

Our purpose in coming together is to worship God, something that we lose track of from time to time. Our word "worship" is nowhere defined in Scripture. It must be defined from the two Greek words *proskuneo* and *latreuo*. *Proskuneo*, which comes from the two Greek words which literally mean "to kiss towards", describes an act of adoration. *Latreuo* means to serve, and is the subjecting of one's will and life to Christ.

Jesus says in John 4:23, 24: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." The worship that we do should be from the heart, and must be guided by the standard that God has given us. In the Old Testament, when one worshipped, he fell down on his face and truly humbled himself. But we are too sophisticated for this type of activity; besides, the floor is too dirty. But we must have this kind of attitude, and not the attitude of the hypocrite at prayer. True worship means that there is only one way to worship acceptably to God.

You know, we can learn a lot from a dog about real devotion. My dad has a dog that goes absolutely wild with excitement when dad comes home from work. I mean, that dog adores my dad. We may think that it is kind of silly, but you know, it wouldn't hurt us much to love God with that kind of excitement! We need to be like David, when he says in Ps 122:1, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" We need to be glad to go worship God!

We forget that it is God whom we are worshipping. He is not an "it" without feelings or personality. We are doing it for him. Why then, do we see so many glassy-eyed stares which testify that the heart and mind are elsewhere? We try to pay a lip service in singing what we do not think, and bowing our heads while we think of something else. We are to adore God from the heart. We must remember that we can no more become Christians by sitting in a church building that we can become chickens by sitting in a hen house.

We are to examine ourselves so that we may not worship in vain, as in Mt 15:8-9, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." We must not worship God ignorantly, as the Athenians, who worshipped the unknown God. We must not offer will worship, as Cain did. The pattern of worship as outlined in the Bible is unmistakable, and we must follow it.

But you know, if you were to listen to the congregation after we worship, you might hear something along this line, "I just didn't get anything out of the worship. The singing was terrible, the sermon was unbearable, and could you believe Bro. So-and-so's prayer? Why, it must have been at least five minutes long!" God can probably hardly believe it.

You know, perhaps one reason we have a problem is because we have not properly prepared ourselves. We must spend some time beforehand to get our mind ready to worship. (Good morning Lord, or Good Lord, morning). We find Peter, although here he is talking about women. In particular, saying that we must be more concerned with how we look on the inside than how we look on the outside. It is an interesting test to compare the time we take dressing up on Sunday morning to the time we spend preparing to worship. I am afraid that most of us would be embarrassed.

I estimate, and many of my brothers have told me that it is an extremely conservative estimate, that if a great persecution were to place itself upon the church today that the membership would drop to 20% of its original value, and it would be 100 times as strong. Our church today is full of dead wood; those who are weak whom the strong must carry along with their other burdens. We must convert our own before we can convert the lost. We have a cause to fight for, and that is lost souls, but first our worship must be set straight. Won't you truly worship now, as we sing...