

What God is Looking For

1. Those who worship in Spirit and truth

John 4:23 NKJV

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."

Jesus has been in Judea and is wanting to make His way to Galilee... and heads through Samaria. Actually, John says that he *"needed to go through Samaria"*. This was a detour. Aside from the fact that it was a detour, Jews and Samaritans generally didn't mix, and it was uncommon for the Jews to choose to go through Samaria.

John 4:7-24

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Isn't it interesting who Jesus taught this to? And where He was?

Worship is not about a geographical place, it's not about culture or nationality or status, or even religious qualifications of the person. The Worshippers God is looking for are those who worship in Spirit and Truth.

Worship is bowing all that we are before all that God is!

I love how Archbishop William temple defined worship:

"Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose--all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable".

Rom. 12:1-2 AMP

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you

may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].

Rom. 12:1-2 TPT

Beloved friends, what should be our proper response to God's marvelous mercies? I encourage you to surrender yourselves to God to be his sacred, living sacrifices. And live in holiness, experiencing all that delights his heart. For this becomes your genuine expression of worship.

e.g. David

1 Sam. 13:13-14

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

- Obedience and true worship can impact our destiny

Acts 13:21-22

And afterward they asked for a king; so, God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'

1 Sam. 15:22-24

But Samuel replied,

"What is more pleasing to the Lord:

your burnt offerings and sacrifices

or your obedience to his voice?

Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice,

and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.

Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft,

and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So, because you have rejected the command of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."

Then Saul admitted to Samuel, "Yes, I have sinned. I have disobeyed your instructions and the Lord's command, for I was afraid of the people and did what they demanded.

Worship “in Spirit” can mean several things.

1. It can mean that worship is to be spiritual in nature.

That is, it is not about the externals of worship such as buildings, stain glass windows, altars and external forms. It is not about a specific holy place (the temple). It is a sincere action of the heart toward God and, therefore, it can occur anywhere.

All that is needed for spiritual worship to take place is the heart and the voice. Everything else is merely an enhancement of the heart and the voice.

You can have instruments playing and people can be singing, but if the heart and the voice are not engaged, it is not spiritual worship.

2. It can mean that worship is to be done “in the Holy Spirit.”

That is, our worship should come from a human spirit that is infused with the Holy Spirit. This is worship that is inspired by the Holy Spirit within and may at times consist of “singing in the Spirit” which Paul tells us is singing in “tongues” (I Cor. 14:15).

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Worship “in truth” can also mean several things.

1. Worship “in truth” is worship that is without falsehood.

It is sincere worship offered without hypocrisy. It is not something that is done for show. It is not just an outward form containing words of constant repetition. When you study the worship of David, he was blatantly honest with God in his worship.

2. Worship “in truth” is worship that is “according to truth,” that is, according to the Word of God which is truth (John 17:17).

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

2. Those who will stand in the gap

Eze. 22:30 NKJV

“So, I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.”

Eze. 22:30 NIV

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.

2 Chron 7:12-14

Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

e.g. Nehemiah

Neh. 1:1-6

It came to pass in the month of Chislev (3rd month of the Hebrew year), in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned.

When it was Nehemiah's turn to serve the King with wine, he went before the king and the king asked him what was wrong. Nehemiah was sad.

Neh. 2:3-6

(Nehemiah) said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?" Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So, I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant

has found favour in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So, it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time."

- Nehemiah set out and journeyed to Jerusalem. He observed the state of the walls and rallied people to help build the walls. They rebuilt the walls, sword in one hand ready to fight, and building with the other hand... their enemies were against them.

So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

- This was Nehemiah's response. What is our response when we see certain walls broken down?
- What is our response when we see certain things that must surely grieve God's heart?
- What is our response to those in authority in government? In church? In family? In business?
- What is our response to current economic challenges? Eskom?
- What words are we releasing from our mouths?
- Are we burying our heads in the sand?

1 Tim. 2:1-2 NKJV

Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

Most of all, I'm writing to encourage you to pray with gratitude to God. Pray for all men with all forms of prayers and requests as you intercede with intense passion. And pray for every political leader and representative, so that we would be able to live tranquil, undisturbed lives, as we worship the awe-inspiring God with pure hearts. – TPT

3. Those who have Faith

Mt. 9:27-29 TPT

One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'"

Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So, don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you; he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?"

As Jesus left the house, two blind men began following him, shouting out over and over, "Son of David, show us mercy and heal us!" And they followed him right into the house where Jesus was staying. So, Jesus asked them, "Do you believe that I have the power to restore sight to your eyes?" They replied, "Yes Lord, we believe!" Then Jesus put his hands over their eyes and said, "You will have what your faith expects!"

Mt. 8:23-26 TPT

They all got into a boat and began to cross over to the other side of the lake. And Jesus, exhausted, fell asleep. Suddenly a violent storm developed, with waves so high the boat was about to be swamped. Yet Jesus continued to sleep soundly. The disciples woke him up, saying, "Save us, Lord! We're going to die!"

But Jesus reprimanded them. "Why are you gripped with fear? Where is your faith?" Then he stood up and rebuked the storm and said, "Be still!" And instantly it became perfectly calm.

Mt. 8:5-10, 13 TPT

When Jesus entered the village of Capernaum, a captain in the Roman army approached him, asking for a miracle. "Lord," he said, "I have a son who is lying in my home, paralyzed and suffering terribly." Jesus responded, "I will go with you and heal him." But the Roman officer interjected, "Lord, who am I to have you come into my house? I understand your authority, for I too am a man who walks under authority

and have authority over soldiers who serve under me. I can tell one to go and he'll go, and another to come and he'll come. I order my servants and they'll do whatever I ask. So, I know that all you need to do is to stand here and command healing over my son and he will be instantly healed." Jesus was astonished when he heard this and said to those who were following him, "He has greater faith than anyone I've encountered in Israel!.... Then Jesus turned to the Roman officer and said, "Go home. All that you have believed for will be done for you!" And his son was healed at that very moment.

e.g. Prophetess Anna

Lk. 2:36-38

Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

A prophetess named Anna was also in the temple court that day. She was from the Jewish tribe of Asher and the daughter of Phanuel. Anna was an aged widow who had been married only seven years before her husband passed away. After he died, she chose to worship God in the temple continually. For the past eighty-four years she had been serving God with night-and-day prayer and fasting.

*While Simeon was prophesying over Mary and Joseph and the baby, Anna walked up to them and burst forth with a great chorus of praise to God for the child. And from that day forward she told everyone in Jerusalem who was waiting for their redemption that the anticipated Messiah had come! - **TPT***

Lam. 3:25-26

*The Lord is good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul who seeks Him.
It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
For the salvation of the Lord.*

4. Those whose hearts are fully committed to Him

2 Chro. 16:1-10 NKJV

In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."

So, Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work. Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

Hanani's Message to Asa

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore, from now on you shall have wars." Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

2 Chron. 16:9 NIV

The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

Job 34:21

*For His eyes are on the ways of man,
And He sees all his steps.*

Prov. 5:21

*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord,
And He ponders all his paths.*

Jer. 16:17

For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes.

Jer. 32:19

You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

Zech. 4:9-10

*“The hands of Zerubbabel
Have laid the foundation of this temple;
His hands shall also finish it.
Then you will know
That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.
For who has despised the day of small things?
For these seven rejoice to see
The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.
They are the eyes of the Lord,
Which scan to and from throughout the whole earth.”*

e.g. Daniel and his three friends

- King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took some of the children of Israel into captivity, to Babylon.
- We are told in Daniel 3:1-4 that these children of Israel were “some of the king’s descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand...”

Dan. 1:6

Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego

Dan. 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore, he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

- These young men had purposed in their hearts that they would serve their God, and their hearts were fully committed to the Lord.
- Nebuchadnezzar built a massive gold statue and commanded everyone to bow down and worship. The 3 refused. This enraged Nebuchadnezzar:

Dan. 3:14-18

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

We know what happened. The 3 young men were thrown into the fire, and it was so hot that it killed the men who threw them into the fire. But they survived. In fact, although there put three men into the fire, King Nebuchadnezzar saw 4 men in the fire, and this is what he said:

Dan. 3:24-28

"... "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-

Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

Conclusion:

What is God looking for?

1. Worshippers who worship in Spirit and truth
2. Those who will stand in the gap and build up the walls
3. Those who have faith
4. Those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.