A LOST CONNECTION
WHAT'S YOUR RING TONE?
EPHESIANS 5:19-21
DECEMBER 13 & 14, 2014

SERMON OUTLINE

Four ways that worship gets off track:

1. **Casual worship** is always off track.
2. **Consumer-oriented** worship is always off track.
3. **An unbalanced approach** to worship is always off track.
4. **Worship that is disconnected from spirit and truth** is always off track.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

**When you hear the word “worship,” what comes to mind?**

Everyone worships something. What are some of the common things that people in our community worship today, other than God?

What are some things that keep us from worshiping God more wholeheartedly?

• In his sermon this weekend, Pastor Charlie taught us that worship is about God. He said, “It’s not about being human-centered. It’s not about me. It’s not about getting my needs met. It’s not about my preferred style. It’s not about my personal tastes. In worship we gather and encounter the presence of the Living God, and we declare His greatness and His goodness and His glory with our heart and soul and mind and strength.” Worship should be central to everything we do as children of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and means.

> **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 5:18-21.**

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
1. Think back on everything we’ve talked about the past few weeks as we’ve studied Ephesians 4–5. Why would this instruction on worship have been important for the Christians in Ephesus?

What different actions and attitudes should be a part of our worship, based on Ephesians 5:18-21?

- Paul was talking about how to commune with the God of heaven, how to live for Him, how to serve and obey Him, how to determine His will. Worship is the response generated when a person is filled with the Spirit. In verses 19-21, four Greek participles—“speak, make music” (melodying), “giving thanks” (thanking), and “submit” (subjecting)—modify the verb “be filled” of verse 18, describing the person filled with the Holy Spirit. The first two participles suggest the importance of music and Scripture in being filled with the Spirit. An attitude of gratitude is a third characteristic of being filled with the Spirit. Finally, an attitude of mutual submission among believers is a characteristic of being filled with the Spirit. Jesus teaches us about the importance of worship in His conversation with the woman at the well. From their exchange, we learn four ways that worship gets off track.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 4:19-26.

19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he” (John 4:19-26, ESV).

- John 4:1-18 sets the scene for Jesus’ interaction with the woman at the well. Jesus knew the woman’s moral history, and it was a tragic record of failure. During their conversation, Jesus brought the woman to face her sinful life. Perhaps uncomfortable with the direction the conversation was going, the Samaritan woman called Jesus a prophet and tried to divert the exchange away from her and her sinfulness to a less personal issue.

2. Read John 4:19-26 and look at the issue the woman raised about worship. How does this passage relate to our discussion of worship from Ephesians 5?

How did Jesus describe true worship to this woman? What role does Jesus have in the true worship of God?

- The woman at the well tried to divert the exchange away from her and her sinfulness to a less personal issue. She pointed out that Jews worshiped in the Jerusalem temple; Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim. In response, Jesus guided the conversation to a more important matter—the object of worship. He emphasized that God is interested in quality of worship, not the place of worship—in how people worship, not where.
Based on their conversation, Jesus could tell that the woman’s worship was off track. What are the four ways Pastor Charlie taught us our worship can get off track?

- From Pastor Charlie’s sermon, four examples of worship that is off track are through casual worship, consumer-oriented worship, an unbalanced approach to worship, and worship that is disconnected from spirit and truth.

The first example of worship that is off track is worship that is casual. Pastor Charlie said the best way to combat that is by preparing our hearts for worship. What are some ways we can prepare ourselves for worship before we get to church? Whether our worship is at church, in our group, or at home, what are ways that we can prepare ourselves daily and weekly to meet with God in worship?

- As Pastor Charlie pointed out, we spend time preparing for what matters to us. If worship matters, then we should prepare for our times of gathering to worship. There are countless ways we can do this, but a few examples include spending some time during the day before we worship meditating on Scripture; getting a worship tape and playing it on your way to church; or spending time in prayer, confessing sin and getting your heart right with God.

- The second example of worship that is off track is consumer-oriented worship. Read John 4:20 again. What was the woman’s focus when it came to worship? How is that an example of consumer-oriented worship?

- The Samaritan woman’s focus in worship was on the place of worship, not on God Himself. She was focused on the details that make up the experience of worship. However, worship is not about, primarily, what we get out of it. It’s not about us. Worship is what we give to God.

3. What is one example of consumer-oriented worship that you see in your own life?

Pastor Charlie challenged us to combat consumer-oriented worship by calling to mind the attributes of God. What attribute of God speaks directly to your example of consumer-oriented worship from the previous question?

- These attributes of God remind us that He deserves better than our consumeristic tendencies to make worship about ourselves. Fellowship of the Rockies will not be a church where we make worship about us. In Pastor Charlie’s words, “We will not be here as consumers. This is not a movie. It is not a play. It is not a game. It is not a show. This is what we do for God, and you are here primarily as a giver of worship to God Almighty.”
The third example of worship that is off track is an unbalanced approach. How was the Samaritans’ worship off balance? What were they too focused on (see v. 20)?

- In verse 20, the Samaritan woman referenced the way “our fathers” worshiped. For them, their worship was off balance in the direction of tradition. They cared more about how worship had been done for generations than having their own personal, genuine worship experiences.

What are some ways your worship has felt off balance lately? What has it taken, or what will it take, to restore balance?

Pastor Charlie voiced his prayer that we will be a church that does worship in a way that honors God and makes worshiping accessible to everybody. What do you think this looks like? What does it not look like?

The final example Pastor Charlie gave us of worship that is off track is worship that is disconnected from spirit and truth.

4. Read John 3:3-8 and John 1:12-13. What does it look like to worship God “in spirit”?

Is it possible to worship God without the Holy Spirit? Think back to Ephesians 5:18. Why or why not?

- When worship is connected to Spirit and truth, it changes your life. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit on our hearts to breathe new spiritual life in us, we will not wholeheartedly worship God. Those who do not have the Holy Spirit may appreciate God on some level but their hearts are still cut off from Him. By commanding the Samaritan woman to worship God in spirit, Jesus revealed that true worship requires a spiritual transformation of the heart. Before approaching God in worship, we must make sure that we have trusted Christ as Lord and Savior. To worship in truth means to worship God as He truly is. Our worship must be focused on the character of God as it is revealed in Scripture.

5. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-3. What does it look like to worship God “in truth”?

- In response to Jesus’ words about genuine worship, the woman brought up the coming Messiah. Based on their understanding of Deuteronomy 18:18, the Samaritans also looked for a Messiah, a prophet like Moses. They believed this prophet would restore the worship system on Mount Gerizim and convert Jews and pagans. The woman wistfully anticipated this long-awaited prophet. Jesus’ response no doubt stunned the woman: “I am He.” Jesus was God incarnate, “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14) to provide redemption for
sinners. The woman found herself in the presence of the One who could forgive her sins and give her new life. We, too, find ourselves in His presence, a truth that should fuel our worship.

How does the reality that Jesus is your Messiah impact your worship?

What are some ways to keep the truth of the gospel central to your thinking as you seek to worship God throughout the week?

• Because worship is so important, it's critical that we be aware of four ways that worship gets off track. Once we are aware of these issues, then we can commit to keeping them out of our worship as individuals and as a church.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

6. Of the four ways Pastor Charlie talked about worship getting off track, which have you seen as a struggle in your life lately? What does this reveal about your relationship with God?

The most common Greek word for worship is proskuneo, and it envisions falling on one’s face in reverence or bowing the knee in homage. What can you read or do this week that might lead you to a posture of worship that you are not accustomed to?

DIGGING DEEPER

Worship, though expressed in a variety of forms, will always be a matter of the heart—the response of our hearts to God’s revelation of Himself. One of the best places in Scripture to turn for examples of intimate worship is the Book of Psalms. The psalmists give us detailed pictures of what it looks like to worship God throughout the various seasons of life, in all its ups and downs. Let’s look briefly at Psalm 92, a song that was used in temple worship services. This song helps us better understand how and why our worship of God is important.

> READ PSALM 92 AND CONSIDER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW.

1 It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; 2 to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, 3 to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. 4 For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. 5 How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep! 6 The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: 7 that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish,
doomed to destruction forever; \(^8\) but you, O Lord, are on high forever. \(^9\) For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. \(^10\) But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil. \(^11\) My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. \(^12\) The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. \(^13\) They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. \(^14\) They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, \(^15\) to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

1. According to Psalm 92:1-4, why does God deserve our worship?

- The psalmist begins with a declaration: “It is good to praise Yahweh, to sing praise to Your name, Most High” (v. 1). The Hebrew word translated “good” refers to something fitting and appropriate. Praise is an appropriate response to God because of His faithful love. We know how undeserving we are of His love, but He gives it nonetheless. In response, it is our privilege to celebrate God.

2. What are some examples you’ve seen of the works of God’s hands? How do these move you to celebrate Him?

3. Which phrase from this song resonates the most with you when you think about who God is and what He has done for you?

- If you’ve experienced the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, then you have every reason to celebrate. By the works of His hands and His indescribable love, He has saved you from a life separated from God and delivered you into God’s kingdom, where you can be in His presence forever. The gospel is cause for worship today and every day. When we recognize that we’re completely undeserving of the grace God shows us, it heightens our understanding of what a privilege it is to worship Him.