

Who's in the House?

Matthew 18:20- “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them.”

I thought I would start this lesson off with a scripture, just to set the stage. There are certainly more than two or three of us gathered together in Jesus' Name today, so it is safe to say, He is among us. Do you consciously grasp that every Sabbath? The Creator of all that exists is among us every week? Having this in the forefront of your thoughts, does it alter your behavior?

How about when a cop pulls up behind you in traffic? Do you all of a sudden become more aware of the speed limit? There are no eternal consequences for speeding. Chances are, unless it is FHP or you are doing more than 15 MPH over the speed limit you will not even get a second glance. I used to get a kick out of someone trying to sneak their seatbelt on when I pulled up behind them...like they had it on all the time...

So why are we here on the Sabbath? We all know it is the 4th Commandment (**Exodus 20:8-11**). We are to fellowship with the brethren and we are to worship God! God is seeking true worshippers, those who *genuinely* desire honor Him.

John 4:23-24- “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

We just read the essay and we know that God has given us His word and His word is Truth. We must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

According to the Free On-Line Dictionary, “Worship” is defined as: the reverent love and devotion accorded a deity. Several other words are associated with worship; adoration, honor, glorify, respect, devotion, just to name a few.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term for worship is “shachah,” (Strong’s 7812) which means to pay homage to royalty or God. It can also mean to bow down, stop to worship, or prostrate (with an “r”). I added the “r” comment as so many folks have a hard time distinguishing between physical positions and male anatomy.

Worshipping God then is a reverencing, honoring, and bowing before Him. Is that all there is to it?

But the worship of God goes way beyond reverencing and any bowing down. God gets plenty of lip service and all the ceremonial crap from the thousands of denominations of so-called “Christianity” worshipping Him their way. I am sure there are thousands if not more of well-meaning and good-hearted believers who genuinely adore and love God with all their hearts. But they are all doing it *their way*.

Matthew 15:8-9- ““These people have drawn near to Me with their mouths, and with their lips they honor Me; but their hearts are far away from Me. For they worship Me in vain, teaching *for doctrine the* commandments of men.””

Sadly, there are even those in God’s own church that still do not get it. We know that in the end times there will come a sifting, a falling away. God knows the heart.

Hebrews 4:12-13- “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit,

and of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart. And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account.”

The enemy will be working overtime as he is on borrowed time to deceive God’s elect.

Matthew 24:24-25- “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have foretold *it* to you.”

Be on guard, but *it is no surprise* to any of us as He has forewarned us.

The truly dedicated seekers of God and His way of life *may* be tempted the most.

Those who play church, or show up to be entertained are a marginal threat to the devil. They are not really serving God and are more inclined to serving themselves than others. They talk a good talk but do not walk the walk. Much like the TV preachers, they can rattle off scriptures, put on a good front but have very little substance.

2 Timothy 3:7- “*They are* always learning but *are* never able to come to *the* knowledge of *the* truth.”

Andrea and I used to attend a Pentecostal church back in the day. I was even an usher. I used to do a “head count” for attendance as it was more about how many were in attendance and “how many were “saved” that day. One Sunday, we had one couple leave because they did not like the music program. I guess people have many reasons for going to church. I can only think of One.

There were sermons and songs in this church like so many others. But words and songs are not enough to count for true worship.

Matthew 7:20-23- “Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who *is* doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’”

This scripture has always pulled my heart strings. This reminds me when God was angry at Moses for “striking the rock” instead of “speaking to the rock” and was not allowed to cross over into the promised land (**Numbers 20:11-12**). With all that Moses had done in leading the nation of Israel out of Egypt, he was not allowed to cross over into the promised land for disobeying God.

It brings to light the seriousness of our calling. This is a blessing, a gift with eternal implications and rightfully so, look at the price that was paid for that gift. There is no margin for error, at least in the sense it is we are all in or nothing. There is no turning back for those who have been baptized.

Luke 9:62- “But Jesus said to him, “No one who sets his hand to the plow, and looks back at the things behind, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

God certainly knows we will continue to fail, we will continue to sin so long as we are in the flesh, but we have His Spirit withing us to overcome these obstacles. We have our work cut out for us.

2 Timothy 4:1-5- “I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His

kingdom: Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves a *great number of* teachers, having ears itching to *hear what satisfies their cravings*; And they shall turn away their own ears from the truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths. But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry.”

We witnessed the “church jumpers” at the Pentecostal church. Folks seeking entertainment or whatever “scratched their ears.” They were attending for themselves. God was an afterthought.

Our true worship of God begins when we bow our hearts to God. It is when we acknowledge our total dependence upon Him. When we place Him in His rightful place as our first love, all else falls into the proper order.

Psalm 69:32- “The humble shall see and be glad; and your heart shall live, you who seek God,”

Matthew 5:3- “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The greatest victory we can experience is when we unconditionally surrender completely to God! The best life we can live is when we die to ourselves and live for Christ Who lives in us. The greatest gift of all is free but it will cost us everything! These are divine oxymorons and they make sense if you just think on them for a bit.

Our humble, heartfelt worship of God becomes a relationship with God. It is reflected in our spiritual dependency upon His grace and mercy.

Whether we physically see God or not at fellowship, He is here, among us. Being aware that God is present with us, should make us more appreciative of the privilege we have every Sabbath of coming together to honor and worship Him, to give Him thanks and praise for His grace and mercy He bestows upon us every single day. God gave us His only Son to pay a price we could never afford, to become heirs to a Kingdom we cannot comprehend, because He loves us more than we will ever understand. I know He is everywhere but I am I am glad He is in the house with us today. Amen.

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