

**True Worship — John 4:21-24**  
**Basil Howlett - Carey Baptist Church – 30 March 2008**

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These verses about worship occur in the story of our Lord's meeting with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. She had come for natural water for her body: he offered her spiritual water for her soul (4:10). When she queried how he could possibly give her living water (verses 11-12) he patiently explained that he meant spiritual water which leads to eternal life.

When she made a flippant remark about this living water (verse 15) Jesus suddenly confronted her with her sinful life (verses 16-18). She then tried to dodge the issue by having a discussion about the best place to worship God (verses 19-20). Jesus' reply (verses 21-24) in essence is, *'Now that the new testament era has dawned the important thing is not so much the PLACE where you worship but HOW you worship God. God is spirit and his worshippers must worship him in spirit and in truth.'*

**1. God is spirit.** He does not have a physical body of flesh and bone, limited by space and time, as we have, but he is alive and real, altogether greater than we are. He is the immortal, invisible God who knows everything and is present everywhere.

**2. He is to be worshipped.** Worship is the glad acknowledgement and declaration of the greatness of our God and Saviour. There is:

- ❖ Personal worship of individual believers which should be part of every day living (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- ❖ Corporate worship when we meet with other believers (Hebrews 10:25). Our present series is mainly focussed on this because it is the area where there is so much debate. There are two extremes. Those who maintain that everything must be open to change! Others who insist that nothing must change! How should we worship God?

**3. We must worship him in truth.** This is the easier phrase to deal with, so let's deal with that first.

- ❖ We must believe the truth about God. The Samaritans didn't (v 22).
- ❖ We should worship where the truth of God is taught.
- ❖ In a genuine service of worship there should always be a presentation of God's truth to ponder. Preaching the truth is a vital part of worship.
- ❖ All our worship must be consistent with the truth of God's Word.

**4. We must worship God in spirit** (see also Philippians 3:3). The only way in which we can worship in a truly spiritual manner is with the help and power of the Holy Spirit. What are the characteristic of spiritual worship?

- ❖ Reality. Not done mechanically just out of force of habit.
- ❖ A sense of the presence and glory of God (2 Chron 5:13, Gen 28:17).

- ❖ A sense of awe and reverence (Acts 2:43, Hebrews 12:28-29).
- ❖ A sense of privilege and delight (Psalm 122:1, Psalm 84:1-4,10).
- ❖ A sense of life and warmth (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).
- ❖ Lose all sense of time, all sense of your own 'importance'. You have met with God and had a taste of heaven (Isaiah 6:1-5, 2 Cor 12-2-4).
- ❖ Unbelievers are deeply affected (Zechariah 8:23, Acts 2:47, 1 Corinthians 14:25).

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