

Why Should We Worship Jesus?

Vintage Jesus, week 7

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Pastor Mark Driscoll

This week our studies will examine the reasons why we should worship Jesus Christ. We will begin by defining some key concepts to ensure that there is understanding on this very important matter.

What worship is not

Worship is not . . .

- something done solely by Christians or “spiritual” people
- a style of music
- something that starts and stops
- something that is connected to a place or time

What worship is

Worship is living our life, individually and corporately, as a continuous living sacrifice to the glory of a person or thing. This connection between glory and worship is clear in verses like Romans 11:36–12:1: “To him be the *glory* forever! Amen. 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*” (emphasis added).

“Glory” means weightiness, importance, preeminence, priority, or that which is our greatest treasure, deepest longing, and fountain of hope. People can and do hold various people and things in a position of glory. Examples include glorifying food and living as a glutton, glorifying alcohol and living as a drunkard, glorifying money and living as a greedy person, glorifying pleasure and living as a hedonist, glorifying sex and living as a pervert, etc. Glory can be given to a hobby, sports team, recreational activity, relationship, band, human being, social cause, political party, job, spouse, child, pet, car, house, etc. Functionally, whatever we hold in the position of highest glory is by definition our god(s). Because we were made for the express purpose of worshiping God, everyone is a worshiper. The only difference is who/what we worship.

The biblical word for worship is also sometimes translated “sacrifice.” This insight is helpful; what we make the greatest sacrifices for reveals what we truly live to glorify and worship. For example, if we eat and drink in excess, we are worshiping our stomach and sacrificing our health. If we sacrifice relationships with God and people for a hobby (e.g., sport, music, craft, etc.) then we are worshiping that hobby. If we are giving our bodies to sexual sin, we are worshiping sex and/or another person whose glory is our highest aim, sacrificing holiness and intimacy with God in the process. In short, we give our time, energy, body, money, focus, devotion, and passion to that which we glorify most, and we make sacrifices in order to worship that person or thing.

Examples of false worship

According to the first two commandments (Exodus 20:1–6), there is only one God, and that God alone is to be worshiped. According to Martin Luther, we only break the rest of the commandments *after* we have broken the first two. What he means is that if the One True God is my only God, and if I only worship that God, then I will not end up committing idolatry and worshiping my job (and not taking a Sabbath), worshiping my anger (and becoming violent), worshiping sex (and committing adultery), worshiping things (and stealing them), or worshiping success (and becoming covetous of what other people have).

The opposite of worship is idolatry, or the worshiping of something or someone other than the One True God of the Bible alone. This theme of worship versus idolatry is in some ways the theme of the entire Old Testament. Romans articulates the pattern of false worship as failing to glorify God. This leads to an over-inflated and arrogant view of self that ends in the worship of created things (cars, money, fame, power, sex) rather than the Creator God alone. Of idolatrous false worship, Romans 1:21–25 says:

For although they knew God, they neither *glorified* him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the *glory* of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and *worshiped* and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (emphasis added)

Worshipping through Jesus

Because we were made to worship, we continue to live lives of glorifying worship. But because we are sinners who bought the lie that we should live as our own gods for our own glory (Genesis 3:5), we are incapable of living worshipful lives that glorify God alone and instead commit idolatry. Since Jesus lived the perfectly sinless life of unceasing worship that fully glorified God the Father, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection alone reconcile us to God. Therefore only through Jesus can we glorify God and be made worshipers instead of idolaters.

- **Hebrews 2:10** In bringing many sons to *glory*, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. (emphasis added)
- **Romans 6:4** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the *glory of the Father*, we too may live a new life." (emphasis added)

Worshipping like Jesus

Not only do we worship through Jesus, we must also worship like Jesus. Jesus has worshiped God the Father with the most glory of anyone who has ever lived. Jesus is the perfect worshiper.

- **John 17:5** "And now, Father, *glorify* me in your presence with the *glory* I had with you before the world began." (emphasis added)

- **John 17:24** “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my *glory*, the *glory* you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” (emphasis added)

Jesus lived a life of perfect glory to His Father. Thus we can look at everything in His life—from the ordinary to the extraordinary—as born out of a life of ceaseless worship that glorified God the Father. This destroys any notion that worship is a sacred thing we do at a special time or at a special place; all of life is to be lived as ceaseless worship: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the *glory* of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31; emphasis added).

Worshipping Jesus

In addition to worshipping through Jesus and worshipping like Jesus, we also worship Jesus. We worship Jesus because He is the glory of God and the God of glory.

- **John 1:14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his *glory*, the *glory* of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (emphasis added)

Jesus was worshiped as the only God by angels before He entered human history as a man.

- **Isaiah 6:1–3** . . . I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his *glory*." (emphasis added)
- **John 12:41** Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

During His life on earth, Jesus was worshiped as the only God by the blind man (John 9:38), the previously demonized man (Mark 5:6), Thomas the doubter (John 20:28), His best friend John (Isaiah 6:1–5 cf. John 12:41; Revelation 1:17–18), all of the disciples (Matthew 14:33, 28:17) a group of women (Matthew 28:8–9), the mother of James and John (Matthew 20:20), angels (Hebrews 1:6), entire churches (1 Corinthians 1:2), His own mother and brothers (Acts 1:14), little children (Matthew 21:15–16 cf. Psalm 8:2), and His former enemies like Paul (Romans 9:5; Colossians 1:15, 2:9; Titus 2:13).

Today and forever Jesus is worshiped in heaven as the only God by both Christians and angels.

- **Revelation 4:10–11** . . . the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and *worship* him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive *glory* . . .” (emphasis added)
- **Revelation 5:11–13** Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the

elders. In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and *glory* and praise!” Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and *glory* and power, for ever and ever!” (emphasis added)

- **Revelation 7:11–12** All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and *worshiped* God, saying: “Amen! Praise and *glory* and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” (emphasis added)
- **Revelation 21:22–23** I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the *glory* of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. (emphasis added)

At Mars Hill, it is our aim to glorify Jesus individually through ceaseless worship in our daily lives, and corporately as we gather together to worship Him through preaching, prayer, repentance, communion, giving, loving, serving, and singing. Physically, the offering of our bodies in corporate worship includes freedoms that Scripture describes as clapping, bowing, kneeling, sitting, standing, raising hands, and singing.

Next week: What makes Jesus superior to other saviors?