

A Journey Of Worship Genesis 46:1

I was born in the era when Dad's weren't allowed in the delivery room with the Mom. They were in the waiting room no matter how long it took. After the delivery, the doctor went to the waiting room to share the good news. As Dad recalls the story, he stood up when the doctor entered and asked how his wife and the baby were. The doctor told him he should sit down. Now Dad was a strong 6'3" soldier and thinking he could take the news standing told the doctor as much. The doctor said she was fine and so were the twins. My Dad said, "I think I better sit down." It was apparently shocking news. He is still sitting.

At the end of **Genesis 45** Jacob had been given even more shocking news. For 22 years he had been living with the belief that his son Joseph had been dead, mauled by wild beasts. After the return of their second trip to Egypt, his other 11 sons informed their father that Joseph was indeed alive and of all things he was the governor of the land, the one responsible to ration out the food supply. Jacob couldn't believe, wouldn't believe until he saw all the provisions sent to bring everyone down to Egypt. Convinced that the news was true, he prepared for the journey to his son before he died. But before he arrived in Egypt, he had one more important stop to make.

We pick up the account in **Genesis 46** where I invite you to turn in your Bibles this morning. Now I want to say at the beginning that it was my intent to consider the whole chapter this morning, but once I got working on the message I found my focus primarily on **verse 1** because it's one that we can't just brush by in a few minutes. So I'm splitting the message between **verse 1** today and **verses 2-34** next week. But let me give you the three main points we will consider in this chapter related to Jacob's journey.

Jacob's worship is offered

Jacob's way is ordered

Jacob's waiting is over

I. JACOB'S WORSHIP IS OFFERED – v. 1

In the previous chapter, we read that Pharaoh's instructions were for Jacob to leave everything behind because the best of Egypt would be provided for him. **Verse 20** says "**Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.**" So when **verse 1** says "**Israel (or Jacob) set out with all that was his**" **Verses 5-7** explain it in more detail and we'll get to that. Jacob is most likely living in Hebron at the time he set out for Egypt. **Verse 1** tells us that he stopped in Beersheba, which is about 26-miles from Hebron. Our text tells us that he stopped to offer sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

Let me ask you parents and grandparents a question. **Are you leaving a godly legacy that points them to seek the Lord?**

Jacob could have stopped anywhere to offer his sacrifice, but Beersheba held some significance. It was the place where decades earlier Abraham made a covenant with King Abimelech (**Genesis 21:31**). Its name means well of the seven because that's how many sheep were offered. It also means well of the oath referring to the treaty they made there.

Beersheba is also the place where Isaac was living when Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. Centuries later Samuel's sons would be appointed deputy judges over the region at Beersheba (**I Samuel 8:2**). Maybe about now you are humming that old tune "Memories, like the corners of my mind..." It is at Beersheba that Jacob paused in his journey to make a sacrifice and worship God.

This is a moment that we get a glimpse into the window of Jacob's faith. This is not Jacob the deceiver, but Israel, the one who had wrestled with God. Here is a moment in which his worship is a statement of his faith. Beersheba was on the southern border of the land that Israel would one day inherit.

Early in the movie *Fellowship of the Ring*, Frodo and Samwise Gamgee are sent on a journey by Gandalf to deliver a certain ring of power to the elves. Stopping at the edge of a corn field Frodo asks Samwise what was bothering him. Samwise

said that if he took one more step that would be the farthest from the Shire, his home, he had ever been.

Beersheba was on the border of Egypt. One more step and he would be leaving Canaan and entering Egypt. A day earlier he had been living in the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and to him, a land promised as possession to their descendants. **Was leaving the land the right thing to do?** So he paused to offer a sacrifice before he left the land. I think this act had a twofold purpose. Not only to offer thanks that Joseph was still alive, but also to seek the will of God. Should he leave the place God had given his descendants? It was, perhaps, for him a quandary. In his earlier days there was little thought of God and what His will was. He was a man of his own making forged by his deceitful nature. That had begun to change the night out under the stars when he had that vision of a ladder and angels coming and going and God standing at the top. His view of God had been refined 20 years later when he returned home after living in Padanaram with Uncle/Father-in-law Laban and the night He wrestled with the Lord.

This pause in his journey was a time of worship. Now we can only speculate as to what was included in this time worship. There may have been other elements but let me suggest three things that worship should include.

A. Worship Should Include Acknowledgement of God

We notice in the verse that his worship was directed to God. The Old Testament has a lot to say against false worship or the worship of idols, things made by man, things Scripture says can't see, hear, smell, or act in any way.

It's clear from **Exodus 20:3-5** that idolatry was forbidden.

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”

Prophets repeatedly condemned Israel for their worship of false idols. Eventually God gave them over to Assyria and Babylon for punishment. This punishment was God's means of bringing them to a place of acknowledging that He alone is God.

In this pause, Jacob is acknowledging God in worship.

The dictionary defines worship as the feeling or experience of reverence and adoration of a deity. A basic understanding from the definition means that anything can become an object of worship whether animate or inanimate, living or not. A noun consists of persons, places or things. Those are the things people can worship. Idols aren't just statues made of wood, stone or metal. Idols can be rock stars, entertainers, authors, and athletes. It might be a place in the mountains or out at sea or in a garden setting. People worship the sun, moon and stars. Science or logic are objects of worship. Idols can be possessions, a job, a hobby or a bank account. If nothing else, this pandemic has stripped away many of the idols people have worshipped, but has it caused man's heart to turn to God? Have we learned to revere God as we should?

Right or true worship acknowledges God over everything else, exalts Him above everything else, gives Him the preeminence over everything else. True worship acknowledges that He has the supremacy over every part of our lives. The first question of the shorter catechism asks the question: **what is the chief end of man? What's man's purpose?** The atheist, the person who believes he is just a blob of lint caught in the spin cycle of the cosmic chaos of evolution, has no clue why he exists. His existence is all by chance, a roll of the dice and he's left to figure out the why, if there is an answer at all. Man really has no lasting purpose and therefore life is essentially meaningless. A short humanist animation about death, afterlife and living in the here and now argues that an afterlife that is endless would be like reading a book that never ended or eating a piece of cake that never ended, each would lose their appeal.

Yet, in the question posed by the shorter catechism

there is an answer to the probing question of man's purpose. What is the chief end of man? If his purpose was all boiled down to one essential ingredient, what would be at the center, what is at the core of man? It is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. That is neither meaningless nor mundane. Our purpose, the reason we are created is that we glorify God, worship God in everything we do and in that worship to enjoy Him forever.

[One day my relationship with Robyn will end. It will end because of death. But until then I enjoy her presence, being with her.](#) God's desire is that we enjoy His presence all the time.

That's our purpose, but to our shame we have largely ignored why we were created allowing other things to take the place, allowing other things to be of greater enjoyment than spending it with God. Now that doesn't mean we can't enjoy other things. It does mean that I put things in proper perspective when it comes to God. I enjoy the beauty of a sunset because of the changing colors of leaves or the variety of flowers because they are God's paintbrush stroke on nature. I enjoy a starlit night because the heavens declare the glory of God. I enjoy a concert or a sporting event because of how fearfully and wonderfully God has made us. Let's never forget the purpose of our existence – to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Worshipping Him throughout the day should be our aim and not just relegated to a fixed day or hour of the week. We call this our worship service when in reality everything we do and who we are should be all about the worship of God.

In his book [Whatever Happened to Worship?](#), A. W. Tozer makes this bold statement: "One of the greatest tragedies that we find, even in this most enlightened of all ages, is the utter failure of millions of men and women ever to discover why they were born."

In the age of reason, many still ask why they are here because they refuse to acknowledge God. This lack of acknowledgment has resulted in man's aimlessness and hopeless. Even man's pursuit of his own praise has left an emptiness in his soul that can

only be filled when he chooses to pursue his rightful purpose for his creation, his existence – the worship of God and that won't happen unless and until we first acknowledge God, that in Him alone we live and move and have our being.

For much of Jacob's life, he had worshipped himself, done his own thing, gone his own way, lived his own life. Now, here in Beersheba, he is pausing to acknowledge God, worship God, glorify God. He is coming back to the purpose for which he was created.

In our acknowledgment of God, in our worship of God, we understand that He alone is worthy.

Psalm 29:1-2

That word ascribe means to attribute to or regard as belonging to. This passage tells us that we are to attribute to God glory and praise that is due His name. That means He deserves it. We see it in **Revelation 4 and 5**. John's description of what he saw in heaven helps us understand the reason the four living creatures fall down in worship repeatedly and excitedly expressing glory to God.

Revelation 4:1-11

Revelation 5:13-14

Like me, I'm sure you have heard and read about people who think that heaven is going to be the most boring place just sitting around playing harps and singing praise songs. When we get to heaven there will be nothing else that we would rather do than to worship God, to acknowledge Him and as **Psalm 29:2** says we give Him what He deserves.

Isaiah's depiction of this scene is much more succinct but no less impactful.

Isaiah 6:1-4

Worshipping God includes acknowledging His character or attributes and what He has done for us.

His holiness
His omnipotence
His omniscience
His omnipresence
His justice
His grace

His mercy
 His forgiveness
 His salvation
 His sanctification
 His provisions
 His promises

Worship praises God for His person.
 Worship praises God for His promises.
 Worship praises God for His provision.
 Worship praises God for His protection.

Did Jacob recall God's promises he learned from his father and grand-father or from God Himself in those moments of revelation?

Did he acknowledge God's mercy by protecting him from his brother's fierce anger, the deceit of his father-in-law or protection from himself?

Of all the hymns of worship, perhaps the best one, at least for me, that acknowledges God in our worship is **Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty**. I'd like us to sing it together.

Our worship should be an unrestrained anthem acknowledging God. I don't know about you, but I have some work to acknowledge God more. That needs to be included in our worship.

Second, worship should include admission to God.

B. Worship Should Include Admission to God

Referring again to Tozer's book Whatever Happened to Worship? he has a chapter titled "True Worship Demands the New Birth". There is no worship of God without being born again. So when I say that worship should include admission to God I mean that there should be a time of admitting and confessing sin. You can't worship God if you aren't saved, and once you are, true worship can't be offered if you have unconfessed sin. When I sin, the chord of worship has been severed and only through admission and confession can that chord be restored.

In the Old Testament, worship was often accompanied with an animal sacrifice. That's what Jacob did. He brought an animal to offer as a

sacrifice to God. Was it a sacrifice for sin or a sacrifice of thanksgiving? We aren't told. But I can tell you this, it was the best he had. When they brought their sacrifice, it wasn't randomly pulled from the flock. There was no eenie, meenie, minie, mo in choosing which one would be sacrificed. It wasn't the first one they caught. No matter what the sacrifice was for, it had to be perfect, without spot or blemish.

When we worship we should not only acknowledge God and His holiness, we should admit our sin and need of Him in our everyday lives.

Psalm 51:1-17

Isaiah 6:5-7

We admit our sin is an affront to Him.
 We admit our salvation is only by Him.
 We admit our sanctification is only through Him.

Tozer states that "the primary work of the Holy Spirit is to restore the lost soul to intimate fellowship with God through the washing of regeneration." Only then can our worship be right.

Worship, therefore, begins as a matter of the heart. John Piper notes that there are two aspects to worship. One is inner and the other is outer. We cannot rightly worship outwardly if first there is not a change inwardly in the heart.

Matthew 15:8-9

We can give the appearance of worship outwardly, but God knows if the nature of our worship is true. Jesus says in that passage that worship that is only outward is vain worship and He condemned that kind of worship in the religious leaders. Piper says that a lack of heart worship isn't worship at all. He continues by noting that "all true worship is in essence a matter of the heart. It is more, but it is not less."

In **John 4:23-24** Jesus stated that true worshippers will worship God in spirit and in truth. It's a matter of the heart. Worship begins with being driven by truth about who God is and who we are in relationship to that truth about Him, then admitting our need of Him and what He has done for us. Only

after we have a right heart for worship internally
can we truly worship God outwardly.

Romans 12:1

Hebrews 13:15-16

Hebrews describes our outward expressions of worship as a sacrifice in two ways.

First, outward expressions of worship is described as the sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess His name. It refers to the things we speak to God or about God as an offering of praise. The fruit of our lips can be things like our singing, our praying, or our repenting. It can be when we are alone or when we are with others as we express our worship of God verbally.

In 1975, Contemporary Christian Artist Chuck Girard released this song that resonates the fruit of lips that praise.

Sometimes Alleluia,
Sometimes praise the Lord
Sometimes gently singing,
Our hearts in one accord.

Oh let us lift our voices,
Look toward the sky and start to sing
Oh let us now return His love,
Just let our voices ring.
Oh let us feel His presence,
Let the sound of praises fill the air
Oh let us sing the song of Jesus' love,
To people everywhere.

Sometimes Alleluia,
Sometimes praise the Lord
Sometimes gently singing,
Our hearts in one accord.

Oh let our joy be unconfined
Let us sing with freedom unrestrained,
Let's take this feeling that we're feeling now,
Outside these walls and let it rain.
Oh let the Spirit overflow,
As we are filled from head to toe.
We love you Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
And we want this world to know.

Sometimes Alleluia,

Sometimes praise the Lord
Sometimes gently singing,
Our hearts in one accord.

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Never be ashamed or feel awkward about your expressions of worship by the sacrifices of the fruit of your lips.

The author of Hebrews suggests a second sacrifice of praise – the fruit of labor or doing good works.
Galatians 6:9-10 “**And let us not be weary in well doing, but in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men especially those of the household of faith.**”

Matthew 5:16 “**Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**”

Your public deeds are an act of worship, the fruit of labor that expresses worship to God. They invite others to worship God. When the heart is moved, the hands are motivated.

Again John Piper writes “**All of our bodily life done in love for others and in reliance upon God display the worth of God above all things and make us worshipers in our daily life.**”

Paul reminds us in **I Corinthians 10:31** “**So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**”

When it comes to worship through our deeds there should be no difference between the sacred and the secular. How I dig a ditch or file a report or pound a nail or change a bed pan should not be different than how I serve in the church as an usher or teacher or musician.

The author of Hebrews states that the sacrifices of our lips and the sacrifices of our labor are pleasing to God. But don't forget that this kind of worship begins in the heart.

Worship includes acknowledgment of God
Worship includes admission to God
Worship includes adoration for God

C. Worship Includes Adoration for God

In his book The Power of Transforming Prayer, J. Oswald Sanders suggests that worship is one of five elements in a well-balanced prayer life. Our prayers are often so focused on what we want that we often fail to stop and give what God deserves in our prayers. In the model prayer Jesus gave to His disciples in **Luke 11**, He began by our need of addressing God as our Father and inviting us to consider His holiness. Let's not forget that our prayers are a time of worship remembering that we come into the presence of a holy God. Again, **Psalm 29:2** tells us to **"worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness."** By acknowledging our reverence of Him when we pray, hold Him in deep awe or reverence as we worship His name. When we don't give God the reverence and worship He deserves in our prayers then our prayers will be feeble. Sanders uses the term anemic.

So, when we pray, do we adore God? The dictionary defines adoration as worship, or to worship as divine or loving greatly and honoring highly. A Bible study tool defines adoration as deep love and respect paid to someone we revere. Adoration is different from praise in that though the two are similar, adoration or worship should be reserved only for God. After Satan tempted Jesus to worship him, Jesus responded by saying **"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'" (Luke 4:8, cf. Deut. 6:13)**

Adoration is related to worship or paying homage. In the Bible adoration is required of everyone who professes to know God. The word adoration is not used in the New Testament but is translated worship, a word that means to kiss or to kiss the ground in reverence before someone.

When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem they wanted to know where they could find the newborn king so that they could worship Him (**Matthew 2:2**). In essence, they wanted to adore the Messiah.

Again, in **John 4:23-24**, where Jesus invites us to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, that word can also be translated to adore. At Christmas we

sing the carol which invites the faithful to come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

One source wrote that **"Adoration gets to the heart of who we are. To truly worship God, we must let go of our self-worship. We must be willing to humble ourselves before God, surrender every part of our lives to His control, and adore Him for who He is, not just for what He has done."**

Hebrews 12:28-29 (Deuteronomy 4:24)

The consuming fire spoken of is a fire that strips us of our pride and self-sufficiency. In true worship or adoration we put off any thought of self to focus on the worship of another and in our case it is to lose ourselves in the wonder, glory, and majesty of God. As we said moments ago, when we worship the Lord with such adoration, everything we do throughout the day becomes an act of worship. As one author notes: **"only when our deepest adoration is reserved for our Savior will all other loves take their proper place. We are able to love our families and friends better when our worshipful adoration belongs only to the Lord."**

Those who were gathered around God's throne in **Revelation 4 and 5** adored God.

Revelation 7:9-12

That passage tells us that our worship will last forever and forever. It will never end. We will never get tired of worshipping God. One source I read referred to **verse 12** as **"a sevenfold list of attributes expressing complete or perfect praise."**

When Jacob stopped to sacrifice to God it was pleasing to God. It pleased God because once again we see that God spoke to Jacob.

As we conclude today's message, what kind of worship do I offer God every day? J. Oswald Sanders poses another question for us to consider: **How can you know God better so that I can worship Him more worthily?**

To end our service, would you stand and let's read **Psalm 95:1-7**, and then we'll sing our closing hymn because when we worship God the way we should it is well with my soul.