



## **The Lord who Rules**

Text: Revelation 4:1-11

Bible Teacher Duffy Robbins

1. Are you someone who usually makes New Years Resolutions?
  - a. Read Deuteronomy 6:12. Take time to dwell on what the Lord has done this year and discuss how this shapes the way you look towards 2017.
  - b. What resolutions have you made this year?
  - c. Read Revelation 4:8. If you have New Year's Resolutions, do they exhibit worship of Christ and growing as a disciple or are they more focused on self?
  - d. Is there anything in particular that you are or are not looking forward to as you look ahead at 2017?
  
2. Read Psalm 98.
  - a. How is the term "salvation" used in the first two verses? How does it differ, or how is it similar to what you think of today when you use the term "salvation"?
  - b. According to verses 4-6, how are we to respond to Jesus?
  
3. Read Revelation 1:4-5.
  - a. Who is "the ruler of kings on earth"? (Revelation 17:14; 19:16; Matthew 28:18)
  - b. According to this passage (Rev. 1:4-5), from where does grace originate?
  - c. How should that guide our feelings on current rulers?
  
4. Read Revelation 4:1-11.
  - a. What elements of worship do you observe in this passage?
  - b. What does it mean for God to receive glory and honor and power?
  - c. How might this passage have encouraged the early church that was facing intense persecution?
  - d. By extension, how can this vision of an Almighty God who sits on the throne ruling over the universe and history give us peace and hope as we head into the New Year?
  - e. Have you humbled yourself under the lordship of God? Where are you still seeking for power and control in your life?

5. Read Isaiah 6:1-8 and Luke 5:1-11.
  - a. What responses to an encounter with the divine do you see in this passage?
  - b. Why might Isaiah's and Peter's reactions have been what they were?
  - c. Would this describe your response when you think of God? Why or why not?
  - d. How does God respond to their reactions? And then what does he call each of them to?
  
6. Read 1 Chronicles 29:11-12, Psalm 103:19, Psalm 115:3, Proverbs 16:9, Isaiah 46:9-10, and Job 42:2.
  - a. What do these passages teach us about God?
  - b. What trials, challenges, and struggles are you facing right now?
  - c. What would you say is going well in your life right now?
  - d. How should the sovereignty of God influence your response to those situations, both the good and the bad?

Challenge: The challenge of leaving our own throne in order to worship God is a tough one. What are some of your thrones or titles that are difficult to surrender? Share with the group and commit to praying for each other this week.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of a new year. Thank You for the sweet fellowship we enjoyed over the holidays with family and friends. We pray for reminders of what You have done and how we can continue to participate in what You are doing in and through us. Amen

## STUDY DEEPER

The following is an audio transcript from  
<http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>

*We end the week with a simple question – and often the best ones are.  
Pamela Khan, a listener to the podcast asks simply: “Pastor John, what is worship?”*

Let’s start with the inner essence of worship and then work out to the more public expressions of worship services or daily acts of love, which Paul calls our “spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). The reason I make the distinction between the inner essence of worship and the external expression of it is because I think Jesus did in Matthew 15:8–9: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me.”

For Jesus, this worship amounts to zero. That is what “vain” means. “In vain do they worship me.” Zero. It is not worship. This is a zero worship. It is zero if there is no heart dimension to it. So, you can do as many deeds as you want and go to as many church services as you want and never be worshipping if it is all external and nothing is happening in your heart toward God. All true worship is in essence a matter of the heart. It is more, but it is not less.

Then the question becomes: What is this inner, authentic, godward experience of the heart that we call the essence of worship? And Jesus pointed us toward an answer in John 4:23–24 when he said, “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” Notice that worshipping in spirit is not contrasted with worshipping in the body or with the body. Instead, it is put alongside worshipping in truth. So what would that mean, that we are to be spirit-worshippers, worshipping from the spirit, and truth, driven by truth? I think the point is that when we worship – right worship, good worship, pleasing worship – depends on a right mental grasp of the way God really is, truth. If we worship an idol of our own creation, we are not really worshipping God. And secondly, worship depends on a right spiritual or emotional or affectional heart grasp of God’s supreme value. So true worship is based on a right understanding of God’s nature and it is a right valuing of God’s worth. And, of course, his worth is infinite. And thus, true worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things. That would be the closest I am going to give to a definition, I suppose. True worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things. So the inner essence of worship is the response of the heart to the knowledge of the mind when the mind is rightly understanding God and the heart is rightly valuing God.

Or you could use words like treasuring or prizing God or delighting in God or reverencing God or being satisfied with God. All of these inner responses to God reflect his infinite worth and beauty. And that is what worship was designed to do: put the supreme worth of God on display. In fact, the English word “worship” comes from worth ship. That is, worship is showing, displaying the worth of God.

We worship God authentically when we know him truly and treasure him duly. Then the word “worship” refers to that valuing, that inner valuing, becoming visible in the world in two basic ways in the New Testament. One is acts of the mouth: acts of praise and repentance in worship services or small group gatherings. And the other is acts of love with the body and the hands and the feet: acts of love that show the supreme value of God by what we are willing to sacrifice for the good of others. And I get those two things from Hebrews 13:15–16. Listen to this amazing summary. It says, “Through him, then,” – through Christ – “let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Those two verses begin and end with the term “sacrifice.” And, of course, the sacrifice is an echo from the Old Testament sacrifices which were at the center of the worship and were to display the value of God as we gave up a bull or a goat and showed that God is precious to us, and we value his redemption that comes to us through the sacrifice and now through these sacrifice of Christ. So through Christ two things become worshipful sacrifices in our life: the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name; that is, worship services in singing and praying and repenting and confessing, and secondly, the fruit of deeds. Don’t neglect to do good. Share what you have. Such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Both of those are acts of worship. You see it again in Romans 12:1: “I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual service of worship.” So all of our bodily life done in love for other and in reliance upon God display the worth of God above all things and make us worshipers in our daily life.

So, here is my summary: The inner essence of worship is to know God truly and then respond from the heart to that knowledge by valuing God, treasuring God, prizing God, enjoying God, being satisfied with God above all earthly things. And then that deep, restful, joyful satisfaction in God overflows in demonstrable acts of praise from the lips and demonstrable acts of love in serving others for the sake of Christ.