

Title: To Him be Glory
Text: Jude 24-25
Theme: The glad and right worship of God
Series: Jude
Prop Stmtnt: Worship is the right response to the right understanding of God

Read Text:

Much of what is called “worship” in the contemporary church is thinly veiled idolatry. True worship is not just concerned with the glory of God, it is consumed with it. True worship is not how I feel in response to a mood, a beat, a sound, a familiar old song, or a familiar new one. True worship is not my reaction to what I like and how I like it. Worship is all that I am responding to all that God is. If there is little attention given to God and if we have a shallow understanding and appreciation for who he is, then our worship will be shallow. If your understanding of God is shallow and your focus on him is fleeting, then your view of God will be small. A small God does not take up much room in your mind and heart. Therefore, there is a lot of space left for fear, doubt, anxiety, addiction, stress, anger, lust, and bitterness. If your view of God is small then your view of yourself or your view of other people or other things will be disproportionately big.

In this benediction that Jude expresses to God in such a way that he brings us along with him, we see the word “glory” used twice. The presence of God is described as the presence of his glory, therefore, our response to God is to ascribe him glory. We are to respond to God in a manner that is fitting with who he is. In the introduction (the sermon before the sermon), I want to address this. The word “glory” is translated from a Hebrew word that means weight or weightiness. God’s value is weighty. God’s value is infinitely weighty.

1. Worship is God-ward

a. Our Posture is toward Him– “to him” “to the only God”

The entire focus of this benediction is on God. “Now TO HIM...TO THE ONLY GOD.” And, grammatically, the heart of this benediction is giving glory, attention, worship, praise and ascribing to God and acknowledging that God is glorious, he is majestic, and he has ultimate dominion and authority. The posture of this is God-ward. The very words, “now to him” and “to the only God” serve to lift our gaze and the attention of our hearts to God. Fundamental to worship is getting our eyes off of ourselves and getting them on God. We naturally think about ourselves. We automatically have our eyes on ourselves. Have you ever considered the fact that some of you don’t sing loud because you don’t want people to hear you. What is that? That is not a God-ward focus is it? Get your eyes off of yourself. Consider God! If you are too cool to sing, then you don’t know God. If God bores you, it is because you are infatuated and blinded by something really cheap. One of the reasons why God has called his people to gather together weekly is so that we will have a time in which we clean our glasses and reset our vision. I may or may not tell you something that you have not heard before. But our gathering is not primarily so that you will get new information, but so that you will get your eyes on the Lord. If your eyes are not on the Lord, then you will not look at life or your life correctly.

This morning we heard Christina tell us about Timmy. When Timmy's diagnosis was confirmed we prayed and have continued to pray because we were aware of how much he needed God to intervene on his behalf. The truth is, I need God and you need God's involvement in your life just as much as Timmy. This is what worship does. It reminds me that I am utterly dependent upon God, all the time. Jesus said that the Father is seeking worshipers who will worship in spirit and in truth. Our worship is to be marked by the right spirit, posture, attitude and focus, but it is also to be marked by truth. Worship is theological.

b. Our view is informed by Him

A shallow view of God results in a false view of and false practice of worship. If my view of God is not informed and framed by God's Word about himself, then I will come up with my own view of God. How I worship is going to be influenced by how I view God. My view of God must be based on God's view of God. How does God view God?

Go back with me to Exodus 33. The book of Exodus is answering the question that Pharaoh threw out in chapter 5 when he arrogantly challenged God and of course Moses when he foolishly said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey him?" 10 plagues later and with the corpses of the Egyptian army floating in the Red Sea, we have part of our answer. Don't mess with God. He is holy, he is powerful and he will not tolerate false worship, like making a golden calf and pretending that this is God. The golden calf fiasco made it clear that the children of Israel were no different than the Egyptians.

So, God tells Moses (v.1) to leave Mt. Sinai and start heading for the promised land. He is going to send his angel before him (v.2) but, he (God) is not going to go with them because the Israelites are so stiff-necked that God says that he may consume them. At this point Moses has a panic attack and says that, "hey that wasn't part of the deal." I can't do this without you. Moses' intercession for his people beginning in v.12 is a beautiful expression of love for the very people who will repeatedly rebel against his leadership. There are many times when we wonder, why doesn't God go ahead and wipe them out and start over. But, God concedes to go with them and in this dialogue with God, Moses makes a request in v.18. "*Please show me your glory.*" God said, "*I will make my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name.*" Don't miss that now. Moses asked to see God's glory and God said that Moses will get to see God's goodness. So, what is it that God says about God? God says that he is good. At the same time, God knows that he is righteous, holy and so infinitely pure that no human can stand in his presence without some protection, so when Moses gets back on the mountain, God hides Moses in a cleft of the rock, covers him with his hand and then passes by Moses in such a way that Moses cannot see the face of God, but he could see the trail of his robes. But, even as God walked by, God said this about himself to Moses. (34.6-7) "*The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands (or to the thousandth generation), forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.*"

So, while God is infinitely holy, white-hot righteous, and perfectly pure, he loves to be known as good. His glory is his goodness which is expressed in mercy and grace. This is how we are to understand all that God does. His default response is mercy and grace because God is good. God never acts contrary to who he is. Behind every trial is our good God being good, being merciful, being gracious, being faithful, and keeping his promises. And since God does not change, we are confident that God will always act in accordance with who he is.

So, we learn about God from his word, therefore, if we are going to worship him as we should then God's Word has to inform us, caution us, and guide our worship. Worship begins with God, not with us. Worship is defined by God, governed by God and protected by God. False worship, that is, the worship of anything or anyone other than God, or the wrong worship of the true God, is catastrophic. Worship is God-ward.

2. **Worship is Christ-centered.** – “through Jesus Christ our Lord”

Once again Jude emphasizes the personal nature of God. God is OUR savior and Jesus Christ is OUR Lord. But, the preposition, “through” is telling. Glory, majesty, dominion and authority are ascribed to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. What does that mean? The preposition through has the idea of “by means of.” So, if the glory of God refers to all that God is and if in all that God is (omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, holy, righteous, sovereign, infinite, just, merciful, kind, gracious, forgiving, loving, joy, wonderful, saving, redeeming, etc.), God loves for us to know and be convinced of his goodness, then we can see why the Bible expresses worship to God through Jesus Christ.

“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7.25

“to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. Romans 16.27

“That is why it is through him [Jesus Christ] that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” 2 Cor. 1.20

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3.17

“...that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory, and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4.11

A. **True Worship comes to God only through Christ.**

So, true worship of God is through Jesus Christ.

God is good but his goodness does not cancel out his holiness or righteousness. This is how it fits together. Because God is so good, meaning merciful and gracious, God has made a way for us to be able to come into the presence of his glory, so that we can do what we were created to do which is to enjoy him by worshiping him. But how? How can this be? How can people like us stand before a God like him? The answer: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus reminds us of his humanity and Christ reminds us of his deity while Lord reminds us of his authority. He is all of these. He is God, who became man. That is astonishing goodness! That is amazing humility. The Creator became part of his own creation. He did this in part so that we could never question his understanding of us, his love for us, his posture toward us. God came to us. God is with us

because God is for us. But, his coming to us was more than being present among us and being a good friend. He came primarily to be our Savior. Joseph was told to call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. If we are not saved from our sins, we cannot be with God. God is too good to compromise his holiness, but his goodness made a way for God to be righteous and gracious. Our sin has to be punished by a sacrifice that is worthy enough of God's forgiveness. The penalty of our sin had to be paid by a gift that was worthy enough to satisfy God's infinite offense at our rebellion. And Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross on our behalf. Jesus lived the life that we could not live and then he died the death that we could die so that he, and he alone paid in full for the every sin of every single person who would ever believe in him. God is that good that he provided Jesus Christ as your substitute. But what Christ accomplished has to be received by you. This has to be personal for you. That is why

B. True Worship is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus is Lord in the ultimate sense. He is King. His kingdom is forever. But the question is, do you love him? Do you trust him? Do you receive him as your Lord? Do you believe that this Jesus who died, died for you? Was buried for you? Rose again for you? It's personal. True Worship is not merely information though we need to know who God is. True Worship is not defined by a carefully scripted service order, with flawless music and a wonderful setting. True Worship is personal. You have to believe in and love Jesus. You cannot worship God any other way. But, it is because of who God is and what he has done for us through Christ and what he has promised to do that

3. Worship is multi-dimensional because it is all-consuming.

Jude uses 4 words that are grouped in 2 pairs describe our response to God.

A. Glory and Majesty

I told you earlier that glory means weighty. The word that Jude uses is the word is doxa. We sing a song called the doxology. It is a combination of doxa (glory) and logos (word). It means a word of praise. We say and sing words of glory because God is overwhelming in all things. To God we ascribe the weight, the esteem, the respect, the reverence, the power and the attention that he is due. When God speaks, we listen. The preaching of God's Word deserves our careful attention. When God commands, we obey. When God explains, we don't argue. It's not just that he is mighty and we are weak and that he could crush us if he wanted to. He doesn't want to. This weighty, overwhelming God by whom we are infinitely overmatched loves you and is good to you. Therefore, we want to listen, we want to obey, we don't want to argue, we want to follow, we want to delight in and we want to be with him. That is how we ascribe glory to God.

Majesty belongs with glory because like that word it refers to the infinite grandeur of God. We build things like monstrous castles, and wear things like uniforms, spectacular dresses and say things, like "your royal highness" in an effort to communicate earthly grandeur to fellow humans who happen to be in positions of royalty. But, God is true royalty. His very essence is grand. Before him, we are naturally amazed. So, we tell him that! We sing of his glory and we sing of

his majesty. He is so glorious and majestic that he is worth good music to be written about him and sung about him and to him.

B. Dominion and Authority

This is so beautiful. The One with infinite glory and majesty is the one with infinite dominion and authority. In our experience we have seen some first-rate loony-bins elected to positions in the government. We shake our heads in amazement and wonder what will they do or say next? But God whose perfection is beautiful, his glory is good, his presence is joy has infinite authority. The goodness never ends.

This is why worship is all that I am responding to all that God is, all of the time. Even eating and drinking is to be done to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10.31). Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God to be used however he wants is reasonable. It is rational. (Romans 12.1-2) In fact, not to do so, is irrational and false worship.

4. Worship is responsive. – “now”

This doxology (words of praise) are in reaction to and in response to the promise of the gospel and the warnings to guard the gospel from false teachers. This battle is worth fighting because the glory of God and therefore, the bride of Christ is worth it. Jesus is so glorious that he is worth a beautiful bride. When you consider the beauty of Jesus, you want to love him, adore him, trust him, esteem him, and make him known.

A Godward worship is therefore going to be marked by adoration and awe in response to God's greatness, confession and repentance in response to God's holiness, glory and righteousness; humility, reverence, and silence in response to God's power and knowledge; love, amazement and thanksgiving in response to God's goodness, mercy and grace; and consecration, yielding, surrendering, and commitment in response to God's Lordship.

You become like what you worship. This is why we take our gathering on Sunday seriously and why you need to be here regularly and seek to engage wholeheartedly in the service. We need to hear about God so that we will respond to God as we should. The more we respond correctly to God, the more we will be like him. What is God like and what are you like?

What you are like helps you understand what your view of God is like. If you stick a pin in God goodness, mercy and grace pours out because that is what is on the surface. For some of you, fear is barely under the surface, anger is barely under the surface, bitterness is barely under the surface. When you get poked, this is what comes out. Do you see it now? Worshipping God is the right response to God, but it is a wonderful gift to us because in worshipping God, we become less like ourselves and more like him, who is Savior.