



Topic	Ultimate Worship
Reference	Ephesians 5:1-2
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Speaker	Gaylord Enns

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

This brings me to a question which is simply this, what is worship?

This is an important question for us as believers. When we look at the dictionary, it would say this, worship is an expression of reverence and adoration for a deity. So this certainly would be compatible with our understanding of worship. When you look at the Hebrew. The word is **shachah**, it means to depress or to prostrate only (especially reflexively or in homage to royalty or to God):— bow, worship. In the Greek language, the word is **proskuneo**, it means to prostrate oneself in homage or worship to God.

The question, what is worship, really helps me, draws me back to a passage of scripture in which Jesus encountered a woman in the town of Samaria. Because there is an exchange here which is very important to us. You remember that Jesus was leaving Judea and he was going to his home region. It was may be a two-day journey and when the noon time arrived, they had come to Jacob's well in Samaria and it was there that Jesus meets a woman. His disciples have gone into town to buy food but Jesus meets a Samaritan woman. She has come out to draw water from the well. Jesus approaches her and he says, mam can I have something to drink. Then Jesus responds to her by saying, if you knew who it was that is asking you for water, you would have asked of me and I would have given you living water. This water that you draw from, you have to keep coming back and over and over again you have to keep drawing water, but the water that I would give you would become a springing well of water that would well up to eternal life. The woman looked at him and having questioned, why a Jew would talk to a Samaritan, a man would talk to a woman. The woman says to him, how will you get this water, you don't even have a bucket to go down and get the water. This woman says, I want this water. I don't want to keep coming here. Jesus then asked her a very unusual question. He says, would you please go and bring your husband to me. She says, I don't have a husband. Jesus prophetically responds



to her and he says, yes you have had five husbands and the man you now live with is not your husband.

Now at this point the conversation changes, because the woman says, 'I perceive that you are a prophet. That leads me to a religious question. Where is the right place to worship? Is it in Jerusalem or is it in the mountain in Samaria? Now this was a big controversy between the Samaritans and the Jews. Where was the right place to worship, but you remember that Jesus as he responds to her gives her some amazing insight and this begins a dialogue in which they use the word 'worship' ten times. There is no other place in the Bible that uses this word so clearly and so frequently as this conversation. In it, Jesus begins to explain to her how significant this is and he tells her that a t

*"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true **worshippers** will **worship** the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of **worshippers** the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his **worshippers** must **worship** in spirit and in truth."* John 4:23-24

This is an amazing insight for us as believers. Jesus is announcing a significant change, worship will no longer be found in Jerusalem or in Samaria, worship will now become something that happens in spirit and in truth because God is seeking this kind of worship, even today from us he is seeking this worship in spirit and in truth. So this begins to lead us to the question, his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. The word spirit is interesting. The etymology of the word is that which cannot be seen. The etymology of the word 'truth' is that which cannot be hidden. So here we see two aspects of worship which God seeks. A part of the worship God wants from us is invisible, it is not seen by human eyes. The other part cannot be hidden from the expression of our worship. Two elements of worship, which God who is spirit seeks from us. I believe Jesus is the ultimate worshiper of the father and so I am very interested to know how did Jesus worshipped God? What did it look like for Jesus to worship God in spirit and in truth? A second question would be this, where in the scripture do we see Jesus worshipping God in this way, in spirit and in truth?

So this intrigues my heart and my mind and I say, Lord show us how Jesus was the ultimate worshipper for us. That takes us to our passage of scripture for today, Ephesians 5:1-2 because I believe in this passage we will see what ultimate worship looks like for every believer. We start at the beginning. In the NIV, it is

1"Be imitators of God . . ."

As I looked at this passage of scripture and began to study it, I did not like one of the words there, which is imitator. To me, it was like getting a very cheap ice-



cream that is called imitation ice-cream in US. It is not the real thing, it is an imitation of the real thing. So I didn't like the connotation of the word. So I remember when I read it in NIV, I went back to my KJV and I looked at it and it says there,

Be ye followers of God . . .

I thought, I like that much better. But then I went to the Greek language, the Greek word is 'mimetes', which means to imitate. So I had to go back and look at it again. Be imitators of God . . . It is almost hard for me to grasp, how this relates to us. I think of a story which I now create. Its two people who have not seen each other for a long time. One is Tom and the other is Joe. They just by chance meet on a street corner one day and they are so glad to see each other and Tom says to Joe, "Joe, what have you been doing since we have seen each other last?" Joe responds and he says, "Oh! Just imitating God". Tom asked, "how many universes have you created?".

It raises the question of what does this mean, be an imitator of God. How is this relevant for me? Well it is interesting because in the passage of scripture it says,

"Be imitators of God, *therefore* . . ."

Now when you see the word 'therefore', it is always significant that you find out what that is there for. It is there because it refers back to some thing which has previously been introduced. So we have to look up one verse to chapter 4:32

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Now we begin to see, oh this is what it means, be imitators of God therefore. He is not asking us to create universes. He is asking us to be filled with compassion and kindness and forgiveness towards one another and to imitate that.

v. 31 "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."

Oh, isn't that wonderful. So now we know what he is asking us to imitate. He wants us to be like God in his gracious mercy, kindness, compassion and forgiveness towards us.

"Be imitators of God, therefore, *as dearly loved children* . . ."



It takes God from just being the God who is out in the universe and it makes him my father. He makes me a dearly loved child of the heavenly father. Oh this is so important for us because we see here that while God is our father that means we are his children. He loves us dearly and that makes us dearly loved children of father God. This is a term of intimacy. This is very important for us today. Children love to imitate their parents. Kids want to imitate their parents but they don't always get it right but parents are so good that do not rebuke the kids or discipline them. They use it as a creative moment because we would someday be like them. This is what God wants of us.

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love . . ."

This now is getting to the heart of what Jesus commanded us. It is getting to the heart of what the Christian message is all about. Live a life of love. In the Greek language, it is the word, 'peripateo', it means to live or to walk in love. What it means is the whole round of the activities of the individual life. It means everything you do, do it in love, because this is what it means, God is saying to imitate God as dearly loved children. Everything that we do, is this even possible. Yes, it is possible. We know that in

2 John 1:6 "And this is love: that we live a life of obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you live a life of love."

This is what he has asked of us that we live this amazing love that he has given us.

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us . . ."

Jesus modelled what it was to live a life of love. This is what he did, he showed us, what it was like to imitate the father because he loved everything he did was living a life of love. This takes us back to the commandment that Jesus gave his disciples on the final evening before he went to the cross. They have celebrated Passover. He has washed his disciples feet and he is now announcing to them that he is leaving

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

This is what apostle Paul is referring to in the Ephesian letter. Just as Christ loved us, we are to love one another. This was the new commandment that Jesus gave to us. It was in fact the commandment that he owned as my commandment in John 15:12



John 15:12 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Paul is highlighting this commandment for us and he is calling us to make it a lifestyle, to live a life of love.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us . . ."

To live a life of love requires us to surrender ourselves to God. It requires of us that we know what it is to yield ourselves fully to the lord, to surrender our life and to trust in him that his love will fill our hearts and empower us to surrender our lives, to yield them up to God, to actually lay them down or lay them aside in order that we can love others. I would suggest this that every time we love someone else, we have to lay aside our life. Now when that act is over, you can pick your life back up again. Jesus said that father had given him this power, he had the authority and power to lay his life aside and he had the authority to take it up again. Each of us have that same authority.

Jesus yielded up his life for us, he surrendered it. It makes life so much better for everyone when we learn what Jesus taught us, love can be a lifestyle.

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

When I see these words I know recognize worship, ultimate worship. This was Jesus in how he worshipped the father. He laid down his life for us, but it was a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. This is what worship as a lifestyle looks like. It is the fragrance that comes. It is interesting, I believe this is Jesus in His ultimate worship. We can't help but think of Romans chapter 12

Rom. 12:1-2 "Therefore, I urge you ... in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

God's perfect will is that we live a life of love, just as Christ loved us. This was his commandment. This is what he asked of us and now he welcomes us into this lifestyle that he himself lived and now has made possible for us to live. When we looked at the exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Jesus said there are two sides to the coin of worship. The person who worships God must



now worship in spirit and in truth. How does this apply to what we are talking about?

Remember, spirit is that which cannot be seen and truth is that which cannot be hidden. They are two parts of this lifestyle of worship that will be very important in understanding this. When we worship in truth, it is that which cannot be hidden. *Worship in truth* is the visible acts of love of the person that "lays down" their life in order to benefit another. That cannot be hidden. Do you realize that Jesus when he died on the cross, they did not put a curtain around him to shield what he was doing from the vision of people. He was out in the open for all to see. This act of love was an act in truth, it could not be hidden, so it is with many of the acts that you will do that are inspired by love. You cannot hide them because they are done in the realm of truth. They are done in a realm which is clearly to be seen and cannot be hidden from others.

1John 3:16 "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life *for us*." ". . . and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up *for us* . . ."

The acts that we do for one another are acts of love. When we step in to help someone who was overburdened, they are overwhelmed with the burden and you as a brother or sister according to Galatians 6:2, you come and you put a shoulder under their burden. It helps to lift the load that is unbearable for them. Apostle Paul says, bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. The law of Christ has a commandment in it, love one another and when we bear the burden we fulfil the law of Christ by loving one another even as he has loved us, but there is the spirit element, in spirit which cannot be seen. I believe that worship in spirit is the invisible fragrance that ascends to God – the smell of love inspired acts of kindness, acts of love, acts of service toward another person. Just as Christ loved us and gave himself up to God as a fragrant offering and sacrifice.

Now this I believe is important for us to understand. The acts of love cannot be hidden. They are done in the realm of truth but there is the invisible fragrance. Do you realize that when you live a life of love, there is an invisible fragrance that goes out from it and your heavenly father, Oh I love the smell of this. This is a sacrifice to me. This is what I wanted to smell. I have always desired that the people who know me and have received my son Jesus would live like him and there would be a fragrant offering an incense and a sacrifice, a fragrant offering that would come up. No one can see the fragrance, it is invisible, it is in spirit but God smells that fragrance. He loves it when we as his children live this kind of a life. This is what apostle Paul was teaching us in an application in this passage of scripture

How did Jesus worship His father in spirit and in Truth?



"... just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Ephesians 5:2

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." 1 John 3:16

This is what love requires. It is simple, it is joyous, it is not a burden. Jesus when he talk to us in John chapter 15, as the father has loved me that's how I loved you. Now make my love your home, I am telling you this so my joy can be in you and your joy can be complete. This is my commandment, love each other as I have loved you. The most joyous life we can live on earth is living a life of love, a lifestyle that Jesus taught us and we are in this passage invited into.

Ultimate Worship is a lifestyle of obedience to Jesus' Commandment--living a life of love, just as He has loved us!

The wonderful thing about this commandment is, it is a grace commandment. It is not us waking up in the morning, today I have a very hard day ahead of me. I have to love everybody today, it is very hard. No, no, no, it is waking up and saying father I am a dearly loved child of yours. I receive your love for me, let it fill my heart and saturate my mind. Your love for me is great, it is put into my heart by the Holy Spirit that you have given to me. It has filled my heart, come Lord fill me, prepare for this day that I can live a life of love, an ultimate worship. You may not be able to play a guitar. You may not be able to play the keyboard or even the drums. You may not be able to sing on pitch but you can still be an ultimate worshipper because he fills us with love and that love then begins to flow out. God has so desired that what saturates he environment of heaven, that perfect love, now begins to be displayed on earth through you and me as we learn what it is and that's why I would call this lesson, ultimate worship. It is a lifestyle, which Jesus empowers us to live.