

“...Glorify God Through Worship...”

Luke 2:1-15 * December 2, 2007

*We are members of God’s family, dedicated to the teachings of Jesus, and committed to seeking God’s will. In our church, we glorify God through worship, reach others through evangelism, assist our community through service, care for each other through fellowship, and equip our members through Biblical instruction.
(Grace Baptist’s Mission Statement)*

I. “And there were shepherds living out in the fields...”

A. What was true about shepherds back in the first century?

B. What’s the lesson that comes out of the fact that God sent his angels first to shepherds?

C. How do I treat the ‘least of these’?

II. “An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”

A. Which word in this verse has to do with worship?

B. This word has a couple meanings – what are they?

1. In verse 9 it means:

2. In verse 14 it means:

C. Worship in its simplest sense is this:

To give _____ to that which in our eyes possesses _____.

“Worship” comes from the old English word _____
meaning “to ascribe _____ to something”

III. Good and Bad Worship

A. What is proper worship for a Christian?

B. Why does God ask this of us – is His ego fragile?

C. What are some examples of improper worship?

D. What’s the Bible word for taking something that is good and making it into a god?

IV. “But I don’t grovel before my golf clubs!”

A. According to Romans 12:1, what is worship?

I worship something if I offer my _____ sacrificially to it.

B. Is coming to church on Sunday worship?

C. The Key Questions This Morning:

- Who – or what – is getting my worship?
- If it’s not God, then what am I going to do about it?

V. Why Is Worshiping Something Other Than God A Dead-End Road?

A. Isaiah’s Answer (Isaiah 44:9-20)

B. It can all be boiled down to two things:

1. The idols we worship do not _____.

2. The idols we worship cannot give us what we truly _____.

Like what?

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I. “And there were shepherds living out in the fields...”

A. What was true about shepherds back in the first century?

Back in the first century, to be a shepherd was as lowly and disgusting and minimum wage a job as could be found. You took a job as a shepherd because the city dump wouldn't hire you. Because you couldn't find a job as a janitor, or a dishwasher. There was nothing romantic or charming about this job. These shepherds were 'living out in the fields' – this wasn't an 8-hour job, then you came home. The fields were their home, because oftentimes to find usable pasture, you had to take the herds miles out into the country. You took a bath once a month if you were lucky. To be a shepherd was to be about as down-and-out as you can get. And because they were down-and-outers, shepherds were often unsavory characters, and over time, the reputation grew that shepherds were nothing but thieves and ruffians.

B. What's the lesson that comes out of the fact that God sent his angels first to shepherds?

If these are the ones that the angels first appeared to with the message that the Christ, the Messiah had been born, then think of it my friends: Christmas is for everyone! God wants the world to know that a “Savior has been born to you”...and you and you and you! And to prove it, God begins with the lowest of the low, the weakest of the weak, he starts with the outcast, and the rejected, and the alone – and reveals his love first to them. No one gets left out of this. This babe lying in a manger is born for everyone.

C. How do I treat the ‘least of these’?

II. “An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”

A. Which word in this verse has to do with worship?

“...glory...”

B. This word has a couple meanings – what are they?

1. In verse 9 it means:

First, it can mean *great beauty, splendor or magnificence*. That's how it's used here in verse 9. It's a reference to the dazzling light and heavenly splendor which surrounded the angel

2. In verse 14 it means:

Giving “glory to God” here in verse 14 has to do with praising God *because of his splendor*. To give glory to someone is to honor them for their greatness, to recognize them for their magnificence, their achievement, their glory.

C. Worship in its simplest sense is this:

To give glory to that which in our eyes possesses glory.

“Worship” comes from the old English word *worship* meaning “to ascribe worth to something”

III. Good and Bad Worship

A. What is proper worship for a Christian?

God revealed in Jesus Christ is the One who should be of ultimate worth and value in our eyes. “You shall have no other gods before me,” God declares in his Word. Jesus said, “If you love anyone more than me, you are not worthy of me.” That's proper worship.

B. Why does God ask this of us – is His ego fragile?

The reason Jesus says this is not for his sake, as though he needs our worship. God's ego is not that fragile. If we won't praise him, the rocks will. The trees of the field will clap their hands. Creation declares the glory of God. He doesn't need us to praise him. No – he calls us to worship him, to give him glory, for our good, and our sake. Our lives just won't work properly if we try to put anything else in his place. You try and stuff anything else but God into that God-shaped hole inside your heart, your life will

gag, wheeze, cough and sputter just like your car will if you try to fill the gas tank with gravy or Pepsi or Pepto Bismol.

C. What are some examples of improper worship?

The sky's the limit. You name it – it can become a replacement for God. Work. Family. Sports. Sex. Hobbies. Shopping. School. Politics. Dogs. They can be things which on the surface are good things, things that enrich our lives, things that make life worth living. Things that have their own sort of glory and goodness. What's the problem then? The problem is whenever you take something that is good, and that enriches your life, and inflate it, invest it with a glory that it far beyond what it is actually worth. You take something that is good and turn it into a god.

D. What's the Bible word for taking something that is good and making it into a god?

Idolatry.

IV. "But I don't grovel before my golf clubs!"

A. According to Romans 12:1, what is worship?

I worship something if I offer my body sacrificially to it.

B. Is coming to church on Sunday worship?

It depends. You may just be throwing God a bone, and the rest of the week, you don't give God much of a second thought. Not much of a sacrifice, is it? Tossing a tithe check in the offering plate – worship? Depends. Is God a co-signer on the rest of your accounts, or do you call the shots?

C. The Key Questions This Morning:

- Who – or what – is getting my worship?
- If it's not God, then what am I going to do about it?

V. Why Is Worshiping Something Other Than God A Dead-End Road?

A. Isaiah's Answer (Isaiah 44:9-20)

B. It can all be boiled down to two things:

1. The idols we worship do not last.

2. The idols we worship cannot give us what we truly need.

Like what?

You're looking for some true meaning and true purpose to your life. You know that you're more than a teacher, or a mechanic, or a computer programmer. You're more than a wife, or a father, or a son, or a student. But what or who can help you find that purpose? You're also looking for something that will transcend this life. You're looking for something that will take this short, piddly, measly life of yours and turn it into something that will last, and not get swallowed up in the end by death. You're looking for forgiveness, you're looking for absolution – you've hurt so many people in your life, you've made so many mistakes in your life, you're broken inside and you need to hear somebody say, "I forgive you. Let's start again." You're looking for some direction in how to live your life. Some moral compass to point you in the direction of what's right and what's wrong. You've made choices that just blow up in your face. You're tired of making a mess of things. You know there must be a better way to live. You're looking for a thread, a missing piece that will help you make sense of life, all of it, the good and the bad, the sweetness and the suffering, something that will give you a reason to embrace each and every season of life. Something that will keep you from collapsing into unending depression or inescapable addiction. You're looking for a father to look at you and smile, and say, "My son, my daughter, I love you, I am proud of you, run into these arms of mine." My friends, you know what you are looking for? You are looking for God.