

WORSHIPING THE RISEN CHRIST:

Meeting God at the Feet of Jesus

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!" Psalm 95:6 (ESV)

"And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him." Matthew 28:9

"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

What is Worship?

- Worship is the activity of glorifying God and surrendering to Him in response to meeting Him. He calls us to love Him with our heart, soul, strength and mind, worshiping Him with more than mere lip service. Surrender to God is marked by humble repentance and the obedience of initial faith, leading us to a lifelong journey of daily submission to God, a growing love for God and His people, and ongoing obedience to Christ's commands by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Mark 12:30; Matt 15:8-9; Neh 9:1-3; Isa 57:15; Luke 24:47,52; Rom 1:5; 16:25-26; 1 Cor 14:24-25; 1 Peter 1:22-23; James 4:7; John 14:15-17)
- Worship is a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living: to glorify God and fully enjoy him forever.¹ (Phil 1:19-23; Isa 43:7; 1 Cor 10:31)
- Our Creator God is worthy of worship, and we are not, nor is any other created being or thing. He alone is worthy of our exclusive devotion. (Rev 4:8-11; 22:8-9; Deut 12:1-4; Exod 34:5-8, 14)
- The authentic, heartfelt worship response to an encounter with God should be distinguished from, though it may be closely related to, the various activities often associated with worship (e.g., Scripture reading, singing, preaching, prayer, praise, service, acts of obedience, etc.). God wants worship from our hearts, in spirit and in truth, offering ourselves as living sacrifices to Him. (John 4:23-24; Romans 12:1-2)

Why do we worship God?

An attitude of worship comes upon us when we begin to see God as He is and then respond to His presence.²

Scripture identifies an awareness of the holiness of God as a key reason for our worship of Him (Psalm 29:2, Psalm 99; Isaiah 6:1-7; Revelation 15:4). God's holiness emphasizes His separateness from creation and from sin, and yet from His high and holy place, He offers us His presence when we are humble and contrite in spirit, to revive us. (Isaiah 57:15)

In worship we express our awe, reverence, gratitude, humility, repentance, devotion, sacrificial service, and longing to be in His presence, as a result of His revealing Himself to us. (Hebrews 12:28; Nehemiah 9:3-6; Psalm 42:1-2; Romans 12:1)

Worship occurs as our heartfelt response to an encounter with God and his many glorious attributes, such as His holiness, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, wisdom, grace, love, mercy, goodness, sovereignty, providence, faithfulness, and righteousness. (Exod 15:6; 34:6-8; Deut 32:4; Psalm 29:2; 118:29; 136:25; 139:1-4, 7-10; 145:17; Isa 6:1-8; Daniel 5:21; Rom 16:27; 5:15; Titus 3:4-5; 1 John 4:10)

We worship Him in response to who He is which is demonstrated in what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. (Ex 15:1-18, Rev 5:9-10)

When and where should we worship Him?

We are called to a life of worship (John 4:21-24, Rom 12:1-2, Heb 13:15-16) characterized by the conscious desire to honor God in all that we do. (Ps 63:5-7; 119, 1 Cor 10:31, Col 3:16-17, 1 Thess 5:17)

As we live our new lives in Christ, we worship Him in corporate Christian gatherings, individually, and in the context of our relationships and daily life. Some examples of where we worship Him include, but are not limited to, church services, ministry teams, small groups, our families, friendships, neighborhoods, schools, places of employment, and homes. (Mat 14:33, Lk 24:50-53, Acts 16:23-25)

How do we worship Him?

The ministry of Jesus by his crucifixion and resurrection is what brings us to God (1 Peter 3:18). Through the work of Christ we enter into God's presence in a new and living way (Heb 10:19-22).

Ways we see God's people worshipping Him include:

- Drawing near to present ourselves to Him and meet with Him (James 4:8, Heb 4:16, 10:22-25)
- Humbling ourselves in surrender to His awesome holiness (2 Chron 7:3; Ps 95:6, James 4:10)
- Serving Him with obedience and sacrificial acts of service and kindness (1 Sam 15:22, Rom 6, 12:1-2)
- Pursuing personal holiness in imitation of God and Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, by abandoning sinful pursuits and committing to growth in Christ-likeness (Lev 11:45, Ps. 96:9, Luke 6:36, Eph 4:32-5:2, 1 Thess 4:1-7, 1 Pet 1:14-16)
- Proclaiming God's truth through reading, teaching & preaching of His word and sharing the Gospel (Mark 16:15, Mat 28:18, 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2)
- Expressing our dependence on Him through prayer & supplication (Eph 6:18, Phil 4:6, 1 Tim 2:1)
- Glorifying Him through song, proclamation and personal testimony (Ps 42, 99, 100). We are instructed to sing to God (Ps 68:4), to one another (Eph 5:19), and across the generations (Ps 89:1).
- Reflecting on His great power and majesty as we stand in awe of Him (Ex 33:19-23, 34:5-8, 1 Chr 29:10-20)
- Offering a variety of outward expressions of worship such as kneeling, bowing, lifting our hands and our heads toward Him (Exod 34:8, Ps 28:2; 45:11; 63:4; 95:6; 110:7; 123:1; Heb 12:12)
- Seeking to honor Him by producing excellence and creating beauty. (Ex 25:1-9, Ps 27:4)
- Celebrating the Gospel through the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38, Matt 26:26-29, 1 Cor 11:23-26)

We can worship God in many different ways, including:

- Reciting and memorizing the Word of God
- Financial giving and various forms of offerings
- Meeting with God individually
- Meeting with God as a family
- Using our gifts and talents for His glory
- Serving others
- Discipling others
- Being discipled by others
- Enduring suffering and trials with faith and hope
- Encouraging one another and bearing one another's burdens
- Giving thanks to God
- Consciously honoring God in whatever we do

What happens when we worship God?

When God's people worship Him in spirit and in truth, we believe that He blesses them with an abundance of spiritual blessings, which include (but are not limited to):

- Intimacy with God
- Increasing hunger for God
- Cleansing/forgiveness (Grace)
- Comfort for today (Peace)
- Foretaste of eternity (Joy)
- Restoration/wholeness ("Shalom")
- Strengthened faith/edification
- Holy Spirit filling/fruit
- Greater obedience
- Greater Christ-likeness (humility, hope, compassion, kindness etc.)
- Increasing love for God and others
- Fellowship/unity in Christ
- Evangelism/boldness
- Action/service to others
- Awe/reverence for God

God's word also says that our worship can produce other results, including (but not limited to):

- God is honored and delights in His people
- The Lord draws near to his people
- Unbelievers recognize the presence and holiness of God
- Unbelievers are convicted of and repent of their sin
- God's people are moved to care for other people and His creation
- We join the heavenly assembly in worshiping God
- Satan and his army flee

What does corporate celebratory worship (e.g., our Sunday Worship Service) look like at WBC?

When we gather as His people to worship the Triune God, exalting His Name and His Word, we desire to encounter and respond to Him so that we are transformed more into the likeness of Christ. (Psalm 138:2; John 1:14; Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:16-18)

God the Father: We gather each week to glorify and praise our Heavenly Father, the maker of Heaven and Earth, joining in His heavenly worship assembly and renewing our New Covenant relationship with Him as His people. (Psalm 34:3; 105:1-3; Exod 3:14; Isaiah 47:4; 1 John 3:1; John 14:23; Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 86:12; Romans 15:6; Hebrews 10:24-25; 12:22-29; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26)

Jesus Christ the Son of God: We exalt Jesus Christ as the Name Above All Names, our Great High Priest, the Head of the Church and Ultimate Worship Leader. Through His work of atonement, the Lamb of God leads us "through the curtain" into the Father's heavenly throne room of mercy, grace and praise. In our worship, we exalt Christ and call attention to Him, and not to ourselves. (John 1:29; 10:11; Acts 20:24; Romans 4:25; 9:5; Phil 2:9-11; Col 1:15-20; Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:19; 7:25; 10:19-22; Revelation 5:9-10)

The Holy Spirit: Having been sent by the Father and Son as a promised gift and Divine Helper, the Spirit indwells each believer individually and the church as a whole, empowering our worship. We gather each week to seek His fullness as He strengthens us and unites us in worship together, making us more like Christ as we glorify Him. (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13; Acts 2:33; Romans 8:4-9; 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16; 5:18; 6:19; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 12; 2 Corinthians 6:16)

Scripture: The Father seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. We hear God's truth through his Word as it is read, sung and preached, and use the Bible as our central resource for both teaching and praise. (Isaiah 66:2,5; John 4:23-24; Psalm 138:2; Rom 1:16, 10:17; Phil 2:12; Col 3:16-17; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13; James 1:21)

Prayer: Worshiping God in spirit means that we respond to Him with our spirit. Prayer is essential for responding to God with praise, thanksgiving, exaltation, and intercession. We gather to pray as a reflection of our dependency upon and intimacy with the triune God whom we worship. (Psalm 145:18; 31:2-3; 86:1; 119:36-37; Acts 2:42; 4:31; Romans 12:12)

Heart: We desire for our services of worship to lead each person in attendance to respond with authentic, heartfelt expressions of worship. God wants worship from our hearts, not merely our lips. (Ex 25:1-3; Ps 24:3-5; 1 Sam 13:13-14; Jer 29:12-13; Matt 15:8-9)

Family: We desire to worship the Lord as a family of believers and as family households, embracing every generation, from child to mature adult, in singing, serving and celebrating the Lord together. (Psalm 45:17, Matt 19:13-14; John 14:23; Eph 3:21; 1 Peter 2:4-5)

Children: We welcome and desire children of all ages, including the very young, to participate in worship activities as members of the body. We encourage children to join in singing, memorizing, serving and celebrating Christ, in intentional and age-appropriate ways. (Deut 6:7; Luke 1:16-17; 18:15-17)

Diversity: We celebrate a diverse body, a diversity of music, a diversity of expression and a diversity of gifts, all united in faith under Christ and His holy Word. (2 Chron 5, Ps 150, Rom 14, Rev 7:9-10)

Unity: We seek to preserve the unity of the body by respecting and encouraging one another, bringing all things unto submission to Christ, and welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us. We come from a variety of backgrounds, with a variety of preferences and we value unity and one other over our own cultural, musical and other personal preferences. (Eph 4:1-5, Rom 12:5, 1 Cor 12; Rom 15:5-7)

Participation: Just as all believers should worship the Lord in every part of our lives, we encourage all believers to participate in corporate worship and to use their spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ regardless of age. As we grow in obedience to Christ, we aspire to increase the offerings of our time, talents and treasure as acts of worship to Him. (1 Cor 12, Rom 12, John 14:15, Phil 4:18)

Music: Through music and song, we exalt the name of the Lord, sing His praises, give Him thanks, tell of His mighty works, and lift up prayers to God. God calls us to sing to Him, to each other, and across all generations. Scripture calls us to sing both time-tested and new songs and, if possible, to commit songs and Scripture to memory. With the help of our music directors, choirs, musicians, song leaders and other volunteers, we sing a variety of music, including psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, to edify each other and exalt the name of the Risen Savior, Jesus Christ. (1 Chr 16:8-11, Ps 95, Ps 98, Matt 26:30, Acts 16:25, Psa 33:3, 89:1, Colossians 3:16-17, Rev 5:8-14)

Key Verses About Worship

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness. (Ps 29:1-2)

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Ps 42:2)

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. (Ps 138:2)

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. (Ps 95:6-7)

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. (Psalm 100:1-2)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Rom 12:1)

For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:3)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy! (Psalm 99:9)

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev 19:9-10)

¹⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 1005

¹¹Ibid, p. 1011