

Sunday 14th June 2020

Philippians 4:4-9 “Adoring our Father in Heaven”

Starting our series on the Lord’s Prayer

- House Groups looked at “Why Pray? Lord teach us how to pray”
- This week: Adoration – how to worship God

Prayer is about encountering God

- Not primarily about interceding for the world
- Not about our wish list or needs

Prayer should be an encounter with the living God

- Our Father
- The quality of our prayer life is linked with our view of the Father
 - If you think he’s a distant, angry, perpetually disapproving and inevitably disappointed in you
 - Then there will be no real desire to pray
 - And when we do pray
 - There will be a lack of conviction and faith in the prayers we pray

But if your view of the Father is of who he really is

- Of the Father as revealed in scripture
- The Father who is unbelievably good
- Extravagantly kind
- Unfailingly constant and faithful
- The sovereign, all powerful, creator of the universe
- Who loves you and me

If that’s our view of the Father

- Then to want to encounter him becomes natural
- And our first instinctive response to a Father like that
- Will always be worship

That’s why the first thing I want to say about adoration this morning is

1. We are created to Worship

God is jealous for me! What does that mean?

- Means that God is a jealous God

Exod 34:14 *“Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.”*

Names of God – reveal the nature/character of God

- Our God is a jealous God
- Reveals something of the character of God

God is good – therefore his jealousy is good – how can that be when jealousy is usually seen as a bad trait?

- proper jealousy
- jealousy to call things back to the way that they were supposed to be
- about calling things back into divine order

God's jealousy is good because:

- God is central – period. He just is!
- In every way and in everything God is central
- God wants us to put him first in our lives
- He wants to be central in our lives
- Whenever he gets moved out of the centre – idolatry
- Idolatry – worshipping something/someone other than God

Worship – central to the Christian life

- The act of worshipping – puts God back at the centre of our lives
- worship – what we value
- worship - what's truly at the centre of our lives

Story of last sermon (8 weeks ago) about what have we missed during this enforced lockdown? – all sport! God has changed me – still support Chelsea, want to go to watch them, but... different emphasis, priority as God has been showing me His incredible creation all around us, and He deserves my worship.

What are you worshipping at the moment?

- ourselves, other people, possessions, money, houses, job, status, position etc
- worshipping God puts Him back in his rightful place

important because God is jealous, is for his own honour

- He desires that worship be given to himself and not a false God
- He eagerly seeks people to worship him for who he really is

Westminster Shorter Catechism 1647 begins by affirming the chief end of man
'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'

Worship is what we were created for

- Staggering thought that the creator of the universe
 - Created us to know him
 - To enjoy him
 - To glorify God – to worship him

That's why the Apostle Paul writing to the church in Philippi

- Says 'Rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always' (Phil 4:4)

God is actively seeking worshippers

- Those who will rejoice in who He is
- Those who will take the time to rejoice in what He's done
- Those who will worship in spirit and in truth

Worship is our response to God – his character and his activity

- It's the natural response for someone who's encountered God

If Jesus is truly Lord of our lives

- If we've really encountered God then worship will have priority in our lives

The true order of priorities in our lives

- Must be worship first
- Service second

What does your priority list look like?

2. Prayer and worship

In prayer, as in life

- Worship first, Everything else second
- Because that's what we're created for

Why Paul writes in Phil 4:6

- That we need to bring every situation to God
- In the context of *thanksgiving*

In prayer

- Worship needs to be central to what we do
- Whether it's through using ancient prayers
- Written by God's people many years before
- Or worshipping God through the latest worship song on *YouTube*
- Worship needs to be central to what we do

How does worship help us in our prayer life?

A. Worshipping God facilitates an encounter with God

Lot's of biblical pictures of this

- Whether it's *2 Chronicles 5:14* – Solomon dedicating the Temple
- Or the prayer meeting in *Acts 4*
- Worship facilitates an encounter with God
- The presence of God is drawn by our worship

Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*

“To worship is to experience Reality, to touch Life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ. It is breaking into the Shekinah of God, or better yet, being invaded by the Shekinah of God.”

Shekinah of God

- The manifest presence of God with his people
- It's the glory of God's presence

We were created to worship God

- To know God
- And to encounter God
- Worship is a key way that we do that

B. Worship – focuses us on who God truly is

Whether it's praise

- Worshipping God for his character
- Or worship as thanksgiving
 - Giving thanks to God for his activity and goodness in our lives

To worship God

- Focuses us on the character of God

It reminds us who we are praying too

- It reminds us, we're coming to encounter a good Father
- Who loves us, who cares for us
- Who delights in us
- Who longs for us to know him better

To worship God

- Focuses us on the ability of God

In other words as we worship God

- for who he is
- We are also reminded of what He does – his power

The simple biblical truths

- That nothing is impossible for God
- That He is able
- That He is the all powerful, creator of the universe
- He is alive and well
- And active in his world today

That's why in *Philippians 4:6-7*

- We see the potency of prayer in the context of worship
- That we bring our petitions to God in the atmosphere of thanksgiving
- With the result that
 - The peace of God will guard our hearts and mind
 - Peace that comes from knowing the God who loves us
 - Has heard and will respond

How do we do this?

Worship & Prayer in practice:

Pete Greig '*How to pray*'

1. **Awake my soul** – sometimes we need to take a grip on ourselves and make a choice to worship
2. **Pray a Psalm** – great way to begin the day
3. **Worshipping with Bach, Beyoncé and Bethel**
 - i.e. doesn't really matter which style of music you use for your prayer life, it's about whatever helps you
4. **Worship with others** –
 - 'our Father' – assumes a corporate dimension to prayer & worship
 - good to worship on your own – but we also need to gather together
 - why Church each Sunday is REALLY IMPORTANT
5. **Liturgy/Set prayers**
 - some find helpful all the time
 - some in certain seasons when prayer is really hard
 - others never find this useful!

Prayer is personal...
6. **Worshipping with your own weirdness**
 - find out what works for you and keep doing that
 - whilst also being open to exploring new ways of worshipping

Some may find it helpful to be quiet in a room on your own, but I like worshipping and praying in the open air on a walk in God's beautiful creation.

3. Worshipping through our difficulties

4 years ago yesterday I lost my best friend very suddenly, but although I didn't feel like worshipping and praying I chose to.

This what the Bible describes as an offering of praise

- It's choosing to worship
- Despite our pain, difficulty, disappointment, suffering
- It's choosing to acknowledge that God is worthy of praise even when everything within us says he's not!

Psalm 63 – David in the desert of Judah

If you're going through a tough time and you choose to worship

- it alters your perspective
- and opens the way for an encounter with God
- that will sustain you
- and equip you for the battle you're going through
- thirst & need for God -> satisfied

NEED to learn to worship amidst pain

- need to learn to worship our way out of difficulty

So, in conclusion:

- We were **created to worship**
- **Worship leads to prayer**
- And even **through our difficulties**
- We can still **adore our Father in Heaven.**

Amen

