



and that's...
The Gospel Truth!!
with Pat Corn

a brief message of encouragement to make your day just a little bit brighter

Last week we took a look at what I call “The Samaritan Exchange”. The scene is found in John 4 where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at Jacobs well and they have a conversation that certainly changed her life. He introduced her to “living water” and she reacted with complete predictability. She tried to dodge the exposure of her sin with “theology”. We do the much same thing when we are confronted with our sins, failings, or shortcomings....”but...but...but....what about...well, he did this or that...and least I don’t do that... etc. Typical guilt dodging the truth.

The other lesson we learn here is from this section of the passage;

"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

I believe that this statement is one of the most profound in the Bible. Jesus is diffusing the theological question she has posed. She is trying to “major in the minors”. She’s putting up a smoke screen that is easily removed with the wisdom of Jesus.

Often when we confront non-believers there is the same response; comparing and arguing worship practices, bible translations, denominational doctrines, recent church history, ancient church history, and anything else to avoid the facts. The huge fact here is simply that man made doctrine and the concepts of man does not matter. It is God’s precepts that do matter. What matters spiritually is what matters to God.

An excellent example is the story of a fresh young preacher who came to fill the pulpit of a revered pastor of 35 years. That’s preacher suicide for sure, but the young energetic, idealistic, faith filled up-start pastor felt he was able to handle the transition. After his first Sunday sermon, he stood at the back of the church to shake the hands of the congregation as they left when an elderly woman marched up to him and stated from

her embittered, pursed lips, "Sonny, I wouldn't like you if you were Jesus Christ himself!" He responded with great wisdom, "Well ma'am, if I were Jesus Christ, it would only matter if I liked you".

That's the fact! What we decide to like or dislike doesn't matter. It only matters what God likes. And what exactly does He like? The passage tells us that He actively searches for "true worshipers". To be a true worshiper we must worship in "spirit and in truth". Now, depending on ones denomination slant, this passage has been preached from every angle you can imagine, from absolute reverence to chandelier swinging exuberance. However the fact is that Romans 12:1 tells us how to worship "in spirit".

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is **your spiritual act of worship**. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We are to offer ourselves as "living sacrifices", "holy" (set apart for His service) and "pleasing to God" (full of faith, "for it is impossible to please God without faith, Hebrews 11:16). We are to be "transformed" but the "renewing of our minds" which calls for the abandonment of preconceived notions, un-forgiveness, useless religious protocol, a often times those "time honored" traditions that our great-grand pappy said was the way it is supposed to be, "Bless God"!

Your "spiritual act of worship" has absolutely nothing to do with what you've decided to act like at your church building along with the other folks who do the same ritual, but everything to do with your heart and the relationship you have with the Father. It's a little unnerving to realize that you may have not missed Sunday School or the morning service for 50 years and have never truly worshiped in "spirit and in truth". Far fetched? Not at all! If the Father has to "seek" true worshipers, then they must be few and far between. Right?

Oops! Once again our opinion doesn't really matter does it? Only our Fathers opinion really matters.

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Responses or questions may be emailed to: patcorn@maizeone.com