

John 27 – To Worship in Spirit and Truth

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Scripture 1: (Jn. 4:19-26 ESV)

The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 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. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

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."

Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Westminster Catechism:

Q50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in His Word.

Q51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in His Word.

Q52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, His propriety in us, and the zeal He hath to His own worship.

Sermon:

Humanity was made to worship God. Worshiping Him is our primary purpose (WSC #1) and everything we do is meant to be worshipful acts for the LORD's glory. The human motivation to worship something is clearly observable as a universal fact of human nature, because every culture and every people group in history have engaged in some form of worship.

Corporate worship has always functioned as a principal factor to unite any given community and beyond any achieved divine appeasement or favor, the civic benefits of worship was considered a social good. Unity in religious worship promoted civic unity and created a civic identity. Therefore, it should be no wonder that our modern political system carries and generates so many overt religion overtones. {Some prime examples are the city “gods”, such as Marduk of Babylon or the Canaanite Ba'als or Artemis of Ephesus.} Although few cultures ever became true theocracies: being ruled by or in the name of a deity; many ancient monarchs were considered either to be: divine (like the Egyptian Pharaoh), descended from the divine (claimed by the Assyrian line of Sargon or the leadership of many Greek city-states; a title assumed by the Davidic line of kings), or preparing to ascend to divinity (particularly the line of Roman emperors following Octavian/Augustus Caesar). This later transformed into the European ethos of the “divine right” of kings, as they were believed ordained, established, and preserved in their position by the will of God.

It is universally accepted that humanity has a need to worship; but, it is not universally accepted as regards to Who, or what, is to be worshiped, much less how they are rightly worshiped. Even people who deny the very existence of divinity: those who claim to be atheists; end up worshiping humanity, or intelligence, or even themselves (for many) without that having been their original intention. Therefore, we are truly without excuse when the evidence for the one true God is so plainly and readily available to us.

However, the problem is that without some kind of “special revelation” from the divine: from the “gods” we purport to worship; we cannot know how we are meant to worship them nor can we really know who we worship. Unless we are commanded and instructed in proper worship, anything we might choose offer would be only our own devising and the product of our own desires and imagination.

- An “act of worship” is not worship merely because we intend for it to be worship: merely because we have a worshipful “spirit”; since no truly divine person is going to accept “worship” that is contrary to their desires and preferences.
- If a god is “God”, and if they want humanity to worship them, then they must instruct humanity how they want to be worshiped, because that is all that they will rightly accept.

No true god would accept “generic” worship. If they are a true god, then they will want what they want and will not accept anything else or less. Nor will they accept proper worship that was “misdirected” elsewhere; accepting worship offered “in the name of” someone else.

That is my problem with the final Narnia book by CS Lewis, “The Last Battle”; where the Calormene, Emeth, spoke of his encounter with Aslan, “Then I fell at his feet and thought, Surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion (who is worthy of all honour) will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him. Nevertheless, it is better to see the Lion and die than to be Tisroc of the world and live and not to have seen him. But the Glorious One bent down his golden head and touched my forehead with his tongue and said, Son, thou art welcome. But I said, Alas, Lord, I am no son of Thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, **Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me.**” (Chapter 15, p. 57), because that goes against the whole Biblical witness as regards the worship of the LORD.

If Lewis's fictional narrative had captured the true sense of this, then the LORD should have been accepting of the idolatrous worship of the Golden Calf at Sinai, the Calves of Jeroboam at Bethel and Dan, or even the Israelites' worship of Ba'al and Asherah merely because the people wanted to worship. But the plain truth of Scripture is that the LORD is absolutely intolerant of wrong worship (just ask Nadab and his brother Abihu (Numbers 26:60-61) or Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)), although sometimes He does choose to be long suffering of it (consider the tenure of the Northern Kingdom and all the ups and downs of worship in the Jerusalem Temple before Ezra's return).

No matter what our pluralistic culture wants us to believe, a Christian cannot affirm that Jews, Christians, and Muslims each worship the same God. Christians surely do worship the same God, YHVH, as the Jews because they “...were entrusted with the oracles of God.” (Rom. 3:2 ESV) which, along with the teachings of the Apostles are the foundation of our faith (Eph 2:19-21), but the Jews, through their continued rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, remain apart from the revealed fullness of God; they are incomplete. Yet, if we are correct in our belief that Jesus Christ is the last, fullest revelation of God, as His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2), then we cannot also affirm the validity of the Islamic religion because of its innovative claims about and denials of the deity of Christ, nor for their perversion of Moses' words {especially when the Quran is exceptionally inconsistent; as it makes its own contrary assertions about Jesus and the Jews, but then also commands Muslims to believe the words of the Gospel (Surah 5:46-47, 5:68)}. Based upon the descriptions of them in the Bible and the Q'uran, YHVH and Allah cannot be the same god; the “character” of Allah, as expressed by the Q'uran, does not reflect or display the same character as the LORD.

Questions about what constitutes “right worship” are as old as people. Scripture goes back to the difference between the worship of Cain and by Abel: where Abel's worship was received and approved, but Cain's worship was not (Genesis 4); and the fundamental difference between them was their heart and attitude in worship, since both offered something valuable in sacrifice.

All of this teaches us two very simple facts:

- God made humanity for the purpose of worshiping Him through our activity; and,
- clearly there are right, proper, and correct ways to worship the LORD and, just as clearly, there are wrong ways to worship.

Therefore, bearing that in mind, we return to Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman.

“*The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet."* Now, her confession carries a greater and a different kind of weight than it would if she were a Jewish women saying the same thing. Samaritans only accepted the Torah, the “Five Books of Moses” as Scripture, like the Sadducees. They did not know the Jewish prophets like Isaiah or Jeremiah, nor Elijah, Elisha, or even John the Baptist. Yet, while they held firmly to the testimony of Deuteronomy 34, “*And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.*” (Deut. 34:10-12 ESV), they still were holding out hope for the “prophet” whom God would raise up like a second Moses, “*I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.*” (Deut. 18:18-19 ESV) {They held to this belief so strongly that the text of Deuteronomy 18:18 was copied and inserted into Exodus 20:18e.}. Her expected “Messiah”, as mentioned at the end of their conversation, would be this “prophet”. The Samaritans expected their Messiah to be a prophet and priest like Moses, a mediator

between God and men, a new “law-giver”, instead of being a political “hero”: a godly, warrior-king; who would deliver their people from external rule and religious oppression, as the Jews were hoping for. The Samaritans may have actually had a more correct expectation for the prophesied Messiah, in that sense.

Then she brings up an point of doctrine, a critical point of division between the Jews and the Samaritans, “*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.*” {Part of the reason for the extremity of their division was the defection by Manasseh, the son of a Jewish High Priest, who married the daughter of Sanballat (sent by Darius to oversee Samaria), named Nicaso, in a political alliance. But, because he married outside the ethnic faith, he was driven from his position and status in Jerusalem. Instead, he was promoted and established as High Priest for the Samaritans, establishing (or legitimizing) their rival worship upon Mount Gerizim under a Levitical (and likely Zadokite; Aaronic) priesthood and thereby creating a terrible schism among the Jews, because many of the Levites and priests were in similar relational situations. Many, if not most or all, of the “corrupted” Levites joined Manasseh with the Samaritans (Josephus, Antiquities 11:302-312). Around one hundred years later, the Temple, destroyed by John Hyrcanus, was built on Mount Gerizim.} She asked Jesus the fundamental question of, “Where is the right place for us to worship the LORD?”.

This question stems from their shared understanding that they should worship “...*In every place where I [YHVH] cause my name to be remembered...*” (Exod. 20:24 ESV) because God promised that He would come and meet them there, saying “...*I will come to you and bless you.*” (Exod. 20:24 ESV). However, the Jews believed that the only proper place for worship was at the Temple in Jerusalem, at the location designated by King David {the presumed site of Abraham's aborted sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2) and the former threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Samuel 24:17-25; 2 Chronicles 3:1); and where all worship was consolidated to during the reforms of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-6)}; while the Samaritans appealed to their version of the Torah, which had additional verses in Exodus 20 {between verses 14 and 15; copied and altered (changing the name from Ebal to Gerizim) from the command to build an altar in Mount Ebal in Deuteronomy 27:4-8} which specifically declared Mount Gerizim as the prescribed site for worship {Samaritan Pentateuch, Exodus 20:14c}. {The only other, greater claim to an older orthodoxy that the Samaritans could reasonably make would be that the first altar built by Abraham was at Shechem, by “the oak of Morah” (Gen 12:6-7), in the shadow of Mount Gerizim.}

Although both sides appealed to a form of *Sola Scriptura* and both accused the other of having a corrupted, erroneous text, Jesus answers her and solves the dilemma without affirming the interpretation of either one or the other. “*Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ... But the hour is coming, and is now here...*”. Instead of saying that one side was right and the other was wrong, He said that having one, single specific location does not matter any more, if it ever really did. Consider when we read the stories about the Patriarchs throughout Genesis, they built altars to the LORD all over the land of Canaan. Everywhere they went and everywhere they stopped, the first thing they did was build an altar (Genesis 12:7+8, 13:18, 22:9, 26:25, 35:7) because their desire to worship the LORD was so great.

When God's people were mobile, they worshiped God “on the go”: first, as the patriarchs did and then, at the portable Tabernacle. It was only after they became settled in Israel that worship space became limited and fixed; but now that membership in God's covenant people is open to all peoples, in all places, our available space to worship in was expanded broadly.

- The specific “Where” of our worship does not matter because there is no “where” that the LORD is not. He is omnipresent and everywhere. He has never been, nor can He be confined to one place. God is not in a box.

But, more important than the place, is that we worship the LORD out of earnest love and desire.

Jesus next explains what He considered the more significant difference between Samaritans and Jews, saying “*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*”. The first thing to notice here is that Jesus makes a firm claim to exclusivity, “...*for salvation is from the Jews.*”; expressly meaning that the knowledge of salvation comes from the Jews but also, implying that Jesus, a Jew, will effect our salvation Himself. He declares that there is only one way to be saved, just like He will state later and more clearly in John's Gospel, that there is only one way of salvation possible and that is through the LORD, the God of Israel, through Himself (14:6).

The second thing to notice is that Jesus divides them based upon their understanding, their *oida*, “*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know...*”, {You worship what you do not understand...}. However, although He specifically applied this distinction to the Samaritans, it also applies to the rest of Gentile humanity {as a “type” example} (Romans 2) because, while they did not (yet) *oida* the God of Israel, they were trying and wanting to worship the divine rightly.

- But the ancient Gentile pagans worshiped god wrongly because their worship was directed to idols and to demons. They tried to worship “...*what [they] did not know...*”, but they failed in their ignorance.
- But it was not entirely their fault because they did not know who the LORD is, yet they remained without excuse because they knew that the LORD is (Acts 17:30; Romans 2:1).
 - Paul pointed out this same fact to the the philosophers and priests in Athens, “*For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. **The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.**"*” (Acts 17:23-31 ESV).

But, what did Jesus really mean by saying that the Samaritans {worship what they do not know}, while the Jews {worship what they know}, when they shared a common {and mostly identical} Scripture text? Again, the answer concerns their understanding of who God is and how He wants to be worshiped.

- The Torah, the Pentateuch, reveals Who the LORD is. It reveals His character and His quality to humanity. It reveals Him as the Sovereign Creator LORD, as the Good Provider for His chosen people.

- The Pentateuch also reveals the LORD's will for humanity, all of His divine precepts and commandments; including the regulations which explain how He wants to be worshiped.

These revelations were shared by both faiths, but what the Samaritans (and the Sadducees) lacked were the later, progressively expanding revelations about God recorded in the historical books and by the Prophets.

- The histories reveal the LORD as the Redeemer and Defender of His chosen people. They reveal the LORD's faithfulness to His covenant, even when His people repeatedly broke it.
- Both the histories and the Prophets reveal the depth of humanity's sinfulness; our need for divine rescue.
- The Prophets reveal the LORD's judgment and discipline against those who break His covenant and also His merciful promises of restoration: of His preservation of a "righteous branch" (Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15) and a faithful remnant (Isaiah 10:20-22; Jeremiah 50:20); and they reveal the LORD's agent of salvation, the Servant of the LORD; the "suffering servant" (Isaiah 42:1-4; 52:13-15); the true, ultimate Christ.

The Jews knew more about God than the Samaritans so reasonably, they should have understood Him better. The Jews had everything necessary to know and recognize the Christ when He appeared (Malachi 4); but they did not, yet this Samaritan woman was beginning to. But please, also notice that Jesus did not condemn her or the Samaritans for their lack of understanding without also pointing out the Jew's deficiency.

Jesus continued, *"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."*, effectively saying that although the Jews knew the way of salvation: through faith in the only God who saves; too many preferred to lean upon their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5) rather than trusting the LORD with their whole heart, mind, and strength. They relied upon their works of religion instead: their acts of worship and devotion; as the source of hope for salvation and eternal security, instead of God's faithfulness to His graciously made promises.

Jesus compares and describes them both by this binary of "spirit and truth":

- as if the Samaritans were worshiping the LORD in "spirit", but not the other; and,
- as if the Jews were worshiping the LORD in "truth", but not the other.

Jesus implies that they were both part right and part wrong; that both of their worship practices were incomplete and therefore, not rightly acceptable. Here and throughout His ministry, Jesus condemns the "religiosity" of the Jews and their Temple cult: their man made "traditions of the elders" (Mark 7:5) and their rote adherence to the forms of worship without also having a right, contrite heart for worship (Psalm 51:17); they followed the "letter of the law" and ignored the "spirit of the law". But here, it also seems that Jesus may have been affirming the heart of the Samaritans' worship {their social-political context suggests that their devotion and the object of their faith may have been rightly directed; implying their possession of regenerate hearts because of their steadfast faith in the face of majority oppression}, while also critiquing their failure in practice. Both almost had it; both were "close", but "close" only counts in horseshoes, hand grenades, and atom bombs.

But Jesus is not "close". Jesus is the complete revelation of the LORD to mankind, period. As the Evangelist wrote in the beginning, *"No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, **he has made him known.**"* (Jn. 1:18 ESV). Jesus makes God known! Jesus, God the Son, came to reveal God the Father to us {leading Philip to eventually say, *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."* (Jn. 14:8 ESV)}; so that we would truly understand Who we worship and how He wants to be worshiped. Paul further explained to the Athenians that, in the past, *"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people*

everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”, which means that, while God graciously forgave us for and in our ignorance, now that we know the truth, through Christ Jesus, we are more accountable and will be righteously judged by Him. Jesus, like Moses before Him, came to reveal our heavenly Father in truth and to teach us how to rightly relate to Him: in a relationship framed by certain forms and by an appropriate attitude of heart; things which are contrary to the natural inclination of our sinful human hearts.

The Father sent the Son because “...*the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*”, but the only way He ever finds such people is by transforming our hearts and minds into living hearts and minds that prefer to love and obey Him, through the power and work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration; through our being “*born again*”.

So now, in the “Church Age”, as modern followers of Jesus Christ, we need to understand that everything about our worship matters. It is because we love the LORD and we want to please and honor our heavenly Father that the ways, whys, and hows of our worship matters, and this forces us to make an important choice:

- Do we choose to worship God in the way He commands; by worshiping Him the way He says He wants to be worshiped and by following the examples of acceptable worship in Scripture? Or,
- Do we choose to worship God according to how we want to worship Him; assuming that because something might not be expressly prohibited by Scripture, that it is a valid, right, or acceptable option for worship?

Considering who God is and who we are, does one of those choices sound presumptuous and selfish? Which of those options is more certain to be God honoring and acceptable and which one risks provoking His displeasure and anger?

These two choices reflect the two different attitudes which Christians have held at various times in church history, known as: the Regulative Principles and the Normative Principles of Worship. Both are based on how we assume Scripture works: whether we think it is prescriptive or merely descriptive; whether it commands what we must and must not do, or if it merely gives a short list of “Do Not’s” along with a few examples, but where anything else not specifically listed is “fair game”.

So, because we want to obey God rightly: to love Him and to worship Him with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength; we try to follow the Regulative Principles in our worship because we want to do what God says He wants and not what we think He ought to want. That is the reason we worship the way we do. That is why our worship service is structured the way it is and contains each of the elements it does. Everything in our worship services are either commanded or exemplified by sacred Scripture. We want to worship God the right way: the LORD’s way; and help guide our hearts into the right attitude for worship. We worship this way because we want to worship the LORD “*in spirit and in truth*” as Jesus commands.

So, by following God’s Word in practice, we worship Him in “truth”.

- We pray and sing Psalms, hymns, and other spiritual songs (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) and we use stringed instruments as accompaniment (Psalm 33:2-3, 150:4). Our music is theocentric: focused on and directed towards God; instead of being man-centric and emotivist, instead of being about us or by trying to fabricate a “felt” spiritual experience.

- We engage with the “ordinary means of grace”: of prayer, the Word, and the Sacraments; because we believe that the Holy Spirit works in our lives through them (WSC #88), communicating the benefits of our redemption by Christ.
 - We offer up prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication to train our hearts to preserve a right attitude towards God and guide our intentions in worship, and also because our remaining sin nature inclines each of us to otherwise neglect one or more of these forms of prayer.
 - While we might find it easier to to ask God for things, we may then forget to thank Him and acknowledge Him for His providence afterwards.
 - We might find it easy to shout God's praise and to glorify Him, but we find it harder to confess our sins to Him and one another; finding it challenging to acknowledge our own faults and to repent of our wrong doings.
 - We hear God's Word read and expounded for our instruction, our edification, for the conviction of our sin, and for our encouragement so that we may become complete and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 - We celebrate the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper as they feed us and strengthen us in our union with Christ.
- We hear assurances of God's promise to forgive us, for Christ's sake, because we often need to be reassured of His great love for us, by His pardon and His cleansing of us with the blood of Jesus (Psalm 25:11; Jeremiah 50:20).
- We publicly reaffirm together what we believe; confessing our shared faith in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14), supporting one another and encouraging each other to remain steadfast in our confidence in Him.

Not only do we follow these forms in our Sunday worship: training our spirits to be in closer communion with Christ; but our attitudes and our outward expressions of faith are also part of how we worship in “spirit”.

- Our acolytes light our candles to symbolize the light of God's presence entering the sanctuary as a reminder that He comes to meet with us here, just as He promises in Scripture (Exodus 29:43). Then, for many churches that also use acolytes, at the close of worship they carry the light back out, as a reminder that when we leave Sunday worship, we also carry the light of Christ out with us, everywhere we go.
- Back before the coming of Christ, the priests wore special and particular vestments as a sign of their having been set apart for the LORD's service, but now, although I am not a priest, I wear this robe as a symbol of my ministerial office {and my education}; a sign of my being set apart for God's purpose during this time of worship.
 - Not only is the robe a reminder that I have a certain authority and the responsibility to speak and preach God's Word faithfully and truly, but it is also a reminder for me, that I serve under Christ's authority and therefore, I am being held accountable to Him (James 3:1).
- Although the clothes we wear to church do not themselves matter, the issue is more about the way we present ourselves in public and before our King. {It does not really matter if the men all wear a coat and tie while the women wear modest dress. What matters most concerning our Sunday dress is the question of respect: are we being respectful of one another, this sacred space, and the God we come here to

worship?} If we truly believed that we are coming into the presence of the Holy and Sovereign God, that would influence everything about how we come into church on Sunday morning: our attitude {Do we come to church mad at others? Do we come to “show off” or “one up” others?}, how we act {Should we be allowed to have coffee in the sanctuary or should we be running inside the church?}, how we dress {Do we dress respectfully in our “Sunday Best” or do we choose to come in jeans, a t-shirt, and flip-flops because we prefer to be comfortable?}; however, too many people, generally speaking, forget who God is and who we are in relation to Him.

- I have said it before and I will say it again, Americans do not understand royalty. Can you imagine that any subject of England's king, who is granted an` audience with him, will appear before him casually dressed? Would that be considered respectful or disrespectful of the man and the office he represents?

All of these different elements, aspects, and attitudes of our worship are sourced in Scripture, which gives us confidence that our worship is acceptable to Christ. We are confident because they are all ways that God has commanded us to worship Him. However, we do not include man made innovations, like the elements found and used in the Roman Mass nor do we have contrived spectacles as found in some popular “Evangelical” Megachurches (like sermon series inspired by “Pop Culture” movies rather than Scripture, or having a race car on stage during the Southern Baptist Convention¹) which they do not even attempt to justify with the Bible. Things like that leads one to wonder who or what they are worshipping: the LORD God Almighty, in whose image we are made, or a “god” made in their own image?

While even though we may greatly disagree with the rightness of their practice, we cannot say with absolute certainty that the worship of those who follow the Normative Principles, will not be accepted by God, the testimony of Scripture offers no confidence that it should be (as when Nadab and Abihu offered their “...*unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them.*” (Lev. 10:1 ESV)). But, we still pray and hope that He will, for their sake .

Finally, after Jesus explained to her that proper, God-honoring worship is the combination of our activity and the attitude of our heart, thereby worshipping the LORD “...*in spirit and truth.*”, the Samaritan woman's conversation concludes with Jesus' self-identification.

“*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.*”. Once again, this woman shows that her expectation, and the expectation of her people, of the Christ is that He would be a great Prophet like Moses. He would tell them “*all things*”; explaining everything that they needed to know and understand about God and their relationship with Him. When Jesus told her, “*I who speak to you am he.*” {saying the same, “ἐγώ εἰμι” (Jn. 4:26 BGT) as He will in His more famous “I AM” statements} He was expressly admitting to (or claiming) His office and role as a prophet, just like He does elsewhere in the Gospels (Matthew 13:57): an “anointed” office and one that is rightly afforded the title of “Christ” {although, by this use of *ego eimi* it could be understood as Jesus connecting Himself, as prophet, with Himself as YHVH; that it would be and is the Lord GOD who they should expect as this prophet because, in the Person of Jesus, He actually is}. Jesus affirms to her that He is the expected Prophet, the Christ. Unlike in Judea, here in Samaria, Jesus was able to accept that title without being concerned with them misunderstanding or twisting it into something other than He intends.

So, to conclude:

1 <https://open.life.church/resources/6131-at-the-movies-2024>

<https://baptistnews.com/article/critics-see-namb-race-car-as-symbol-of-financial-excess-they-still-want-to-curb/>

- We have been created to worship and, while our earlier ignorance is forgivable, as Christians we are responsible to worship our Father in heaven, “...*in spirit and truth*.”
- Our worship is also not tied to any one, single location but we are free to worship everywhere, provided that we are worshiping rightly.
- However, worship is not just about the things we do. Worship is not religiosity, but is more importantly about our heart. Our heart should both be leading us to want to worship and to worship God rightly; to worship the LORD the way He wants, as exemplified by Scripture.
- Lastly, Jesus has the authority to command us and to expect our worship to follow this form because He is the prophet greater than Moses.

So, because we earnestly desire to love the LORD and thus desire to worship Him “*in spirit and truth*”, we gather together every LORD's Day to worship Him the LORD's way. Since we believe that Scripture is the best and only guide or rule for our earthly lives, we also know that it is the best and only guiding rule for our heavenly lives and our worship.

AMEN