**Worship 24/7**

This is the 3rd Sunday of Lent – a time of preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord and also of the coming of the Lord. The theme we have chosen for this time is that of worship.

On the first week, we asked what worship was, then last week we considered the concept of worshipping with all our heart.

Remember the prophecies we received from people in our congregation:

"My worshippers are not with me. Tell them to seek me every day and not just on the Sabbath. My children are not with me. People are worshipping me with their lips but not their hearts."

And

Joel 2:12-13 “*Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love*”

At their Retreat at the beginning of the year, the Leadership heard from God that we were to have a focus this year on worshipping the Lord 24/7 in Humility and truth.

That is the question I want to canvas today.

What would it look like to worship God 24/7?

In our discussions on worship we’ve discovered that worship is more than a song. Worship is more than what we do once a week in a congregational setting. We know of the importance of having a daily encounter with Jesus through prayer, Bible reading, journaling and other spiritual disciplines. But worship is more than that, too! How much more? Jesus wants all of us, all of the time. Jesus wants us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Evelyn Underhill wrote this:

“The glory fills not only heaven but earth, the jungle and city, the church and the marketplace, the ballroom and the hospital, the most sordid and disheartening spheres of service, the roads humming with traffic and the silent mountains where tiny plants of exquisite beauty flower for God. Let all that is within us cry glory. Glory to the Lord Most High.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

We are not lacking in inspiration to worship 24/7

The Psalms are filled with 24/7 prayer

Psalm 119:164 *Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous ordinances.*

Saying that worship is at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday sends the strong message that may imply that the other 166 hours of the week are times for non-worship. This idea of segregating the spiritual from the secular is foreign to God’s desires and intentions. If we truly love him, then we’re to worship 24/7. There should never be a time when we don’t worship him.

Psalm 145:2 *Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.*

You might be wondering: how can this be? How can I worship Jesus 24/7? Am I even capable of doing that? We may think this type of worship as something that monks or “sainted” people do, requiring intense effort, postured on your knees with your eyes upward to heaven, and being still for a very long time, sitting in cave in a desert. In our time-poor culture, the idea of worshiping Jesus 24/7 sounds outrageous.

But 24/7 worship of the Lord is nothing like what most people think.

It is not restricting, but freeing.

It is not passive, but active.

It does not require an intense effort; rather, it eases our burdens.

We don’t have to rearrange our schedule to do it; in fact, it works best in the midst of whatever we are currently doing.

It’s not an “add-on” to life; rather, it effectively takes away negativity in life – stress, anxiety, fear, shame, impatience.

Best of all, it is transforming. It transforms our situations, our relationships, and most of all … us!

We become a better person when we become a 24/7 worshipper of Jesus.

The key to becoming a 24/7 worshipper is to simply allow Jesus to enter into our everyday activities. [[2]](#footnote-2)

There is a story about a pastor who had a conversation with a worship leader before hosting a week-long conference. The worship leader asked the pastor, “How long do you want us to worship? 30 minutes? 40 minutes?” The pastor said, “24/7. 24 hours 7 days a week.” The worship leader said, “I don’t think my fingers can last that long playing the guitar. My vocals will also become sore by the third hour.” The pastor replied, “Exactly. You are talking about music, but I am talking about worship. Worship does not constitute music and singing alone. It is a lifestyle. It is when the singer becomes the song. It is when the music and lyrics become alive in living out the life for Jesus 24/7! Sometimes there are sounds. But most of the time, there are none. Just waiting on the LORD and listening to what He is saying. Be still and know that He is God,”[[3]](#footnote-3) The pastor said.

We are to worship God in all things, in all ways, and at all times. There is no spiritual time and non-spiritual time; it’s all spiritual. If everything is spiritual, then everything should be worship.

That sound pretty scary, doesn’t it?

Psalm 113:3 *From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised.*

A tall order for this day and age and in our culture.

True worship can’t be scheduled and never ends.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Brother Lawrence, a 17th-century Carmelite friar, is best known for his advice in a little book called "The Practice of the Presence of God," which emphasizes maintaining a constant awareness of God's presence in everyday life, had the very nonspiritual task of washing dishes and doing the shopping in his monastery.

He believed that every action, whether work or prayer, can be an opportunity to connect with God, fostering a deep spiritual relationship. His writings encourage us to seek God's presence in all aspects of life, suggesting that even mundane tasks can be transformed into acts of worship.

He wrote: “The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees.”

1 Chronicles 16:23 Sing *to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day*.

God deserves all the praise we can muster because He created us. Our worship brings Him pleasure.

Think of Revelation 4:8-11 *Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.” Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”*

John, the writer of Revelation painted this scene depicting the throne room of heaven. Almighty God sits at the centre in the place of honour surrounded by four unusual beings and twenty-four elders. The main purpose of the four beings is worship. Day and night, they repeat words of praise to the King seated on the throne. The elders respond by saying, *“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased”* (Revelation 4:11 NLT).

Nothing distracts these worshipers. The presence of God is so riveting that all else fades into insignificance.

God makes it clear that He desires earthly worship to mimic heavenly worship. In Exodus 24-25 God meets with Moses on Mount Sinai and commissions him to build a temple according to what he saw in exact detail (Exodus 25:8-9). This was an earthly replica to a heavenly reality (I Chronicles 28:19).

God created us to be 24/7 worshipers. Apostle Paul said every aspect of our lives can glorify God, even our daily consumption of food. “*So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31 NLT).

Brother Lawrence: “I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without the practice of the presence of GOD. For my part I keep myself retired with Him in the depth of centre of my soul as much as I can; and while I am so with Him, I fear nothing; but the least turning from Him is insupportable.”

Yet we know that distractions yank us from our worship of God in these activities. Our own agenda and plans can eclipse the view of our Creator. Entertainment, politics, and social media also rank high in our list of distractions. Even more insidious are the thoughts inside our heads that control us—worry about the future and memories of the past. And incorrect ideas about God’s character also interfere with our desire to live a life that glorifies Him.

To which Brother Lawrence gives some good advice: ″... being accustomed to think of Him often, you will find it easy to keep your mind calm in the time of prayer, or at least to recall it from its wanderings.”

As our Creator, God knows wholehearted worship of Him is best for us. When we eliminate distractions and make Him the centre of our attention, we enjoy the rich and satisfying life Jesus promised (John 10:10). [[5]](#footnote-5)

Psalm 59:16 *But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the morning,*

Brother Lawrence: “He does not ask much of us, merely a thought of Him from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the graces, past and present, He has bestowed on you, in the midst of your troubles to take solace in Him as often as you can.”

Psalm 71:8 *My mouth is filled with Your praise and with Your glory all day long.*

Consider these scenarios:

As we drive to work/school/shopping, do we give God praise for the day? Or are we busy passing comment about other drivers and their lack of ability, or the slowness of the traffic lights?

As we encounter people, do we allow Jesus to guide our conversation or do we already have an answer on our lips, ready for the other person to take a breath?

As we face a decision, do we ask Jesus to give us wisdom or do we jump straight in with whatever is the current cultural response – “what’s in it for me?” “God wants me to be happy.” “Newer is better” and so on.

As we wait in the supermarket checkout line, do we allow Jesus to guide us to pray for the people in front of us. Or are we more concerned at how long they are taking and how the slow the queue is?

As we eat dinner with our family, do we ask Jesus how we can build up our family members or are we more concerned that they eat all that’s on their plate – even the Brussel sprouts, or more worried about their table manners.

As we go to bed to sleep, do we allow Jesus to guide your dreams or are we more happy worrying about the day gone or the day to come?

When we think of God in these times and many more opportunities by rending our hearts and worship, we will begin to see remarkable things happen. God will open up opportunities for us. We will hear His voice. Our attitudes and perspectives will change. Hearts will soften before our eyes. We will experience the Kingdom of God in power because we are giving Jesus access into our life.

Is it easy? Nope. It is painful to change. It is painful to look at our worldviews, our default settings, our values, our motivation and our expectations. It is only when we surrender our rights that we experience these things. God is asking us to change our hearts as well as our lips.

What is our default response when someone cuts us off when we are driving? What are our default responses when someone slights us, and we think we are innocent? What is our default response when our partner criticises us? What is our default response when we want to buy something but can’t afford? Those scenarios are some of many that test our hearts, they are where the rubber meets the road.

Dear God, so far today, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, and I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been grumpy, nasty or selfish, and I'm really glad of that! But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot of help. Thank you! Amen

That could be the reality of our prayer life. A dissonance between what we think and what we do.

Jesus wants to do amazing things in and through us. However, we don’t give Him very much opportunity to do so. We often wait until there is a dire emergency before we involve Jesus in the process. Do we allow Jesus to enter our lives only when there is a crisis? We call Him, “Lord”, but do we give Him access to our everyday, ordinary activities?

Consider how these activities can be filled with worship:

• By being excellent in our jobs.

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever *you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

• By sacrificing ourselves to raise the next generation to love Jesus.

Less of me and what I want and more about a legacy of love. I think of my forebears – my parents, grandparents, great grandparents and the legacy of the love of God they modelled for me.

Deuteronomy 6:7 *And you shall teach them diligently to your children [grandchildren] and speak of them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Impress them on your children.*

• Have wholesome thoughts that elevate God to His rightful place of honour

Think about what we watch and read, in books, TV and social media. How do our actions line up with Philippians 4:8 NIV: *Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*

• Spend time in meditation on the Word and communication with God

Psalm 119:15 *I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways.*

Joshua 1:8 *This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.*

Obedience is not just reading the word of God but actually doing it. I can read the 50kph road sign but unless I actually do what it says, I may be having s deep conversation with a policeman with radar.

• Confess our sins to cleanse our hearts

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Are we really willing ton confess our sins to one another and uncover ourselves and risk lessening their esteem of us. And do we really want to give up our sins at all. Do we justify our sins and say God will turn a blind eye because he wants me to be happy, regardless of what his Law says

Brother Lawrence again: “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God.”

Psalm 63:4 *So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.*

Let us try to give God every moment of every day, and worship him with gratitude and love for his mercy to us.

Next time we are going to look at why worship is so hard. We are going to look at the distortion we face from the deceiver and also the deception from our culture and we will disempower those deceptive things so we can worship God in spirit and in truth in our innermost parts.

1. Joyce Huggett *God’s Springtime: readings and prayers for Lent 47* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://wholelifeworship.com/2013/01/24/jesus-247/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.thejoshlink.com/article269.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.peterdehaan.com/christianity/what-is-worship/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/crosswalk-devo/247-worship-the-crosswalk-devotional.html#google\_vignette [↑](#footnote-ref-5)