

24 December 2023

## True Worship

Dear Sisters and Elders,

First of all, Sister Kunz and I want to wish you a very Merry Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. At Christmastime, the world celebrates the birth of our Savior and while we join in that celebration, we must never forget that it is the grown Jesus that we worship, for as President Hinckley stated, *“There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter. The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection.”*

How do you worship Him?

The word worship means the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity. The origin of the word is attributed to Old English weorthscipe, which translates to a *“condition of being worthy, dignity, glory, distinction, honor, or worthiness”*. Looking further, I found 11 words in the bible that were translated from the Greek as “worship”. These 11 words are spread over 102 verses. Here are four of the most popular of these Greek words and their meanings.

- Shachah – ἠψῶ bow down, humbly beseech, do reverence, make to stoop.
- Sebomai σέβομαι – to revere, adore.
- Doxa δόξα – dignity, glorious, praise.
- Latreuo - λατρεύω – to minister to God, serve, do the service.

And so, I ask the question once again, how do YOU worship Him?

In Luke 4:8, Jesus declared, *“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”* In Psalms 95:6-7, the Psalmist affirms, *“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand ...”*

These scriptures were both quoted in an October 1971 General Conference talk by Elder Bruce R. McConkie titled, “How to Worship”. In that talk he said, *“Our Heavenly Father has planted in our hearts an instinctive desire to worship ... and serve a power or being greater than ourselves.”* He then followed that with, *“A knowledge of the truth is essential to true worship.”*

Elder McConkie then quotes D&C 93:7-20 and makes this summary: *“... true and perfect worship consists in following in the steps of the Son of God; it consists in keeping the commandments and obeying the will of the Father to that degree that we advance from grace to grace until we are glorified in Christ as he is in his Father. It is far more than prayer and sermon and song. It is living and doing and obeying. It is emulating the life of the great Exemplar.”*

Below are ten ways I selected from Elder McConkie’s talk about how we worship God (these represent about half of his list). To worship the Lord is:

1. To follow after him, to seek his face, to believe his doctrine, and to think his thoughts.
2. To put first in our lives the things of his kingdom, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, to center our whole hearts upon Christ and that salvation which comes because of him.
3. To walk in the light as he is in the light, to do the things that he wants done, to do what he would do under similar circumstances, to be as he is.
4. To walk in the Spirit, to rise above carnal things, to bridle our passions, and to overcome the world.
5. To study the gospel, to treasure up light and truth, to ponder in our hearts the things of his kingdom, and to make them part of our lives.
6. To pray with all the energy of our souls, to preach by the power of the Spirit, to sing songs of praise and thanksgiving.
7. To work, to be actively engaged in a good cause, to be about our Father's business, to love and serve our fellowmen.
8. To stand valiantly in the cause of truth and righteousness.
9. To be of good cheer, to be courageous, to be valiant, to have the courage of our God-given convictions, and to keep the faith.
10. Ten thousand times ten thousand things. It is keeping the commandments of God. It is living the whole law of the whole gospel.

It would be incomplete to mention how to engage in true worship, without mentioning the blessings of doing so. It was Forty-five years later in the October 2016 October General Conference, that Bishop Dean L. Davies, while serving as first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric gave a talk on the "Blessings of Worship". Here are ten of the blessings he identified (there are more). When we truly worship God, we:

1. Invite light and truth into our souls, which strengthens our faith.
2. Are transformed into sincere and earnest disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. Become more understanding and caring. More forgiving. More loving.
4. Develop an unwavering determination to walk the path of discipleship.
5. Marvel in gratitude of the goodness of God, and thus acquire hope.
6. See with spiritual eyes through the Holy Ghost, and thus acquire faith.
7. Refine our souls and commit to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and thus acquire charity.
8. Open our hearts to the healing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
9. Blossom and mature in hope, faith, and charity.
10. Fill our souls and our lives with divine meaning, abiding peace, and everlasting joy.

I will close with a scripture and a question. The scripture is in 1 Chronicles 16:29, *"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."* The word beauty could also be translated as magnificence, for surely there is nothing more magnificent than His holiness. And now the question, "What will your offering be?". He has given us everything necessary to have peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. What will you give Him?

May you all have a very Merry Christmas Day. May you seek to serve, inspire, and uplift those around you this evening as you bring glad tidings of great joy to members and investigators alike.

All my Love,

Lyrics to Child in a Manger

*Baby so lovely and pure  
Lord of the heaven and earth  
Laid in a manger to rest  
Dreaming in slumber blessed  
Sleep while the chorus above us is swelling  
And legions are telling great tidings of joy  
Sleep while the angels sing carols so sweet  
Child in a manger, sleep  
Born as the shepherds abide  
Keeping their flocks in the night  
Laid in a manger to rest  
Cradled in tenderness  
Sleep while they haste through the darkness to find thee  
And kneel down beside thee in wonder and awe  
Sleep while the angels watch over their sheep  
Child in a manger, sleep  
Born of the mercy of God  
Gift of His infinite love  
Laid in a manger to rest  
Sleep, Son of Holiness  
Sleep while the starlight around us is falling  
And angels are calling, "Come worship the King!"  
Sleep while the Father enfolds us in peace  
Child in a manger, sleep*