

# STAYING CONNECTED

SUN 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL '21

WEEK 58

Over the last 2 weeks we have looked at being **ROOTED IN WORSHIP** & from a biblical overview why we worship & then how to worship *in Spirit & in truth* (Jesus' words in John 4:23-24). Using a Wm Temple quote worship was understood most clearly as having 7 component parts

1. submission of all of our nature to God
2. quickening of our conscience by His holiness
3. nourishment of our mind with His truth
4. purifying of our imagination by His beauty
5. opening of our heart to His love
6. surrender of our will to His purpose
7. most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable

For those interested, the SH book "Why Worship" is readily available to purchase, is readable & goes into much more detail explaining who this Trinitarian God that we serve is, what happens when we worship & various other relevant nuances. For this last look at being rooted in worship I am summarizing Williams final session's teaching on it as he looked at **the attitudes & the actions of the worshipper. To worship in spirit & truth is to display the following ATTITUDES:**

1. **Serious not superficial** – these are believers who 'press in' to the LORD, before drawing out from Him, as with Jacob (Gen 32:24ff) who wrestled with God, refusing to let go, until he received a blessing. In the morning when he did, he had a limp. Pressing in had a cost. The Persistent Widow in Luke 18 pressed in to the judge until she got the proper answer. Blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46ff), etc.
2. **Relentless hope** – that is based on faith conviction, not on conditions

that are comfortable or favourable. For e.g. Job's words in Job 19:25-27 "*I know that my redeemer lives, & that in the end He will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*" Like Job true worshippers need a faith & a hope that is unrelenting despite whatever happening around us. Our hope is in the One who creates, sustains & perfects all things.

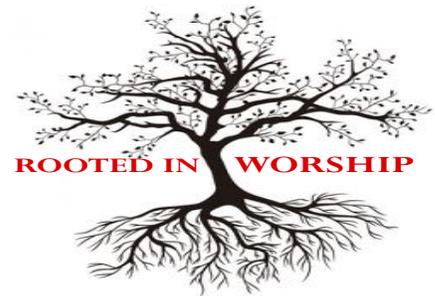
3. **Rejects impurity** – it is our responsibility to make right choices & Bible is very clear about poor choices & there are stern warnings about engaging in ongoing willful sin (see 1 Cor 10:8 & Heb 10:26-27). To only partially obey, is to disobey! True worshippers will have a deep appreciation for the pardon of their sins (1 Jn 1:9) & in Jesus' words in Jn 8:11 will "*go & sin no more*".

4. **Endures through suffering with a consistent faith** – whether by sin 1 Cor 10:13 "*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it*", or through general suffering in life, true worshippers follow the message in the great faith chapter Heb 11, **DO NOT GIVE UP!**

5. **Submission to God's correct disciplines** – Heb 12:4-11 teaches that God wants to father us for our benefit. As children discipline influences us in the right way (Pr 22:15 & Pr 13:24) Heb 12:11 "*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness & peace for those who have been trained by it*". God disciplines out of a heart full of love.

**Secondly Williams said that the true worshipper displays the following ACTIONS:**

1. **Prioritize verbal praise** – Heb 13:15, "*Let us continually offer to God a*



sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that openly acknowledge his Name". Williams wryly observed, "some Christians look like they have been baptized in vinegar!" When we glimpse the wonder of our salvation, our hearts should be filled with joy & praise becomes an outward expression of the overflow of our hearts.

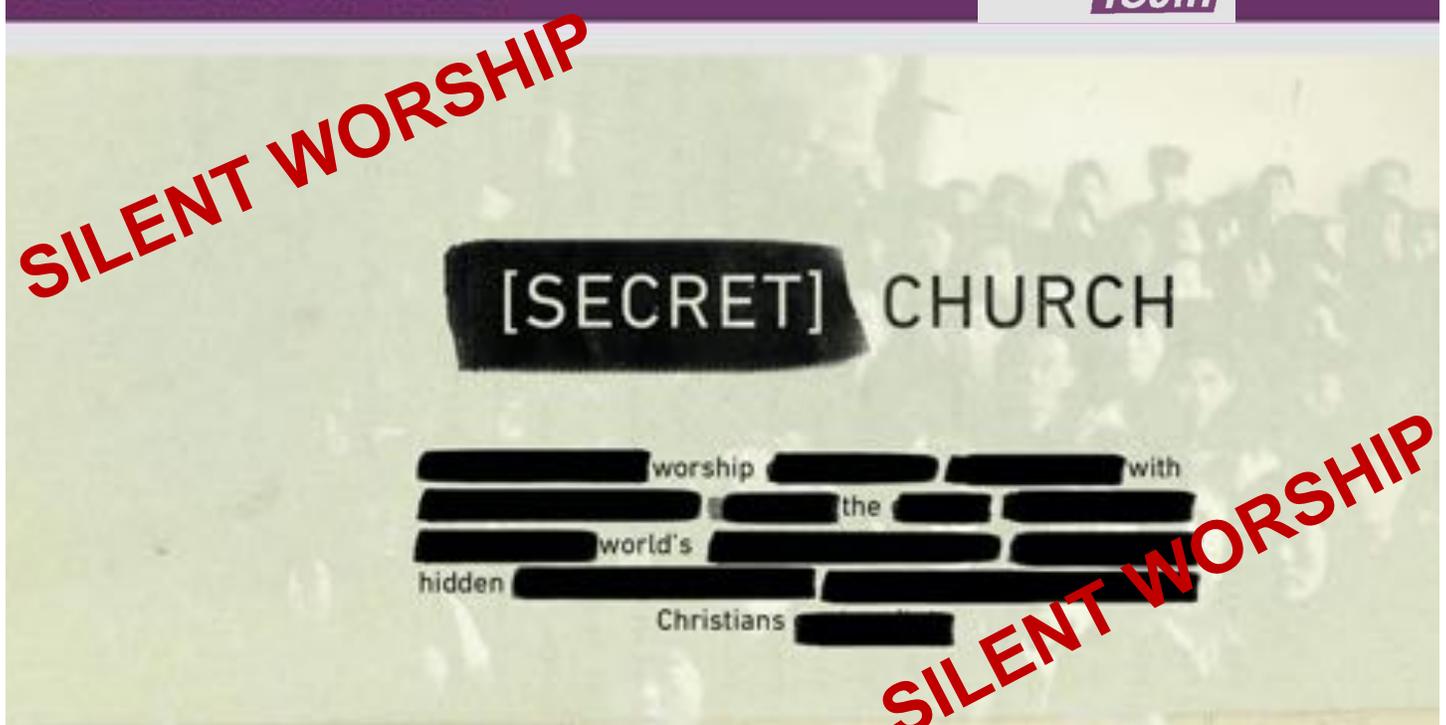
2. **Physical integrity & propriety** – Rmns 12:1-2 "*Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy & pleasing to God. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed*". We have a mandate to look after our physical well-being. Paul in 1 Cor 9:27 "*I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified*".

3. **Benevolence to the poor & needy** – Heb 13:16 "*don't forget to do good & to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God*". James 1:27 "*Pure & genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans & widows in their distress*".

4. **Financial generosity** – not just to the poor & needy, but also to God's work & mission. Phil 4:18-19a "*I have all I need & more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me... They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable & pleasing to God*".

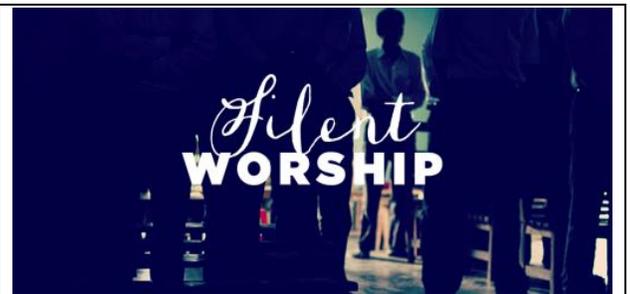
5. **Excellence in ministerial obligation & responsibility** – we offer our work to God as our worship as in Col 3:23-24 "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for people*".

Giving is at the heart of all of our expressions of worship. "*God loves a cheerful giver*" (2 Cor 9:7). Whatever we give, God takes it & multiplies it up as with the boy's 5 small loaves & 2 fish (Jn 6) that fed 5000 men plus women & children & had 12 basketfuls left over. When we give our all in our worship, God similarly amplifies it.



**Silent worship** by Georgia Prowse  
*(this article is taken from & is available on the Open Doors website)*

- How do you worship, when you have to be silent?
- How can you learn from God's Word, when you can't get a Bible?
- How do you pray with others, when religious meetings are banned?



We have had covid & lockdown restrictions for 14 months, but for millions of Christians across the world, this is what life is like all the time. In many countries they have never entered a physical church building, nor never experienced worshipping with many others, or even sung to God in anything above a whisper.

**They are the secret church, & wherever they meet – they find Jesus there.**

Across the world, in countries such as North Korea, Syria, Iran & many more, our Christian brothers & sisters are facing persecution & death for their faith. Praising God with guitars, keyboards & drums (our normality) is not an option for them. For many Christians the simple act of singing would make enough noise to get them found by the authorities & imprisoned. **They have to worship in silence.**

At a recent event in London called 'Shift the Silence' organized by Open Doors, 2 Iranian women told their story of how they spent 9 months in prison for refusing to deny Jesus. They said in their home country you could be executed if the authorities discovered that you were a Christian & so churches have to meet in secret & in **silence**.

In order to experience a small part of what the persecuted church go through, people were told to sing the songs in a whisper with no music. Already this seemed so different, then they were told to sing with just as much passion & power as usual, but without making a sound. **People were closing their eyes, raising their hands & worshipping the Lord with all their hearts, yet the room was completely silent.** At that point the sensation of power in the room was incredible!

**Please remember to pray for the silent worshippers across the persecuted church in many countries.**

*'Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious.'* Psalm 66:1-2