

The Need Of Worship.

Text: John 8:47

Suggested Hymns:

507, 503, 504, 839, 509

- 1) We find escape in worship
- 2) When life crumbles in
- 3) Comfort beyond life's sunset
- 4) We receive guidance through worship
- 5) Who has the answer?
- 6) Love compels us to worship

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 8:47, ⁴⁷ ***“He who is of God hears God’s words.”*** (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

We worship. This proves us to be human, moral beings. The animals do not worship.

People worship even though they may not know the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture. Man, not knowing the true God, makes himself gods that he can worship. Even people who live in Christian countries but reject God as He has revealed Himself in the Bible and refuse to accept Jesus Christ as His Son and our Saviour nevertheless have some form of religion or follow some cult. Instinctively man worships.

We become abnormal when we cease to worship. Isaiah calls such people *“unnatural children.”* We read in Isaiah 1:2-3, ² ***Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me; ³ The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master’s crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider.”***

So we degenerate and get to be lower than the animals when we do not worship. Only “fools” say, ***“There is no God.”***¹

What prompts us to worship is either fear or love. If it is fear, we are afraid to stop. Our worship will be regular but mechanical. However, God finds no

delight in such artificial worship. Our worship must be motivated by love and appreciation. Only then is God well pleased.

Worship fills a real need in our lives. Without it life is incomplete. The soul either starves, or it feeds upon ashes. If we love God, who has redeemed us by sending His own Son, then we find great delight in praising Him who loved us so greatly that He did not shrink from this sacrifice. No other gods can interest us so long as our hearts are aglow with appreciation to God, who in His grace redeemed us through His Son. Therefore we Christians give first place to God on the Lord's Day. That is the natural thing to do. Our text says "*He who is of God hears God's words.*" May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. We Find Escape In Worship

We worship because we must get away from the vexing problems of life, which irritate us and often make life bitter. We need, likewise, to find an escape from the guilt of sin. No one who is honest with himself and looks into his own heart can deny that he has sinned. "*Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.*"² The finger of guilt is pointed at each one of us and says, "*You are the man!*" or "*You are the woman!*"

However, in our sins we cannot be happy. The way of the transgressor is hard. Sin makes us afraid of judgment and eternity. Especially when health fails us; when disappointments and failures haunt us; when the shadows of death appear on the threshold of our homes, then sin looms up in all its ugliness and tens of thousands cry out, "*Mountains, Fall on us!*"³

We need a place of refuge lest we become despondent and despair. There must be some place where we can go to confess our sins and unburden our souls. There is one Rock higher than we, where we can go and find safety as the sense of sin drives us to distraction. This one Rock is Jesus Christ. He stretches out His pierced hands and draws us to His wounded side and cleanses us from all sin. As I come to worship Him, I find peace within my soul and a hope which reaches into eternity.

Having found this peace in Christ Jesus, I can return to my daily tasks with the joy of forgiveness in my heart. I start life anew. I have found not merely an escape from sin but strength to face the temptations of the week and live in the sunshine of God's love. With confidence I can go forward, knowing that my

Saviour is with me as I run the race of life. He will keep me on that narrow way which leads to life eternal.

2. When Life Crumbles In

We worship because we need to get away from the cares and worries of life. We are disturbed by the events of the day. The aggravations are a strain on our nervous system and our health. In the Old Testament Isaiah felt this nerve-racking pull on life. Uzziah the King had died. During his long reign the nation enjoyed peace with the accompanying prosperity. The prophet was sure that now the bottom would fall out of everything. In that hour he goes to the temple and discovers that the Lord Omnipotent is still on His eternal throne.

We too are harassed by the cares of life: sickness, loss of job, disappointments, failures, and death. Life crumbles in. Our strength fails us. We need someone to lean on. We need God. As we worship we discover that we need not fight our battles alone. After all, God has all things in His hands. This assurance enables us to relax; it steadies our nerves. Once more we can hope.

Or look at other life situations. All around us we see trouble, sorrow, and tears. Sin is doing its worst. Go out into the streets, and look into the eyes of men and women — what do you see? Anxiety, restlessness, tensions, hatred, and grief.

To millions of people the days are drab, empty, and purposeless. There is a deadly routine which completely unnerves. As we worship we discover that, after all, you and I, have a gracious Saviour who stretches out His pierced hands and says to us, *“Come to Me, and find rest for your souls. These things have I spoken to you, that in Me you might have peace.”*⁴ As we come to worship, this Jesus lifts us to His heart and gives us a new hope and a joy which no other can offer us. He promises rest after our toiling on life’s pilgrimage. Even now He offers us peace, forgiveness, and heaven with all its glory. We still are graven upon the palms of His hands.

3. Comfort Beyond Life’s Sunset

We need an escape from the sorrows and tears of life. Sooner or later the angel of death carries some precious soul out of our family circle. At times it is the bread-winner, and the family is in dire straits. Sometimes it is the mother,

leaving her little children orphaned with endless problems for their future well-being. Then again it is the child who has been the sunshine of the home. How empty, how meaningless, how lonely life becomes!

Our friends stand by helpless. In that hour we need God. We need the comfort of His Word. We must know that beyond the gates of death is Jesus, welcoming home the pilgrim of this life. We need the assurance of the resurrection and life eternal.

As we come to worship, Jesus speaks to us through His Gospel, saying, *“Because I live, you shall live also.”⁵ In My Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”⁶* This hope in the heart enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the Philippian prison. That is why mothers have sung to their children while they were dying. That is why David exclaims, *“⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me.”⁷* This hope upholds us in the darkest hours of our lives.

So worship does something to us and for us. It makes God real in our lives. After all, He is a God of love, mercy, and forgiveness. This gives us a unique security. We can look with confidence and with courage beyond this world of bitterness and disappointment and death. We find in this Gospel a joy which dries our tears and brings to our heart a song of peace and reconciliation with God. That is the reason why we need to worship.

4. We Receive Guidance Through Worship

We worship because we need guidance as we pass through the maze of our living. We need an authority which speaks to us with authority. Truth must not, dare not, be founded upon the decisions of man, because man time and again changes his thoughts with the whims of public opinion.

We must have an authority which is above and beyond human changeableness. The truth that we are redeemed from sin, that there is a heaven in eternity, that we are reconciled to God through Christ, cannot be based on human, flexible thinking. Truth must be revealed. *“Thy Word is truth,”* says Jesus.

Therefore the Saviour tells us in our text, ***“He who is of God hears God’s words.”*** This Word is the only authority in things spiritual. Only in Scripture does Christ reveal Himself to us. There is no other written revelation. This Word is final, and it is complete. Believing this Word, we no longer grope in the dark, seeking the truth and trying to find the way. We know God. We know who He is and how He feels toward us. We know the way: *whoever believes that Jesus died for us and our sins shall have eternal life.*

This truth, then, makes us wise to salvation. Through faith in Christ Jesus we are sure that at the end of our earthly journey is heaven, where Jesus awaits us who have been faithful. We know that we receive daily the forgiveness of all our sins by grace and are justified before God, not because of our accomplishments, not because we are better people on earth, but because by faith we stand under the cross, where all our sins are blotted out through Christ’s blood.

This gives us the needed security to enjoy peace of heart and mind. Confidently we can say, ***“I know whom I have believed.”***⁸ All this is underwritten by Jesus’ resurrection. As we worship we are led into this truth and are safe and saved.

5. Who Has The Answer?

Without question we need an authority which answers all questions of human behaviour with positive authority. Someone must give us the code which unerringly tells us what is wrong and what is right, even in our age of endless discoveries and inventions.

If with our community we were compelled each morning to decide what is right and what is wrong, to enact every day our laws of conduct and behaviour, we would have nothing but chaos.

We must have moral laws which through the centuries are unerringly the same. Our conscience cannot set up this set of laws. Final appeal cannot be made to the courts of man. Therefore Elijah, as he met King Ahab to reprove him for his sins, appealed from man’s courts to the higher court, that of God.

In God’s Law we have a standard which is unchanging, an authority which is not debatable. Every morning we know that this Law still stands and that we can

unerringly follow its directives and know that we are doing what is right. The Ten Commandments are basic to right living.

As we worship we sharpen our conscience and receive either approval or disapproval for our conduct from this voice within. In these Sinai laws we have outlined for us a way and “philosophy” of life which has as its purpose to bring us to the end of the day with fewer regrets. As the day comes to a close we can say, *“We have walked with God today.”*

We dedicate ourselves, then, to our Lord God eternal as we worship. We accept and believe His Word and His revelations as final and unerring and sufficient to make us wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. He gave His life on the cross that whosoever believes in Him as his personal Saviour cannot perish but is certain and sure of life eternal.

6. Love Compels Us To Worship

Living in His grace, we worship because we love God. He has done so much for us. Although God is perfect in His holiness and nothing unclean can stand in His presence, nevertheless God has found a way to reconcile us to Himself — through His Son Christ Jesus. This glad message we hear again and again as we worship. God has laid upon Jesus our transgressions, and this Son has paid for our sins in full. Standing beneath the cross in God’s grace, we are forgiven. God remembers none of our sins.

Through the Gospel the Holy Spirit creates and sustains in us this faith. Our hearts therefore are filled with an undying love toward God, who has rescued us from the powers of darkness, set us free from the shackles of sin, and made us heirs of that glory which lets us stand in the very presence of God forevermore.

Therefore week after week we say with the psalmist, *“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the LORD.””* We should be eager to hear this Gospel, sing His praises, and bring our offering of thanks to His altar. And our appreciation and love for the Lord shall not let us undo on Monday afternoon what we have been trying to build up in the Sunday worship.

Therefore *“He who is of God hears God’s words”* and goes home with the joy of forgiveness in his heart.

Let us conclude with the words of the hymnist,¹⁰

*To Thy temple I repair:
Lord, I love to worship there:
While Thy glorious praise is sung.
Touch my lips, unloose my tongue.*

*From Thy house when I return,
May my heart within me burn,
And at evening let me say,
'I have walked with God today'. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Psalm 14:1, 53:1

² Matthew 15:19

³ Luke 23:30

⁴ Matthew 11:28

⁵ John 14:19

⁶ John 14:2

⁷ Psalm 23:4

⁸ 2 Timothy 1:12

⁹ Psalm 122:1

¹⁰ Hymn 504