

Unified Purpose: Worship

March 4, 2018

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Psalm 63

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship.)

Read through the passage out loud several times; then have everyone join in a focused prayer time of praise and thanksgiving. Encourage your group to give praise to God for His attributes that are featured in this passage, and then give thanks for one specific circumstance in their life in which one of these attributes showed up in the last week.

Icebreaker

Tell about something “amazing” (good) that happened to you this week. How did you respond to it?
Transition: In this session, we are going to talk about our response to our amazing God...what the Bible calls worship.

Text for Discussion: Luke 10:38-42

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Jesus was clear: the church exists to make disciples of Christ. This means a transformational new way of living, where we become real life apprentices of Jesus, who by grace and by choice are learning from Him how to live in the Kingdom of God, today. How do we live this out? We worship publicly and privately. We get involved in intentional community. We live lives of mission so that all may know Christ. This week, we will focus on the first of these.

Worship is a way of life. It's experiencing God's goodness and power, receiving His grace and love, beholding His beauty and worth, and then responding with admiration and joy. Following Jesus begins here; we need to sense His goodness, love and beauty personally. We must feel His embrace. The Bible often calls this the One Thing – that our deepest desire is to be with God, to gaze upon His beauty, and to seek Him. (See Psalms 27:4, 42:1-2, 63:1 & Phil 2: 13-14.) Because following Jesus isn't primarily about our diligence, devotion or what we *do*. It's about whom we *desire*.

One Thing is necessary in our lives... but it's so easy to be distracted. It is good to take care of our health, to spend time with family and friends, to be diligent in our work, and to serve one another and our community. But sometimes these very good things take our eyes off of the One Thing we need to focus on, and our modern compulsion to be all-consumingly busy drowns out our need to discover what's truly important to our lives.

So how do we get to a place of desiring God and experiencing His goodness? Two of the main ways God wants to meet us is through prayer and through His word. Stillness is another path, acknowledging God's presence, listening to Him, and just being with Him. Because ultimately – more than our service or hospitality, more than our ministry or good works – Jesus wants to have a relationship with us. He yearns for us to discover and experience His goodness. He desires for us to commune with Him, to enjoy His presence, and to wholeheartedly rest in His embrace.

Guiding Question of the Week

How can we lead a life of worship?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

Opening Questions...

- Look up Psalm 27:4 (one of the verses Paul referenced in his message).
 - What do you think the Psalmist meant by “gazing on the beauty” of the Lord? How is that a part of worship?
 - What do you think the Psalmist meant by “inquiring” of the Lord? How is that a part of worship?
- How do you define worship?
 - From Paul’s sermon
 - “The response to experiencing something amazing.”
 - “Experiencing God’s goodness and power, receiving his grace and love, beholding his beauty and worth, and responding with admiration and joy.”
 - Why is worship so tricky to define?

Digging In...

- Read the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42
 - What is the difference between problematic busyness, and healthy productivity?
 - How does rest enable worship?
 - Are you more like Mary or Martha? How and why?
- Read the story of Mary in John 12:1-8
 - Mary did not know Jesus’ immediate future. Why do you think she did what she did?
 - Was what Mary did an act of private worship or public worship? Explain your answer...
 - Is Judas’ response justified? Why or why not?
 - Do you believe that there is a place for extravagance in worship? Why or why not?
 - How is giving/sacrifice a part of worship?
 - What are the implications for today of what Jesus meant when he said, “You will not always have me?”

Application Time...

- Assess your public worship habits.
 - What are they? How are you doing with them?
 - What shaped your current habits?
 - How do you believe they are forming you into more of an apprentice of Jesus?
- Assess your private worship habits.
 - What are they? How are you doing with them?
 - What shaped your current habits?
 - How do you believe they are forming you into more of an apprentice of Jesus?

Experiment of the week

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

- This week, set aside a definite time each day for 10-15 minutes of stillness (something Paul mentioned in his message). Before the next group meeting, review your week and write down three things you experienced in the times of stillness to share with the group.
- Change your public or private practice of worship this week, based on your assessment above (i.e., shift your practices to try something new and/or different). What is one shift you can make that would help you to be formed into more of an apprentice of Jesus?
 - Come next week ready to share how the shift affected you.