

THANKSGIVING

gratitude, grace, & generosity

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Thanks-Giving: a series about Gratitude, Grace & Generosity.

- Series goal: increased participation in tithing and challenge to give 1% to Alms & Missions
- Last week shared a NT understanding of tithing
- This week we will see how giving financially is an expression of worship

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Matthew 2:1-11 NKJV

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, (2) saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." (3) When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. (4) And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. (5) So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

Matthew 2:1-11 NKJV

(6) 'BUT YOU, BETHLEHEM, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH, ARE NOT THE LEAST AMONG THE RULERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.' " (7) Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. (8) And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

Matthew 2:1-11 NKJV

(9) When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. (10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. (11) And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:1-11 NKJV

- The first record we have of anyone worshiping Jesus
- Fitting that the first people recorded as worshiping Jesus are Gentiles
- Jesus came not only as the king of the Jews, but as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to rule and reign over all the earth and to have a kingdom comprised of every tongue and tribe and nation

What Worship Looks Like

What did their worship look like? (Kiononia and worship look alike)

“They fell down”: bowing to the ground

- ***Physical action:*** – **participation**
- Worship, throughout the Bible involves your whole body, not just a “state of mind” agreeing to right doctrine, or an emotional experience
- In fact, these “wise men from the East” probably didn't have all their doctrine right, but they knew who and how to worship!

What Worship Looks Like

“And worshiped Him”: *prostrate* oneself in homage
(*do reverence* to, *adore*)

- Hmm, they fell down and fell down
- First bodily
- Secondly in their hearts: reverence & adoration.
- ***Heart Action: intimacy***

“They had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense & myrrh”

- Worship included giving things of value
- ***Material Action: contribution***
- Christmas tradition of giving gifts to children is partly based on this story

What Worship Looks Like

- I think its wonderful.
- Yes people can be distracted from the true meaning of Christmas and make it about materialism.
- But it also is a wonderful demonstration of the greatest gift of all: the gift of God sending His Son as Savior to the world.

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 NKJV

"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. (17) Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

- From the beginning worship has always included offerings
- Gen. 4 – Cain & Abel brought offerings to God

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 NKJV

- “Worship” is derived from the word “worth”
- Our offerings are a demonstration of the worthiness that we ascribe to God
- Every man had to come 3 times a year for 3 great festivals of worship & celebration
- “They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed”
- This defines worship as being a two-way interaction between God and man

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 NKJV

- God receives the offering and worship and gives His blessing & presence
- Man receives God's blessing and presence and gives his offering & adoration
- Same transaction we saw between Abraham and Melchizedek
- “Every man shall give **as he is able** according to the blessing of the Lord...”
- Proportionate giving / exponential return!

2 Samuel 24:24-25 ESV

“But the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. (25) And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.”

- David defined Biblical worship
- In this passage we see into David's heart
- “I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.”

2 Samuel 24:24-25 ESV

- David had a conviction that worship must be substantial, it must cost something
- When we worship the Lord, but separate worship from everything that has material value, we diminish the place of God in our life.
- Contemporary worship that reduces it to merely an expression of intellectual assent (agreement) and/or emotional experience, lacks the Biblical element of worship that ties our mental and emotional experiences to the real world - giving something of value

2 Samuel 24:24-25 ESV

- Biblical worship involves our whole being.
- Thinking worship should, or even could, be purely mystical or “spiritual” and separate from tangible offerings is actually based upon Greek dualism and Gnostic heresy.
- Biblical worship is incarnational -- God’s presence and worth experienced and expressed by real people and real things.
- Worship should include expression of God's worth in our lives and it should be demonstrated in the offerings that we give to God.

Application

Biblical worship “costs something” it has worth, value

How can we worship this way with:

- **Physical action** - participation, physical cost/value
- **Heart action** - intimacy, emotional cost/value
- **Material action** - tangible demonstration of cost/value

Response time - Pray for gratitude, grace and generosity

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