

gracepoint

A M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

Homegroup material



ELEMENTS OF

True Worship

GARY RIVAS | 27 NOV 2011

A Colour-Full
CHRISTMAS
gracepoint

I. Introductory Discussion Questions

1. What stood out for you most about the “True Worship” sermon?
2. Read Genesis 22 vs 1-19 below. The story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22 is an uncomfortable one for us. How do you think it was possible for Abraham to be so dedicated to God that he was willing to obey Him, even to the point of sacrificing his son?

- **Genesis 22 vs 1-19:**

“And it happened after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold me. And He said, Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will name to you. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, You stay here with the ass. And I and the boy will go on to this way and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand, and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they both went together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, Abraham! Abraham! And he said, Here am I. And He said, Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked. And, behold, a ram behind him was entangled in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place the LORD will Provide; so that it is said until this day, In the mount of the LORD it will be seen.

And the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of the heavens the second time, and said, I have sworn by Myself, says the LORD; because you have done this thing, and have not

withheld your son, your only one; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies. And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.”

3. In your understanding, what is true worship?
4. Would you say that you are a true worshipper right now? Why or why not?
5. In John 4 vs 23 Jesus said that true worshippers would “worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” What do you think this means?
6. Worship is not just singing songs or going to church, but is in fact, a whole way of living. We often tend to confuse the means of worship with worship itself. Do you think you have done this in any way? How?

ii. Revelation

1. True worship is based on revelation of God. Tom Inglis once said, “Worship is all that we are, reacting to all that God is.” Do you agree with this statement? How does it challenge your perception of worship?
2. We need to ensure that we are worshipping God according to Biblical revelation and that our worship is Biblical. In other words, we need to ensure that we are really worshipping the God of the Scriptures, because otherwise we will soon find ourselves worshipping a god or idol of our own making. How do you think we can ensure that our worship is Biblical?
3. We become like what we worship. Can you see any way in which your worship of God is transforming you more into the likeness of Christ?
4. If you are ruthlessly honest with yourself, is there anything you are worshipping besides God?
5. What is the last clear revelation of Himself that God imparted to you?

iii. Preparation

1. In Genesis 22 vs 3, we see that despite how incredibly difficult it must have been for him, Abraham immediately made preparations to go and worship God in obedience to His command. Do you ever prepare yourself for worship? How?
2. While worship should be an all-pervasive lifestyle, we need to ensure that we set aside specific, dedicated times to worship God. How do you think we can best prepare ourselves for these times?
3. Read the following Scriptures. What do they reveal to you about preparation for worship?

- **Psalm 24 vs 3-5:**

“Who shall go up into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, and has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

- **Matthew 5 vs 23-24:**

“So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God.”

- **Mark 4 vs 3-20:**

“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, it happened that indeed some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and ate it up. And another fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth. And it sprang up at once, due to not having deepness of earth. And when the sun rose, it was scorched. And because it had no root, it withered away. And another fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And another fell on good ground and yielded fruit, going up and increasing. And one bore thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundredfold. And He said to them, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And when He was alone, they who were about Him, with the Twelve, asked Him concerning the parable. And He said to them, To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. But to those outside, all these things are given in parables so that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And He said to them, Do you

not know this parable? And how then will you know all parables? The sower sows the Word. And these are those by the wayside, where the Word is sown. And when they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts. And these are those likewise being sown on stony places; who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with gladness. But they have no root in themselves, but are temporary. Afterward when affliction or persecution arises for the Word's sake, they are immediately offended. And these are those being sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, and the cares of this world, and the deceit of riches, and the lust about other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. And these are those sown on good ground, who hear the Word and welcome it, and bear fruit, one thirty, one sixty, and one a hundredfold.

- **John 4 vs 24:**

“God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

4. In the parable of the sower in Mark 4, Jesus reveals that our hearts can sometimes be unprepared to receive His Word or revelation, or can become hardened and unreceptive to Him. If you honestly examine the state of your heart right now, would you say that it is:
 - Hard and unreceptive?
 - Filled with distractions and concerns that make it difficult for God’s Word to take root in it?
 - Open and ready to receive from God?
5. How do you think you can practically prepare better for worship – both in terms of dedicated times of worship and in terms of living a general lifestyle of worship?
6. We need to prepare ourselves for worship, like Abraham, by being obedient to the revelation that God has given us. In what area of your life do you need to be obedient to God’s instruction or revelation right now?

IV. Separation

1. Abraham purposefully separated himself for the purpose of worship so that there would be no hindrances or distractions. What are the things that tend to distract you from worship most?

2. How do you think you can overcome these distractions?
3. Sometimes, even the elements or means of worship we use can distract us, e.g. the style or volume of the music, the preacher, etc. How do you think we can practically overcome our tendency to focus on our tastes and not allow these things to distract us from worshipping God?

V. Dedication

1. True worship is costly and it requires a giving and surrendering of all that we are. What are the things that tempt you to hold back and not give over completely to God?
2. How do you think we can ensure that we don't just go through the motions of worship, but really dedicate ourselves to it?
3. Read and discuss the following quote:

"Someone has said that the seven deadly sins of society are these: Policies without principles; wealth without work; pleasure without conscience; knowledge without character; commerce and industry without morality; science without humanity; worship without sacrifice." – Leaves of Gold

VI. Proclamation

1. Abraham's encounter with God and worship of Him led him to experience God's character and therefore, he proclaimed what he had discovered about God: "The Lord will provide." (Genesis 22 vs 14). Praise is proclaiming what God has done. Worship is proclaiming Who God is. Spend some time making declarations of praise and worship in your group. What has God done for you lately? What aspect of His character has He revealed to you?
2. Do you think your life is a testimony or proclamation of God? Why or why not?
3. What is one way in which you can practically determine to proclaim God and His works this week?

VII. Call to action

1. What will we do with what we have discovered in this session?
2. How will we hold each other accountable to this?