

There is nothing more powerful than the Presence of God. If the fullness of God's Presence were to enter this sanctuary, we would all be instantly consumed as would be the sanctuary and all that is close to it. Almighty God, omnipotent, omnipresent, all powerful, all knowing is so powerful that God has to hide Himself from humankind. Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory. There is only one God in the universe, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When Jesus comes again in all His glory we will see Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in all their glory. That first sight of God will not only change us, it will change the entire universe. Our present universe cannot contain the fullness of God's Presence. When Adam and Eve fell and sin entered the world, the entire universe was impacted. The creation groans until the day of Jesus Christ, giving birth to the new heaven and the new earth. Because we are sinful human beings, God has to hide Himself so humankind can still live. Adam and Eve got kicked out of the Garden. When Jesus comes again there is going to be the great recreation, the making of a new heaven and earth whereby God no longer has to hide himself for He will give to us glorified bodies that can stand in His presence and live. We will look at Jesus face to face and not be consumed. Our present bodies ache for the day that we will receive our glorified bodies that will ache no more. That day is coming, and it may be sooner than we think.

The greatest display of God's Presence in the Old Testament was when God visited Moses on Mt. Sinai. God hides, God envelops Himself in the shekinah glory cloud. If we could look inside the cloud, we would be entering a different sphere that God has kept separate from us. The fullness of God can never be in the presence of the unholy for the unholy would be consumed. When Jesus came to earth, He had to give up His former glory so he could be here on earth with the rest of civilization.

Exodus 19:16-20 (NLT2) ¹⁶ *On the morning of the third day, thunder roared and lightning flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain. There was a long, loud blast from a ram's horn, and all the people trembled.* ¹⁷ *Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.* ¹⁸ *All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently.* ¹⁹ *As the blast of the ram's horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God thundered his reply.* ²⁰ *The LORD came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So, Moses climbed the mountain.*

Notice the response of the people as God descended upon the mountain. "And all the people trembled." In Isaiah we read **Isaiah 66:2b (ESV)** ² But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

Today Americans show little or no respect for people in authority. I will never forget one of my mentors, Mrs. Ruth Winqvist. I swore she was 7 feet tall or as tall as Goliath. The first time I met her I had my head down because my mother and I were late. The year was 1970. I was to be interviewed to see if I would be accepted at the Christian school I wanted to attend. I was only 12 at the time and it was to be my first interview. With my head down, walking next to my mother, I abruptly saw these big feet and super long legs. I kept looking up higher until I saw her face. She had a warm smile on her face. I had never seen such a tall woman. I looked up to her and though she is with the Lord now I still look up to her with the greatest of respect. Everyone showed the greatest of respect for her and I was in awe of her. If there were two hundred unruly students in chapel, all Mrs. Winqvist had to do was stand up and give us her look and we would be instantly quiet. My body would tremble a little bit. I got really nervous because none of us wanted to make her angry. She had a heart of gold and loved us students, but you never wanted to cross her or disappoint her. I visited her twice a year for 34 years after

high school. I loved Mrs. Winquist and she loved us Breums. I could only treat her with the respect she deserved.

We as a society have lost the art of respecting those in authority and treating people in general with decency. Even pastors these days are listed below used car salesmen in terms of credibility. This has impacted one's view of the church in general and God in particular.

A few things about worship are about to be stated and we will begin with the first commandment. **Exodus 20:3 (ESV)** ³ "You shall have no other gods before me." Luther writes, "Since I alone am God, thou shalt place all thy confidence, trust, and faith on Me alone, and on no one else." Luther also writes, "[W]here the heart is rightly set toward God and this commandment is observed, all the other commandments follow." In other words, if we actually obeyed the first commandment according to God's word, we would obey all of the other commandments. For all the other commandments are derived from the first. The First Commandment is running through all the others. "You shall have no other gods before me."

It used to be said that you can tell a lot about a person's walk with God by looking at their check book. These days we carry debit cards. Looking at your bank account tells something of one's personal priorities in life. "Where your heart is there goes your money."

"You shall have no other gods before me." The word "before" is an exceptionally important word to understand. Dr Sproul writes, "God is not saying, "You can have all kinds of other deities as long as they don't rank ahead of me; I only want to be judged to be of first importance." On the contrary, "before Me" means "in My presence." God is everywhere so God is saying, "I will not tolerate any other gods." Thus the first commandment guards against all forms of idolatry, because idolatry misdirects worship

from the true God to some kind of substitute, a fraudulent deity (5 things Every Christian needs to grow, pg. 63.)

It has been said that people are like tea bags. You put them in hot water and their true selves come out. Living in this time of covid has revealed to us particular things about ourselves that are not pleasing to God and in direct rebellion against the first commandment. It's like we have been living in super-hot water and the smell of the tea is not all that good. We have attitudes, behaviors, relationships and more that have soured during this time. We could no longer rely on things that we took for granted, including coming to worship. I am glad for the time we had at home. My wife made the best of it for all of us. I had to face things in my own family that I never would have faced for my true self came out loud, very loud and clear. All of our relationships grew deeper, and the tea began to smell a lot better. The hot water began to purify instead of bringing out the worst in us.

Whatever we rely on more than God, wherever we find our happiness in more than God, whatever we live for more than God, whatever we put before God will eventually be one's downfall. There is only one God, and we are here to worship Him. You came out of your Mama to worship God, to glorify God by enjoying God. **1. Life is all about giving to God His proper worship, His proper place in your life. God calls every Christian into the church.**

Everything the Lord has ever done He has done for His church and yes, we are the church, assembled, brought together by God to worship God in the company of His people. To avoid worship is only to ask for problems in the long run. Certain circumstances in your life may just about do you in because you have not been strengthened by fellowshiping with God and with God's people weekly. It is dangerous in our Christian lives to avoid the Sabbath. Try driving your car without any oil in it and all it does is burn the engine up and it is no good for what it was made.

In Romans chapter 1 the Bible makes it crystal clear that from the beginning of creation God has plainly revealed Himself in nature. This self-revelation to every human being unveils God's eternal power and deity. Paul declares that in every moment of our existence we are in a theatre in which an ongoing revelation of God's nature and character is playing before our very eyes. Paul also states that due to our fallen nature, the fact that we are sinners results in taking the knowledge that God reveals and suppress it, to exchange it for a lie, choosing to worship and serve the creature, the creation rather than the Creator. **2. The fundamental sin of the human race is that despite knowing God, men and women do not honor Him as God; rather they engage in idolatry.** This makes the first commandment all that more important (ibid pg. 64).

Where I grew up the beauty of God's creation is breathtaking. Surrounded by two mountain ranges, the waters of various bays and sounds, and being close to the ocean has not drawn people closer to God; just the opposite. Over 90 percent of the population is busy worshipping the creation to the neglect of the Creator, suppressing the truth for a lie. Paul is so right in what he writes.

3. God seeks us out to worship Him. Repeating **Isaiah 66:2b (ESV)** ² But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. Jesus states clearly, **John 4:23-24 (NLT2)** ²³ But the time is coming—indeed it's here now - when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." God is actually seeking worshippers.

God seeks worshippers, not because God is a narcissist and needs to be worshipped. No, God has no needs. **4. God seeks worshippers because he gave us life and knows what our souls long for, to be close to God.**

What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth? To worship God in spirit means you can worship God anywhere and not just one locality for God is everywhere. The curtain has been torn and now we all have access to the Holy Presence of God, no longer just in Jerusalem. God is being worshipped all over the world and that is good. **5. To worship God in spirit is to engage your entire self, your entire being into worshipping God.** It is possible to come to church and not worship God. Your body might be here, but your mind is 1000 miles away. The Bible calls this false worship. **Isaiah 29:13 (NLT2)** “¹³ And so the Lord says, “These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.”

So Jesus was saying, “I want people who, when they come to worship Me, come with hearts fully engaged with what they are doing.” Worship that pleases God is not given grudgingly, out of a mere sense of duty to show up at church on Sunday morning but is motivated and driven by soul that delights in the Presence of God. Spiritual worship is worship that is offered by a person who takes delight in honoring God, in praying to God, in listening to the Word of God with his or her mind fully engaged (ibid. pg. 71).

To worship God in truth means God reveals Himself to you through the Scriptures and your response is to worship God with your entire heart, soul, mind, and strength. **6. Worship is a spiritual workout to strengthen one’s faith in God.** The clearer you see God as revealed in the Bible the more intense will be your worship of God giving to God the reverence, honor, praise, glory and adoration His Majesty rightly deserves. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive every bit of worship we offer Him. God inhabits the praises of His people. We worship together for an audience of One, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen and Amen.