

## Redemption Hill Church

December 1, 2013

John 4.19-26

“The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But 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.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.””

Proposition: Since the coming of Jesus, true worship occurs without constraint

### 1. Introduction

- a. Illustration: Being a Red Sox fan even though I didn't grow up in New England.
- b. Proposition: Since the coming of Jesus, true worship occurs without constraint

### 2. True worship vs. False Worship (v.22)

- a. False worship is based on traditions/untruths, v.20a, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain...”
  - i. The woman’s religious beliefs hinged upon the traditions passed down by her ancestors
    1. The woman is a Samaritan—a mixed Jewish-Gentile race that was strongly disliked by their Jewish counterparts. Samaritans held to a partial and abbreviated version of Judaism which contained its own version of the Pentateuch, reinterpreted certain aspects of Israelite history, and worshipped at a temple on Mount Gerizim.
- b. True worship is based on Scripture, v.22b, “...we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”
  - i. In contrast to the Samaritans, the Jews held close to God’s revealed word in all of the Old Testament—the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Any traditions that inform true Jewish worship at this time are based upon Scripture, and thus they worship from what they “know” because as God’s chosen people they hold exclusive claim to the truth which leads to salvation.
- c. Applications
  - i. Tradition and untruths are anything that you feel bound to that is not explicitly laid out in Scripture
    - a. Catholicism--Mariology

- b. Christian Karma
    - c. Prosperity/poverty theology
- 3. Before Jesus vs. Since Jesus (v.23a)
  - a. Before Jesus
    - i. A Theology of the Temple, Part 1
      - 1. Throughout Scripture there is an emphasis placed on God’s ability to dwell with his people, his presence with them
        - a. In the Creation, God dwells with his people in the Garden. However, because of sin humanity becomes defiled and God must remove them from his presence, cf. Genesis 3.22-24, “Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”
        - b. After some time passes God moves to bring his presence close to his people again through the institution of the tabernacle and then the temple, cf. Exodus 40.34, “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”
        - c. Because of their continuing disobedience, the temple is destroyed and the Jews are sent into exile. Despite this, the presence of God continues to dwell with the remnant of those who will be saved, cf. Ezekiel 11.16, “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone.’”
      - 2. Consequences
        - a. True worship occurred in a place, cf. Deuteronomy 12.5, “But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there.” See also 2 Samuel 6, 24; 1 Kings 8.
          - i. The physical temple existed to protect God from the uncleanness of humanity and humanity from the wrath of a holy God. The chambers and the curtain

served to protect him from being associated with the defilement of their sin, cf. Leviticus 21.21-23, “No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the LORD's food offerings; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, but he shall not go through the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries, for I am the LORD who sanctifies them.”

- b. True worship was designated for a specific people
  - i. Salvation in the OT was specific to the Jews because the unholiness of man required them to need the Law and a priesthood to enter before God, cf. Leviticus 16.34a, “And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.”

b. Since Jesus

i. A Theology of the Temple, Part 2

1. Things change radically when the God-Man messiah comes to the earth

- a. When Jesus comes to earth he embodies the presence of God, cf. John 1.14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- b. After the death of Christ God's presence dwells within the redeemed—and particularly in the church—through the Holy Spirit, cf. Ephesians 2.22, “In him you [the church] also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”
- c. When Christ returns the presence of God will dwell with in the new creation redeemed humanity just like he did with Adam and Eve in the Garden, cf. Revelation 21.3, “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”

## 2. Consequences

- a. True worship occurs without constraint to a physical temple, v.21, “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.’”
  - i. The physical temple served as a shadow of things to come and was never meant to last. When Jesus came he offered himself before the presence of God with a sacrifice sufficient to forgive all sin and remove all defilement, meaning God no longer needs the protection of the temple, cf. Hebrews 9.24-26, “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”
- b. True worship now occurs without constraint to a specific people, v.23a, “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the *true worshipers* will worship the Father in spirit and truth.”
  - i. Could have easily said, “when the Jews,” but he didn’t. Adherence to the Law and completion of temple sacrifices are no longer necessary for salvation.
  - ii. New Testament believers no longer need to complete physical acts to come before God because Christ stands forever as their mediator on the basis of his perfect sacrifice on their behalf, cf. Ephesians 2.18, “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” Hebrews 4.16, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

- c. Applications
    - i. No worship at a place
      - 1. Don't need a (beautiful) church
        - a. The sacred/secular divide is a psychological phenomenon and is not a reality about true worship of God
      - 2. Don't need to get into nature
        - a. God is no more present in nature than he is in the middle of the city
      - 3. Don't need Sunday
        - a. Gathered and scattered worship
    - ii. Not constrained by unholiness
      - 1. Positive: Don't need to be something great to be in church
        - a. Illustration: Student at UofL who lived with her boyfriend
      - 2. Negative: Can't avoid God by avoiding community
        - a. It's a lie from Satan intended to keep us from conviction and growth in holiness
        - b. It's an excuse we give to avoid conviction and being called to change our ways
4. Conclusion
- a. Embrace that true worship occurs in spirit and in truth and experience fuller worship of God. Do this whenever, wherever, with fellow believers and on your own.
    - i. This unconstrained worship is available to all by faith alone. However, it is only available by faith. If you have not yet confessed faith in Christ's sacrificial death on your behalf do so and receive the presence of God in you.