

---

# Encounter(ing) God

## Worship Part 10

Rob Rogers

March 24, 2019

---

### Review... Truly encountering God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- 1) Contrast “Knowing About” and “Encountering” God
  - a. Knowing – *aware and informed*
  - b. Encountering – *revealing (seeing) and transforming – MEETING!*
  - c. The image of God you carry around in your heart and mind affects the way you live your daily life.

**We want to make sure the image of God we carry is correct!**

**Moses says, “Show me Your glory” – God shows Moses His character!**

**If we want to know what’s glorious about God – it is Who He is!**

#### Exodus 34:6-8

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and **worshiped**.

---

### Our Highest Need

- The word for worship here is the word *Shachah*, which means to depress, to bow down, it’s carries with it the idea of a spontaneous, almost reflexive response to royalty.
- What’s interesting is that while it can include music, and singing, and what we typically associate with worship, it’s way more than that.

**INTERESTING:** *Have you ever noticed how in our Sunday services, Jonathan doesn’t say, “Now we’re going to worship” and then the band starts up... what does he say? “Now we’re going to worship in song.” Whoever is hosting the service says, “Now we’re going to worship in our giving.”*

*“Worship is the act of ascribing ultimate value to something in a way that engages your whole being.”<sup>1</sup>*

*~Tim Keller*

- The word *worship* comes from the Old English word “*Worth-Ship*.” It’s the attribution of worth to something and it engages everything about you. It includes your emotions — but it’s not limited to an emotional experience. It includes your intellect — but it’s not limited to your intellect. It includes

---

<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down* (Hodder & Stoughton, Sep 16, 2010)

an act of your will — but it's not limited to an act of your will, it's ALL of it. It's something that you value so much, that it engages your whole being, your mind, your will, your emotions.

**INTERESTING:** *If that's true, it means that every single person, regardless of their culture or creed, is worshiping something. The default mode of every human heart is that our worship will find its place in something.*

**PERSONAL STORY:** Pastoring in the Pacific NorthWest is an interesting thing. I don't know if you know this, but there a few cultural differences between Nashville and Seattle.

A regular comment we'd hear from people in the community is, *"Oh I'm not the type of person who worships. I'm not the worshiping type."* And what they meant was, *"I'm not the religious type. I don't go to church, I don't attend worship services."*

**The world isn't divided up into those who worship and those that don't.  
The world is divided up into those who worship the only One who is worthy of it,  
and those that worship lesser things.**

**PERSONAL STORY:** Growing up, I had amazing parents that did their very best raising me and my older sisters... but for our family, knowing God, or having a relationship with Him was a totally foreign concept. God was nowhere on my radar.

At an early age... I remember being 12 years old being haunted by the question, *"What is the point of life? Like, what is the point of working hard in school, so I can work even harder in college, so that I can work even harder in a job, so I can support a family, and work even harder in my marriage and then in my parenting, and then eventually send the kids off to live their life, and then I retire, and wait to die. Sign me up for that!"*

I was haunted by it and had no clue where to go for the answers. Do you know what I worshiped? **Pleasure.** If this is all life is about, I might as well have some fun. I might as well alleviate the pain of the pointlessness of life... and by the time I was 19 years old I had already been a heroin addict for three years.

I worshiped my own personal pleasure and it destroyed my life. It nearly destroyed my family...

**If you don't ascribe ultimate worth to God  
you WILL ascribe ultimate worth to lesser things — you can't help it!  
And it will distort and destroy your whole life.**

---

## **Our Greatest Deception**

***I'm in church and I'm here, so I'm worshiping God, aren't I?***

**In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us something incredibly profound about worship...**

- **Matthew 6:5**

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

<sup>6</sup> But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- What Jesus is telling us here is that there is a type of person, that the thing they want more than anything else is praise. Recognition. Acclaim. They want to be seen as spiritual people, as successful, accomplished, therefore they only pray when they're seen praying. For this person, prayer isn't a means to communicate with God, it's a means to selfish gain. Yes, they're praying, but the only thing they're worshiping is themselves. Jesus says, *"If that's how you pray, then you've already received your reward."*
- Then Jesus takes it to another level, He says, *"Don't be like this, but instead, pray in secret!"* Why? **There is no public recognition for private prayer.** There's no danger for weird motives to get mixed in there...

**Application:** *What Jesus is telling us here is that you may have the appearance of being very religious, very spiritual... you may look like someone that worships Jesus... but that doesn't mean that you are one. That's terrifying! Isn't it?*

"The human heart is an idol factory."<sup>2</sup>  
~ John Calvin

- What he's saying is that we are constantly finding lesser things to worship. Our hearts constantly gravitate toward worshiping something other than God. We're constantly replacing God with lesser things. The entire Old Testament is filled with story after story of God's people doing this.
- Our greatest danger as church-going, Bible-belt Christians is to behave like someone who loves Jesus — while simultaneously worshiping something entirely different.
- Just because you're singing, or just because you're giving doesn't mean you're worshiping! Just because you look like a worshiper doesn't mean you are one!
- **Proverbs 16:2**  
All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.
- It's not just what you do, but it's WHY you do what you do. You could be singing your heart out on Sunday morning, and yet, what Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 is that it's entirely possible to do that and simultaneously be worshiping something entirely different.
- Jesus, speaking of the Pharisees says, **"They honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me."**

**Question:** *So how do I know? How do I know what I truly worship? How do I know what I'm ascribing ultimate value to?*

"Your religion is what you do with your solitude."<sup>3</sup>  
~ Archbishop William Temple

**If you want to know what you truly love, what you truly worship...  
when no one is around, when no one is watching, when you're no longer accountable,  
what do you dream about? What do you think about? What is your default?**

<sup>2</sup> Donald Armstrong, *Who Do You Say that I Am: Christology and the Church* (W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, Jan 1, 1999) 32

<sup>3</sup> Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down* (Hodder & Stoughton, Sep 16, 2010) 168

- Do you dream of wealth?
- Do you dream of romance, being desired, wanted?
- Do you dream about status or success?
- Do you think about professional acclaim? Do you think about achievement?
- Is it sex or personal pleasure?
- Do you think about what brings you comfort?
- What do you dream about when you don't have to think of anything else?

**Jesus in Matthew 6, and William Temple are both saying — whatever that is, that's what you worship.**

**Another way to get at this is:**

**Question:** *What is it that you're currently most defensive about? Is it control? Is it the need to be right? Is it your reputation? If others think ill of you, are you crushed?*

**Question:** *What is it in your life that you're holding God at arms-length... if He asked you to give it up you would be unwilling, or at least would deeply struggle with letting it go? What MUST be a part of your life or else you've lost all your value? Is it the success of your kids? What makes you erupt in anger? Or sink to the place of utter despair? THAT is what you value most!*

**Question:** *What is the very first commandment that God gives to Moses on the mountain? “**You shall have no other Gods before me.**”*

**Question:** *What is that about? **It's about WORSHIP!***

**Question:** *What is the greatest commandment? “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.**”*

**Question:** *What is that about? **It's about WORSHIP!***

**The whole story of the Bible is a continual call to ascribe ultimate value to God, to worship HIM, not because he needs your adoration and worship, but because your adoration and worship needs HIM!**

- You will worship something, but the only way you will ever find rest, the only way you'll ever have peace, true deep lasting joy, is if you worship the only One who won't buckle under that weight of your need. The only One who will never leave you or forsake you. The eternal, unshakeable, King of Heaven who is absolutely unwavering in His love and devotion to you.

**Well, Rob... my spouse will never leave me...**

- Maybe not, but can your spouse bear the burden of all your hopes, dreams, your very worth as a human being? If you're not sure, just ask them about it.
- See, relationships are a big one in Western culture. We go all “Jerry Maguire” on people. “you complete me.” No, you don't. You can't complete me! The only one that can handle that burden is God, and when I worship Him, then and only then am I free to love my spouse without condition. Then and only then am I free to live life, not for my own value, but from the value I've already received in Him.
- When you ascribe ultimate value to God, only then will others' opinions of you be just that, their opinions.

- Only then will you be able to relinquish your need for power and control, and trust that your Father knows best!
- Only then will you be able to sacrifice personal pleasure for the pleasure of God.
- Only then will your finances be viewed not as an indication of your value, but as a tool to be stewarded for Kingdom purposes on the earth!

**When you worship God, everything else in your life is put in its proper place.  
But when you worship lesser things, it brings disorder to everything else in your life.**

“We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased.”<sup>4</sup>  
~ C.S. Lewis

## Our Deepest Longing

**Where is Moses when he asks to see God’s glory? What is he experiencing? What is he going through?**

- He’s in the wilderness! He’s in the desert! And he has a few million exiles, refugees depending on him! Imagine being in those shoes! If you’re Moses, what are you going pray for? *“Oh God, get me out of here!!!! Just get me out of this... there’re all these people putting demands on me! They’re complaining and grumbling, and they made a Golden Calf for goodness sake... I don’t know what to do! God—rescue me!”*

**Question:** *What does he pray???*

- *“Oh God, I want to see **your glory.**”*
- *In other words, “I don’t want You for your stuff! I want You!*
- *I don’t want You for what you can do for me! I want You for **WHO YOU ARE!** I want You because without You I’m nothing! I have nothing! Without You there’s no hope, there’s no life, there’s no joy, no freedom, no love! In light of all that You are, nothing else will do! No amount of comfort or ease will suffice! No amount of success or status compares to being with You! If I gained the whole world, and don’t have You, I don’t want any of it, it’s not enough!”*

**Moses says, show me your glory...  
and God gives him just a *glimpse* of his character...  
He falls flat on his face and worships.**

**Do you realize what Moses only got a *glimpse* of,  
we get the *whole picture* — in the person of Jesus Christ?**

- **Hebrews 1:3**  
The Son is the radiance of **God's glory** and the **exact representation** of **His nature**...
- **John 14:9**  
*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*
- **Colossians 1:15, 19**  
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell...

<sup>4</sup> Bruce L. Edwards, *C.S. Lewis: Apologist, philosopher, and theologian* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007) 85

**In the person of Jesus, the lightning and thunder of Mt Sinai, the dynamite power of God, the mercy, the justice, the patience, the love... the whole nature, character, the glory of God is perfectly represented in the person of Jesus! Moses got a glimpse... we get the whole picture!**

*“All that delights you in earthly things can never satisfy you, for all your desires are in God. The comforts you have here are only drops inflaming, not satisfying, the appetites of your soul. But the **Lamb will lead you to fountains of living water.**”<sup>5</sup>*  
~ John Flavel a British Puritan writer, lived in the 1600s

**PERSONAL STORY:** In January of 2004, I moved into Bill and Stacy Spencer’s house in Kingston Springs, TN. I was 19. I didn’t believe in Jesus... I was skeptical of Christians... I had no exposure to the church... and over time, through experiencing the radical grace and generosity of these two people, my walls started coming down and I began asking questions.

Now, I was fresh off of heroin, and when you stop using a drug like that... the receptors in your brain start screaming for it... in recovery circles it’s referred to as cravings... and I was having these 10-12 times a day. I’d been through heroin withdrawal 13 times at this point... this was my last-ditch effort... to find a new life. I’d been down this road before and I’m just hoping that somehow this sticks...

Church, the very moment we started looking into the character and nature of Jesus, all of my cravings, all of my desire to use, every ounce of it, disappeared. I hadn’t even given my life to Jesus yet... I was just curious...

**Question:** *How do you explain this? What happened? **I caught a glimpse of glory. In Jesus is the full revelation of God’s character, the perfect expression of His glory. I caught a glimpse and it filled my heart with everything I always longed for but never knew — and it changed my life forever.***

And God spoke to me, he said, “Rob, you haven’t even surrendered your life to me yet and I’ve done this for you. Imagine what I can do if you surrender everything to me.” And in April of 2004, coming up on 15 years ago, I gave my whole life to Jesus and through the transformation he caused in my life, my whole entire family came to know the Lord!

This is exactly why the Apostle Paul tells us:

- **2 Corinthians 3:18**

And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding the glory of the Lord**, are **being transformed** into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

You want transformation in your life?

You want to be purged of your worship of lesser things?

You want to be free?

**Behold the glory of God in the person of Jesus!**

Think on him, delight yourself in Him, dwell on him

Meditate on His very nature

Stare into it until it hits you!

---

<sup>5</sup> John Flavel, *The whole works of John Flavel: late minister of the gospel at Dartmouth, Devon, Volume 3* (W. Baynes and son, 1820)

**PERSONAL STORY:** I remember driving across I-40, blasting worship music, laughing and crying and shouting, and singing, and celebrating my heart out! Not because someone told me that's what I should do. I couldn't help it! It was my unrestrained, natural response to the Glory of God! I worshiped! And anyone driving by would have thought I was a total lunatic! But I didn't care because the God of the Universe, the King of Heaven loved me and healed me, and rescued me and made me a brand-new creation!

**When you see Jesus, you see the fullness of all that God is –  
it will change you forever –  
and the lesser things of life will lose their appeal.**

- God of Justice – God of Mercy
- He is the just Judge – yet longs to forgive.
- All powerful, He is the LION – yet totally humble – He is the Lamb.
- Totally Pure, no association with sin. – Yet He's a God that gets in the mess of humanity!
- He's eternal, outside of time – yet breaks into time, confines Himself to time and walks with us!
- He's Holy. He's perfect in every way – and overflowing with love for sinful, rebellious, imperfect humanity.

*And that love drove Him to sacrifice everything for you and me.*

**When you see His glory, you can't help but surrender everything to Him and worship!  
Why?  
Because He's the only one who is worthy of it.  
Every ounce of your life.  
He's worthy of it all.**

---

## Discussion Questions

1. Who or what do you worship other than God?  
Which do you ascribe more time and effort to?
2. What does it mean, "Just because you look like a worshiper doesn't mean you are one"?
3. Discuss Archbishop Temple's statement, "Your religion is what you do with your solitude."
4. Why is God's First and then His Greatest Commandment to worship Him and no one else?
5. Does God need our worship and adoration?
6. What is the difference between Moses getting a *glimpse* of God, and us getting the *whole picture*?