

Why do I worship? Because Jesus paid the whole price of my sin!

Outline:

- I. Make the Effort!
 - a. I have played volleyball for a number of years. When you play “pick up games” that is where people just kind of join your team as they walk in, you never know who you will get or what skill level you will find.
 - i. What I have noticed are two kinds of people in sports.
 - ii. Those who give it their all and those who just wait for the ball to come to them.
 - iii. The first kind, those who give it their all are ones who seek to get in the game, to play with all of their ability and not hold back.
 1. By playing with all they have they get a lot more out of the game.
 2. They are the ones you can count on to be “in the game.”
 - iv. The other kind, those who just wait passively, really ruin the game.
 1. They just don’t have their heart in the game.
 2. They just show up. And then they are disappointed when they don’t get any enjoyment out of the game.
 3. They generally don’t come back every week.
 - b. Did you know that people come to worship with the same kind of attitudes?
 - i. Some folks think that somehow they will experience worship if they just show up.
 1. They don’t necessarily prepare for the morning, they come without a sense of expectation, and seem to think that somehow God is happy to see that they made it to His house.
 2. But by thinking worship will just “happen” to them, they never really experience it.
 3. They never get into it, they never give themselves or put themselves into the service.
 4. As a result, they go away empty and wonder why.
 - ii. But the others, who give it their all...what do they experience?
 1. They experience God Himself.
 2. They get up on Sunday morning (and just about every morning for that matter) and look for God.
 3. They are hungry for God.
 4. They don’t just want “a little bit of God” but they want all of Him.
 5. And as a consequence, they enter their Sunday experience with a sense of “giving all of themselves” to God.
 - c. Which are you? What have you come this morning to do?
 - i. Have you come with an aching hunger for God this morning or have you just “shown up” and just hoping that you will experience worship?
 - ii. Let’s Pray: Lord God, some of us want to confess that we have not come here with the right motives...we came to get rather than to give. We came to receive rather than to give ourselves to You. Some of us have just showed up, wanting You to bless us for making the effort to just be here...yet You want more than that. So we ask Your forgiveness for our mixed motives. Turn our hearts toward You. Help us to hunger for Your Presence the way we hunger for food after a fast. Help us to desire You above anything else this morning. Oh God...You long for us, You Ache for us, may we experience what you feel for us and return that love to you in worship. In Jesus Name. Amen.

- II. This morning, we are going to learn about the supreme motivation for worship.
- a. I want to take you back to the beginning of your bible, to the place where Adam and Eve had sinned and had discovered their alienation from God and found out what kind of debt they had incurred.
 - i. Genesis 3:6-8 *“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”*
 - ii. The bible says that in Genesis 3:7 that after they had sinned that they recognized their “nakedness” and they sought to cover it by sewing fig leaves together.
 - iii. Their “nakedness” is an analogy that their guilt before God was exposed.
 1. Before their sin, they *needed* no covering, because they had no sin and therefore, no guilt.
 2. But afterward, they did. Why is this so?
 - a. Because sin had done something to them. It had changed them and their relationship to God,
 - b. And no longer could God look upon them, because of their sin.
 - c. This is because God is perfectly holy and the bible says that *“His eyes are too pure to look upon evil.”* He cannot dwell with evil.
 3. Closely related to God’s holiness is something called His “wrath.”
 - a. Wrath is NOT an emotional, knee jerk reaction to something, nor is it anger out of control.
 - b. **God’s wrath is His disposition and attitude toward evil.**
 - i. It is a complete incompatibility to co-exist with evil.
 - c. Some folks think that God’s wrath is just an Old Testament concept, as if somehow God changed between the pages of the bible.
 - d. But it is very New Testament as well.
 - i. If we want to see a picture of God’s wrath, we only need to look to the Cross and see the price that Jesus had to pay to expend the wrath of God upon evil and sin.
 - ii. We cannot really understand the nature of God’s wrath toward evil if we don’t understand the utter holiness of God.
 - iii. Stott: **“God’s holiness exposes sin and His wrath opposes it.”**
 - e. **As long as the Holiness of God is something we don’t come to grips with, then we ourselves will never really be repulsed by sin and evil, and we will tolerate it in our lives and in our world.**
 - i. I would like you to think about something...
 1. As long as sin does not provoke our own wrath, we mistakenly believe it doesn’t provoke God’s wrath.
 2. If our view of God ignores His holiness, that is, if we bring God down to our level and raise ourselves to His, then we will see no need for a such a huge price to be paid for sin and evil.
 - ii. But on the other hand, when we have glimpsed the blinding glory of God, and have been so convicted of our sin that we tremble before God and acknowledge what we are...hell deserving sinners,

then and only then does the necessity of the cross appear so obvious that we are astonished that we never saw it before.

- f. How many of you have rented or purchased the Passion of the Christ?
 - i. If you have seen the Passion, you are witnessing the wrath of God upon sin.
 1. Jesus purpose in coming to earth was to take our sin upon His body and to bear the penalty that you and I deserved for our sin and self-led lives.
 2. In other words, He bore the very wrath of God that was directed at your and my sin.
4. When Adam and Eve sinned, they encountered God's holiness in a way they never had before.
 - a. Suddenly, they were contaminated with evil.
 - b. They could no longer enter the presence of God as they were.
 - c. So, they did their best to try to cover themselves.
 - d. But when God came through the garden, the bible says that they "hid themselves."
5. God finds them, and his wrath becomes visible in the pronouncement of the penalty and consequences of their actions.
6. And then, curiously, after this pronouncement of their penalty, in v. 21, the bible says "*The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.*"
7. God provided a "covering" for them to take the place of the coverings that they had made for themselves.
8. This curious statement demonstrates a biblical principle that runs the entire length of the bible.
 - a. What is the difference between this covering that God provided for them and what they had tried to provide?
 - i. It is found in the costliness of the garment.
 1. You see, the garments of fig leaves, they had made themselves, out of their own efforts, from the materials around them. They cost them their own labor.
 2. But the garments that God provided were made of animal skin. Something had to die to provide that covering.
 3. Something innocent had to give its life so they could be covered.
- iv. While that may not sound like a big thing, it actually is.
 1. Later in the bible, we hear about a term called "atonement" which is the term that is used whenever the bible speaks of sin and the price that sin requires.
 2. Sin always must be covered.
 3. Unfortunately, our own efforts to cover it only lead to *concealment* rather than dealing with it.
 4. **God's method of covering sin is called atonement.**
 - a. It involves the covering of the one who sinned with the blood or life of one who did not sin.
 - b. It involves the biblical principle of substitution.
- v. What does all of this have to do with worship?
- vi. It has a great deal to tell us.

- III. Let us turn our bibles to Genesis 4:1 – 5.
- a. Many of us are familiar with Cain and Able. Most of what we learn in Sunday School is about the first fratricide and the first murder. We learn about how one brother was jealous and hated the other. But the story is not primarily about that.
 - i. The story is about worship. And it goes to the very heart of what we have been speaking about this morning.
 - b. *“Now Adam slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time came, she gave birth to Cain, and she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have brought forth a man!” Later she gave birth to a second son and named him Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer. At harvest time Cain brought to the LORD a gift of his farm produce, while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his offering, but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.”*
 - i. You might have noticed that Cain and Abel each presented a different offerings to God at the harvest time.
 - ii. God accepts Abel’s offering but rejects Cain and his offering.
 - iii. Were the offerings from the flocks really “better” than the farm produce?
 - iv. What was reason that Abel’s offering was acceptable and Cain’s was not?
 - c. The answers to these questions lie in the way that Cain chose to ignore the pattern that God had prescribed to approach Him
 - i. Back in the garden, Adam and Eve had learned about the nature of “atonement,” that you couldn’t come to God with stuff you had made, but that you had to approach Him through a blood sacrifice. They had learned this by the way that God had clothed them and showed them that the clothing that they had made was inadequate for them. They learned that God provided for their covering and that to come to Him required coming by the method that He had prescribed.
 - ii. Cain comes and makes his offering with the works of his hands...it is the fruit of his fields.
 1. Both Cain and Abel farmed and raised livestock. They would have, by necessity, done both.
 2. But what they chose to offer to God gives us an insight into the attitude of their heart and disposition toward God.
 3. Cain’s offering has been produced by the sweat of his brow.
 4. We learn in the book of Hebrews that *“without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin”* (Heb. 9:22)
 5. And Cain’s offering is without blood. “
 6. “The sweat of his brow” is no substitute for “the blood of the lamb”
 - iii. It was as if Cain believed that he could actually produce something God needed or wanted.
 1. As if he could actually “give” God something.
 - iv. What was fundamentally wrong with Cain’s sacrifice?
 1. No doubt, he brought the very BEST he had to God.
 2. But God “despised” it. He rejected it.
 3. Why? Because it was bloodless.
 - a. It was a denial of his need for a redeemer.
 - b. It was a assumption that he was worthy in himself or in his acts.
 - c. He approached God based upon his own merits and actions.
 - d. In fact, it was a rejection of God’s revelation (because Adam and Eve and Abel all understood the necessity of atonement)
 - e. Cain wanted worship before atonement.
 - f. But **worship is not possible without atonement.** (at one ment).
 4. Cain was not an infidel or an atheist.

- a. He was a proud religionist. He was self-righteous.
 - b. His offering was the fruit of his own life.
 - c. He really believed that somehow he was good enough for God.
 - v. Cain also didn't come by faith (Heb 11)
 - 1. Faith is more than confident expectation.
 - 2. Cain had that much.
 - 3. Faith is the result of hearing God submitting oneself to God's revelation of Himself.
 - 4. Essentially, **faith is an act of worship!**
 - vi. Cain's actions represent man's attempts to please God, to earn God's approval, to "win" God's favor, to "buy" our way into heaven and to "pay" for our own sins.
 - 1. Anyone who does these things knows neither the Holiness of God nor the Costliness of Sin.
 - 2. It is at the root...an attempt to use religion to approach God.
 - 3. It is where we feel we must "do" something! "I will give God something" as opposed to recognizing "I have nothing to give, so I come only by the blood of the lamb"
 - 4. **Religion and works says, "something in my hand I must bring"**
 - 5. But Abel and those of faith can say only, "***Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the Cross I cling.***"
- d. But the bible says that there is only one way to God and it is not through a religion, through a bunch of actions we take, or things we must do.
 - i. There is only one way to God and it is through a person. That person is Jesus Christ who himself said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life, and noone comes to the Father except through me.*"
- e. Able came by the way that God had prescribed.
 - i. He came only by the blood.
 - ii. He gave the lamb.
 - iii. He believed God, he came by faith (Heb 11:4). "*It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. God accepted Abel's offering to show that he was a righteous man. And although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us because of his faith.*"
 - iv. Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice?
 - 1. Because Able looked to Christ. He came to God through faith in a Substitute.
 - 2. His offering was a confession of sin, guilt and an acknowledgement of just condemnation.
 - 3. God saw him as Righteous, not because of who he was, but because of whom He placed his faith in.
 - 4. He came by faith in looking ahead to the provision God would make in a substitute.
 - 5. And the lambs of his flock were the symbolism of that substitute, Jesus.

IV. There are two ways people approach God.

- a. One is by their own methods.
 - i. By their own (supposed) goodness.
 - ii. Most of us have tried this.
 - iii. We see ourselves as "not too bad" and we stick a leaf or two on ourselves whenever we do something for someone else and feel a little better about ourselves.
 - iv. When we resist the temptation to do something we are tugged at, we stick another leaf on ourselves.

- v. And then we come to church, or we give to a needy cause, and a few more leaves are glued on.
- vi. But the problem is...we may look like a fig tree, but we are no closer to God. We aren't experiencing worship because we are trying to approach God on our own merits and our own goodness.
- vii. That is the way of Cain and the way that Adam and Eve tried.
- viii. It falls short because it doesn't do anything about our sin. \
- ix. It just makes us feel better, but it doesn't change us or our relationship with God.
- b. The other to approach God is by the way that God has provided.
 - i. When we do this we are conscious that we deserve the wrath of God.
 - ii. We don't deserve anything from Him except judgment.
 - iii. And we find out that God has provided a covering for our sins, He has provided forgiveness through Jesus who paid the price of sin and absorbed the entire wrath of God on our behalf.
 - iv. When God looks upon us, He doesn't see us, He sees the blood, the precious, valuable, loved life-blood of His infinitely valuable Son, and He accepts us.

V. How are you worshipping today?

- a. Are you thinking to yourself, well God, I didn't screw up too bad this week.
 - i. I only lied a couple of times and really didn't spend too long watching that program I shouldn't have.
- b. Or are you coming here in stark recognition that you deserve what Jesus took in your place. Are you coming by faith, trusting not in anything you have done, but instead trusting what Jesus has done on your behalf.
- c. If you were to stand before God today and He asked you why should I let you in my heaven, would you say, "because I tried to do the best I could?"
 - i. If that were your answer, He would have no choice but to refuse you entrance, because you were relying upon your own goodness and not on Jesus. You would be approaching just like Cain did. On your own merits, on your own works, on your own efforts. And that would never be enough to pay the price of the debt you owe God.
- d. But if you said, "Because Jesus paid for my sin and have nothing else to give." Then you come by the blood of the lamb. You come by the way of Abel.

This offer of Jesus is a choice you get to make,
 You can simply ignore it
 You can refuse it
 Or you can accept it.

Back in 1830 George Wilson was convicted of robbing the United States Mail and was sentenced to be hanged. President Andrew Jackson issued a pardon for Wilson, but he refused to accept it. The matter went to Chief Justice Marshall, who concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. "A pardon is a slip of paper," wrote Marshall, "the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged."

Jesus offers you the pardon for your sins. Will you refuse to accept it? Of course, to accept it means you acknowledge that you have sinned and that you deserve death. Perhaps your pride will not allow you to do that. Perhaps your stubbornness will not let you accept forgiveness and acknowledge that you have sinned. But maybe your refusal to turn your back on your sin is at the root of your refusal to accept the pardon. To accept it means you will not go back to your former life. Is the cost too high for you? It can never be as high as what Jesus paid for you.

Will you receive the pardon that Jesus offers you today? It can be yours if you are willing to acknowledge that you have been living life on your own terms and that you want to come to God through Jesus and receive His forgiveness. The bible says that when you do this you will pass from death unto life.

If you want to turn from your own self-led life and turn to Jesus, then pray with me as I pray.

Father God, I have been running from you. I have been trying to live life on my own. I have been trying to be “good enough” for You but I didn’t understand that I can never be good enough. You sent Jesus to die in my place on the cross and I now see that it was for ME that He died and rose again. I ask Jesus to take away my sin and I want to live for You forever. Make me Your child.

With every eye closed and every head bowed, if you just prayed that prayer and meant it, I want to ask you to slip up your hand in acknowledgement. (thank you) Jesus has just saved you. According to the bible you are a brand new creature in Christ, you have been born again and the angels in heaven are cheering! You have left your past behind and are now forgiven and free of all sin!

We want to celebrate with you. In a moment Jennifer and I will be down front to pray with anyone who has a need...and if you are one of those who asked Jesus to enter your heart and forgive your sins, then I want to ask you to slip out of your seat and come up and let us pray with you and celebrate with you. Don’t let fear hold you back. You have already done the hard part. Make it public and your past will be left behind.