agree with God’s Word!

In John 14:6 – Jesus says “*I am the Way, the TRUTH and the Life, no one comes to the Father, except through ME*”

Here Jesus is declaring the absolute truth that **He is the ONLY Way to Heaven and the only way to gain eternal life.**

Because Jesus is “God’s Word” in flesh – He is in fact the embodiment of truth – so everything Jesus says and teaches – **we can guarantee is the absolute truth.**

Even when other religions talk about other ways to get to Heaven or Paradise – **we know this is false** – because Jesus only ever tells the truth – He can’t lie – because He is sinless!

In **John 8:31-32** – Jesus says - “*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*”

Jesus is teaching us to stick to His truth in God’s Word and not deviate from it – and if we do stick to His Truth – there is a sense of freedom.

It’s like the truth is our friend. We can have 100 people against us telling a lie – **but we can stand tall knowing we have the truth! This give us great strength.**

Later on, when Jesus was arrested and had a conversation with the Roman governor – Pontius Pilate – in John 18:37-38

³⁷ Pilate said to Jesus “You are a king, then!”.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸ “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him”.

Here, Jesus confirms He is indeed a King and He confirms His mission is to **bear witness to the truth**, reinforcing His role as the embodiment of divine truth.

Even Pontius Pilate knew Jesus was telling the truth

And the answer to Pilate’s question - “*What is truth?*” – the answer is God’s Word – Jesus!

Unfortunately, we have someone in this world always attacking the truth – He is a hidden enemy – **The Devil (Satan)**

Jesus describes the devil as “*a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies*” (John 8:44)

Application

The devil will use every trick in the book to deceive us and take us away from the truth – he did it with Adam and Eve – and he does it with us. He uses temptation,

half-truths, blatant lies sometimes and false teaching – he uses good intentioned people, people with impure motives and people with selfish agendas and egos – he attacks our weaknesses – when we are tired or hurt or vulnerable – *the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour!* (1 Peter 5:8)

For us to stick to the truth, then – **we must always come back to the source of all truth – God's Word – the Bible.**

We must ask ourselves

Does what I'm thinking – line up with the truth in the Bible?

What I'm about to say – does it line up the truth in the Bible or does it contradict the Bible?

Is what people are saying to me or teaching me – actually in the Bible?

What I'm about to do – is it contrary to the truth in the Bible?

Is the behaviour of the person in front of me – prohibited in the Bible? If so – we must not follow it or condone it!

Jesus' point is – when we worship in TRUTH – **the truth in the Bible is our moral compass – it's our handbrake – it's our anchor!**

(pause)

Example of worshipping in Spirit & Truth (1 Chronicles 16:7-31)

So, we've looked at the **Spirit and Truth**

[Slide-Example of Worship]

What will **worshipping in Spirit and Truth** look like – in reality?

Well – let's look very briefly at our OT reading from 1 Chronicles 16:7-31 – and perhaps we can learn from the Israelites what proper worship looks like...

[Please turn there now]

The context is – it's 1000BC – King **David brings the** **Ark of the Covenant** to **Jerusalem** and **establishes proper worship of God by the people of Israel**

We can **summarize** this worship in the following ways:

1st – worship is - **Offering praise and thanksgiving for God's greatness** (vv7-14)

Here the people of Israel – **praise God for the wonderful acts He has done in the past** – His **wonders**, His **miracles** and His **perfect judgments**!

Isn't that what we do as part of worship – we sing God's praises – we remind ourselves of God's greatness by reading His Word – and we give heartfelt thanks for what He has done and continues to do for us!

2nd – worship is - **Acknowledging that God is faithful to His covenant promises**
(vv15-22)

Throughout God's Word – we **read of His promises to** - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David and so on – and we **read of His promise to send a Messiah and Saviour** - and we **read that God keeps all of those promises** – and so we **can then have confidence** that He will keep all His promises that are yet to come!

3rd – worship is - **Proclaiming God is the provider of salvation** (v23-24)

The Israelites proclaimed God's salvation – **how He led them out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land** – where they are now worshipping.

And we can do the same - **we can proclaim that God has provided salvation for us** – in His Son Jesus – and **He has made it possible** for us to go to our Promised Land of Heaven – one day!

So, part of worshipping in Spirit and in Truth is **to proclaim that Jesus is the Way to Heaven!**

4th – worship is - **Calling others to worship God** (vv25-31)

Here the Israelites declare that - **it's their God who is worthy of praise** (v25) and that all other gods in the surrounding nations are false – they are merely idols (v26). The Israelites are hanging on to the truth about their God!

And so, they call upon the families of other nations (vv28-29) **to come and worship the one true God.**

Isn't that part of our worship here – that we call others to come and worship the one true God – who gives the way to Heaven in Jesus.

The bottom line is - Proper worship is when we allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us to produce the fruit of the Spirit – and – when we allow the Truth of God's Word to guide us to praise God with thanksgiving and to lead us to proclaim there is no other name under Heaven, but Jesus, by which we can be saved! That's worshipping in Spirit and Truth!

Conclusion (1 Peter 2:9)

[Slide-1 Peter 2:9]

Let me finish with a **reminder of who we are** from Peter the Apostle from 1 Peter 2:9: ***"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."***

Let's pray... *Lord Jesus, we thank You for the living water You offer us, that quenches our deepest thirst and fills our hearts with Your truth.*

Father God, help us to worship You not just with our words, but with our whole being—sincerely, humbly, and in the power of Your Spirit. Help us to draw near to You in truth, setting aside all distractions and false notions, and offering our lives as an act of true worship. Empower us, Father, to live as those who worship You in spirit and in truth, reflecting Your love and grace in all that we do. We praise You, Lord Jesus, for revealing the Father to us and making a way for us to approach Him freely. In Your precious name, we pray. Amen.