

WORSHIPPING CHURCH MEMBERS

DATE: 6/6/10 am

TEXT: John 4:23

INTRODUCTION

There is no official directory for all the congregations and Churches in the United States

But the Hartford Institute estimates that there are 335,000 religious congregations in the U.S.

Of those Churches, there are 1,210 Protestant Churches that are classified as mega-churches

A mega-church is defined as a Church having a weekly attendance of 2,000 people or more

The average mega-church has an attendance of 3,585

However, the average size of a congregation in the U.S. is only 75

While Churches vary in Quantity, they also vary in Quality

The quantity of a Church often depends on its ministries

Such is the case in many of the mega-churches

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They draw people primarily because of what they offer

III. Listen to this description of the mega-Church I read about in an article:

“The campus of a full-blown megachurch might include a bank, pharmacy, its own Wi-Fi network, tennis courts, rock-climbing walls, martial-arts classes, restaurants, and gourmet coffee bars. A person might head to their megachurch for AA meetings, job training, a singles group, or classes in auto repair. Some megachurches even house McDonald’s franchises.”

Whereas the Quantity of a Church often depends on its ministries ...

The Quality of a Church Always depends on its Members

Complacent Church members make complacent Churches

Indifferent Church members make indifferent Churches

Cold Church members make cold churches

Lifeless Church members make lifeless Churches

Spiritually dead Church members make spiritually dead Churches

But on the other hand, Great Church Members make Great Churches

Last week we began this series that I am entitling –

“The Making of a Great Church”

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III. One day a simple construction worker walked into a Church office and told the pastor that he was working on a job just down the street. He introduced himself as Johnny and wanted to know if the pastor minded if he could come and sit in the church during his lunch break. The pastor said he didn't mind, so day after day, Johnny would slip in the Church, spend about 30 minutes, and then go back to work.

One day, the pastor curious about what he did, slipped in the Church. He saw this simple construction worker on his knees in the altar with both hands lifted in the air, his hardhat lying beside him. He heard him say, "Jesus, this is Johnny. I didn't come to ask for anything today. I just wanted to tell you that I love you. You know I ain't very smart. I can't read or write very well, but you loved me and saved me anyway. Jesus I love you! I praise you for all you have done for me. Jesus, I haven't got long for I have to get back to work, but I wanted to let you know that I still love you as much today as I did yesterday." He got up, wiped the tears from his eyes and slipped out the door and back to work.

It's the Johnny's of a Church that makes a Church great!

Will you be a Johnny?

THE "PRIORITY" OF WORSHIP

THE "PERSON" OF WORSHIP

THE "POWER" OF WORSHIP

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I want this Church to be more than a Good Church

I want this Church to be a Great Church

If we have a great Church it will depend on each of us becoming and being Great Members

III. I think of the great political statement made by President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural speech, January 20, 1961:
"Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

When it comes to America's Churches

Most members are asking what can their Church do for them

When they ought to be asking what they can do for their Churches

Members are getting upset with their Churches about what the Church doesn't do for them ...

When it ought to be the other way around

The Church ought to be getting upset because their members don't do anything for it

If you want to have a great Church then let me suggest that you decide to be a Great Member

The plain and simple reality is that a Church is no more than what its members make it – So ...

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For the next several weeks I want us to be thinking about what it takes to be a Great Church Member

Last week we thought about What a Great Church should be

Today, let's begin thinking about Great Church Members

I want to begin today by saying that –

Great Church Members are –

“WORSHIPPING CHURCH MEMBERS”

~~~**OPENING PRAYER**~~~

A Great Church is a Worshipping Church

**Because** its Members are Worshipping People

If the members are not Worshipping ...

The Church will not be a Worshipping Church

The piano and organ are not going to worship

The pews and walls are not going to worship

The lights and sound system will not worship

The truth is that things cannot worship

They are all inanimate objects

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

Great Church members are growing Church members

Worship is essential to our spiritual growth

Spiritual immaturity is a sure sign of a lack of worship

Each time we worship there is a deepening of our walk with God and our faith in God

It always results in spiritual growth

Strong and mature Christians are those who have learned to worship

What is a great Church member?

Great Church members are Worshipping members

Are you a Worshipper?

There are some of you who enjoy watching others worship, but yet you never worship

Worship is not for a few

It's a Mandate for every Christian

The Greatness of this Church depends on each member being a Worshipper

I close with this story

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

**First** - it had, as we have seen, a purifying effect

We hear the prophet crying out to God in **Isaiah 6:5**

*“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts”*

**Secondly** - it had a sanctifying effect

**Isaiah 6:8** – *“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”*

Isaiah was ready to serve God once he had worshipped

He was a ready and willing volunteer after he really worshipped

Worship should have the same effect on us

A heart occupied with God wants nothing more and nothing less than to serve and follow God

**Thirdly** and lastly, there is:

### **C. The ‘Edifying’ Power of Worship**

I will say just a word about this because we will be considering this in more detail next Sunday

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

If a Church is to be a Worshipping Church its people must be a Worshipping People

Our text speaks of Church members being Worshippers

Jesus said in **John 4:23** – *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the True Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him”*

### **I. THE “PRIORITY” OF WORSHIP**

Jesus said that the Father is seeking Church members that will Worship Him

I think that you would agree with me - that anything that God is seeking should be a Priority

Whatever He wants is to be Honored

Whatever He seeks should be Provided (Why?, because)

He is God – therefore - **if** He is seeking Worshippers ...

Worship should be the Priority for everyone who claims to be a Christian

There are three reasons why worship should be a Priority for every Christian

**First** - worship should be a Priority because:

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

### **A. God ‘Demands’ Our Worship**

The Bible says in **Psalms 29:2** – *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His Name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”*

Again, in **Psalm 95:6** the Bible says – *“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker”*

Neither verse is a suggestion or recommendation

They are Commands

Worship is a Divine Mandate (an official command or instruction from an authority)

God has the right to Demand and Command our Worship

He is our Creator; therefore He has every right to Command us to Worship Him

Worship is an act of obedience

The lack of Worship on our part is disobedience

**John 14:15** – *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”*

**I John 5:3** – *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous”*

**God ‘Demands’ Our Worship**

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

His greatness and faithfulness will become the anchor of your life

Worship purifies the soul of all that troubles us

### **The ‘Purifying’ Power of Worship**

Secondly, there is:

### **B. The ‘Sanctifying’ Power of Worship**

If you ever worship—really worship—it will leave you with a love for God unlike any love you have ever known

There is something about worship that causes the heart to be captivated with God

Once captivated you want nothing else but to love Him, serve Him, honor Him, and please Him

The absence of commitment and the presence of complacency that is often found in Christians can be traced to a lack of worship

In **Isaiah 6** the prophet had a glorious vision of the Lord on His throne

He found himself in the presence of God

He got in a real worship service

What was the result?

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

On the other hand I have seen what worship can do in a person's life

It is amazing how the things that once bothered us become so trivial and unimportant when God become big and real to us

When we get our eyes off the Lord we let the petty things of life affect what we do, how we feel, how we act and react

But when we worship—really worship—these things are no longer an issue

Worship is like the soul getting a good bath

It washes out all the trash and filth and fills us with the greatness and glory of God

When our hearts are filled with God there is a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory

Worship will also cleanse the soul of worry, fear, doubt, and anxiety

When you see God as the God He is

You know that God will take care of you

Faith and trust become the norm

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

The **Second** Reason why worship should be a priority for every Christian is because:

### **B. God 'Deserve' Our Worship**

As our Creator, God **Demands** our Worship

As our Redeemer, He **Deserves** our Worship

The Psalmist said in **Psalms 138:2** –***"I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy Name for Thy lovingkindness and for Thy Truth"***

God in His lovingkindness sent His Son to die on Calvary's cross to redeem us from our sins

We should be lost and on our way to hell

But instead He made a way and reached out with salvation

If it hadn't been for His Great Love ...

We could still be wandering around without God

He **Deserves** Worship from every single person who has ever been **Redeemed** by His marvelous grace

Maybe the reason you have such a hard time with Worship is because you are not saved!

The word worship is a shortened form of the old English word worth-ship

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

Which means showing God the worth he holds in your life (worth = value, significance, importance, meaning)

Worship is the Expression of a Grateful Heart

If you have a heart filled with gratitude that God reached down one day and saved your poor sin-sick and hell-deserving soul, you will worship

We have many reasons to worship God

But **if** being saved was the only reason

It would be the only reason we would need

He ‘**Demands**’ our worship as our Creator and

He ‘**Deserves**’ our Worship as our Redeemer

The **Third** Reason why Worship ought to be a Priority for every Christian is because:

### **C. God ‘Desires’ Our Worship**

**John 4:23** says that God “Seeks” our Worship

Jesus told the woman at the well that *“the Father seeketh such to worship Him”*

He Looks for people who will Worship Him

He Longs for people to Worship Him

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

Let me refer to it once again

In the final chapter of the book he speaks of the results of worship

He states that there are four results to worship

- 1) God shall be Glorified
- 2) The Believer will be Blest
- 3) The Assembly will be Edified (and)
- 4) The unsaved will be reached

There is something Powerful about Worship

Its affect in our hearts and lives cannot be measured

Real Worship is transforming for both our life and the Church

In closing let me give you Three Results of Worship

**First** - there is:

### **A. The ‘Purifying’ Power of Worship**

I have been in this thing of preaching the Word of God and pastoring now for the better part of my life

I am 53 years old and have been saved since I was 20

I have seen people get disgruntled, angry, and upset over just about anything you can imagine

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

He is called the “*Father of glory*” in **Ephesians 1:17**

He is called the “*Father of lights*” in **James 1:17**

He is called the “*Father of mercies*” in  
**II Corinthians 1:3**

He is called the “*Father of all*” in **Ephesians 4:6**

He is called the “*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” in  
**I Peter 1:3**

When you come to Church - think about the Father

Think about the kind of Father He is

Set your Attention and Affection on Him and Him alone

If you do - it won't be long and your heart will be  
overflowing in praise and thanksgiving

Church will really become a worship service to you then

### **THE “PRIORITY” OF WORSHIP**

### **THE “PERSON” TO BE WORSHIP**

Lastly, let me say a word about:

### **III. THE “POWER” OF WORSHIP**

I have already referred to A.P. Gibbs book on worship

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

Our attitude ought to be –

*“Lord, anything you want or desire I will give”*

If God is **Seeking** our Worship then Worship must  
become a Priority of our life

**III.** I'm indebted to the writings of A.W. Tozer  
He said this about God desiring us to worship Him: *“God wants us  
to worship Him. He doesn't need us, for He couldn't be a self-  
sufficient God and need anything or anybody, but He wants us.  
When Adam sinned it was not Adam who cried, “God, where art  
Thou?” It was God who cried, “Adam, where art thou?”*

I think I can be safe and say that even though God  
**Desires** our Worship ...

The majority of people don't worship when they come to  
Church

**III.** R.B. Kuiper wrote: *“By and large people do not go to Church  
to learn about God from His infallible Word, but rather to be  
tranquilized. And that the glory of God is both the beginning and  
the end of common worship does not seem to occur to them.”*

The Church is a place where Christians are to come to  
hear from God

But most don't what to hear one Word He says

I watch you; a lot of you don't even attempt to turn to  
passages in your Bible when one is cited (Why? 1of 3 –  
Didn't bring your Bible, don't really care or not saved)

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

The Church is a place where Christians come to meet God

For many of you it has been long time since you had a encounter with God (If you've ever had one at all?)

The Church is a place where Christians assemble to offer to God the sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving

★ But yet many hearts are indifferent and barren of any Affection or Appreciation of all God has done ★

The Church is first and foremost a place where God's people are to worship Him

But how few will really worship when they come to Church

How sad when we realize that God Demands, Deserves, and Desires our worship

Truthfully, it is more than sad

It is sinful!

**III.** Once again I quote A.W. Tozer who aptly described many Christians when he said, *“Because we are not truly worshipers, we spend a lot of time in the churches just spinning our wheels; making a noise but not getting anywhere. ... I would rather worship God than do any other thing I know of in all this wide world!”*

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

His heart was **Focused** on God and soon his heart was **Full** of God

You want to know why so few worship when they come to Church?

Their hearts are so full of everything - but God!

Their hearts are full of jealousy, bitterness, resentment, anger, unforgiveness, pride, and self to just name a few

They are mad at the world or maybe just someone on the other side of the room

The last thing on their mind is being Full of the Presence of God

We have a Heavenly Father who is Good, Great, and Glorious

There is nothing or no one who should occupy our minds and hearts but Him when we come to Church

This is Real Worship when we are completely occupied with the person of God Himself

Jesus called Him our Father

The Bible calls Him the **“Holy Father”** in **John 17:16**

He is called the **“Righteous Father”** in **John 17:35**

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

*overflows from a heart filled with a sense of the greatness and goodness of God.”*

The Psalmist said in **Psalm 45:1** – *“My heart is inditing a good matter”*

The marginal rendering is: *“My heart boileth, or bubbleth up.”*

As the Psalmist meditated on the glory and majesty of God ...

His heart began to warm within him, until it boiled over in worship and praise to God

Let me show you an example of worship in the Bible

Turn with me in your Bibles to **II Samuel 7:18-22**

When Nathan was sent by God to tell David that the throne of his kingdom would know no end

He was so moved that he went in and sat before the Lord

As he did - he was soon lost in the wonder at all God said

His heart got warmer and warmer until he burst out in praise in v.22 declaring –

*“Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God; for there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee”*

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

Because God **‘Demands’, ‘Deserves’,** and **‘Desires’** our worship we should rather worship than any other thing in this life

Worship should be the Priority of Priorities in our life

### **THE “PRIORITY” OF WORSHIP**

#### **II. THE “PERSON” TO BE WORSHIP**

When Jesus spoke of the *“Father”*

He was telling us that the Object of our Worship is our Heavenly Father

Some think that just showing up at Church is Worship

Just coming to Church and sitting in a service like this is not worship

I know we often speak of our services as Worship Services

But just being in Church is not worship

Worship is not about Church

It is all about God

Worship is not what we get out of a service

It is all about what God gets from us in a service

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

When we understand what Real Worship is

We understand that Worship is all about a Person—

That Person is Our Heavenly Father

Let me explain what it means to Worship

**First** - I want you to understand that when we worship:

### **A. The Heart is ‘Focused on’ God**

Let me give you a few definitions of worship

**III.** Here is one given by A.P. Gibbs in his book entitled “*Worship*”

He wrote: “*Broadly speaking, prayer is the occupation of the soul with its needs. Praise is the occupation of the soul with its blessings. Worship is the occupation of the soul with God Himself.*”

Did you notice what he said worship is?

It’s the occupation of the soul with God Himself

**III.** Gibbs continued: “*Prayer and praise may be mingled in worship, and included in the general thought; but properly speaking, each, in itself, does not constitute worship. ‘Lord, save my soul,’ is prayer. ‘Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul,’ is praise. ‘Thank you, Lord, for who You are’ is worship.*”

Another has said, “*Worship is the occupation of the heart, not with its needs, or even with its blessings, but with God Himself.*”

## *Worshipping Church Members – John 4:23*

We worship - when - we come to Church and the only thing we think about or care about is God!

Another as said, “*Worship is pulling our affections off our idols and putting them on God. Worship is seeing what God is worth and giving Him what He is worth.*”

We worship - when - we come to Church and our heart is totally and completely focused on God

You are not worshipping when you are looking at your watch and anxious to get out of the service

You are not worshipping when your mind is on what you are going to do this afternoon or what you have to get done next week

If your mind is on anything but God, you are not and cannot worship

Worship is when Your Heart is ‘Focused on’ God

Furthermore, I want you to understand that when we worship:

### **B. The Heart is ‘Full of’ God**

Worship is the overflow of a heart that is full of thoughts about God

**III.** A.P. Gibbs also said of worship: “*It is not something which has to be laboriously pumped up, but that which springs up, and*