



For 3 weeks we have looked at aspects of being **ROOTED IN WORSHIP**. We saw a brief biblical overview of why, & then how to worship *in Spirit & in truth* (John 4:23-24) & we briefly examined the attitudes & actions of such a worshipper. I've been asked to expand on the application of this so today we are looking more closely at the attitudes. To worship in spirit & in truth is to do so displaying the following 5 attitudes:

**1. Serious not superficial** – one of the greatest ever golfers Lee Trevino hit a magical iron shot that somehow curved around a tree trunk, ducked under branches, soared over a bunker & ended inches from the hole. Someone shouted to him, “Are you always that lucky?” His reply, “Yeah, and the harder I practice, the luckier I get.” Trevino was serious about how he approached the game & I can imagine his many unseen hours of intensely serious preparatory work. When Christians have that same serious approach to their faith, then things start to happen around them, and their worship intensifies.

True worshippers have this serious not superficial attitude. They

determinedly press in to the LORD. Famous words from Jeremiah 29:11, “*For I know the plans I have for you...*”, are followed by vv.12-14, “*You will call on me & come & pray to me & I will listen to you. You will seek me & find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,*’ declares the Lord.” This is an intentional relationship cultivated in its commitment derived from the response of knowing that we are loved. As we grow closer we want to spend time in the other one’s (Jesus) presence. We want to please that significant other & put His needs above our own. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 “*Whoever wants to be my disciple / follower must deny themselves & take up their cross & follow me*”, so this is a sacrificial love. It is in this close relationship that as we press in to Him, we gain a fresh & deeper understanding of Him & His ways. Then we can then draw out our fuel for living & our worship is at a more intimate level.

**2. Relentless hope** – that is based on faith conviction, not on conditions that are comfortable or favourable. Such worshippers never give up no matter how great the challenge that confronts them. They remember “*that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose*” (Rmns 8:28). The human propensity is to be weighed down & overcome by adversity & feelings of helplessness, but the God we worship, “*gives life to the dead & calls into existence things that do not exist*” (Rmns 4:17). Having this attitude means looking at situations & seeing them with positive outcomes, despite the

seeming impossibility of that. Our God breathes life into dry bones (Ez. 37)

In Shelia Walsh’s lovely book, “5 minutes with Jesus: Quiet Time for Your Soul”, she recounts a story when the emperor of China had a problem. “*Something was destroying his mulberry trees. mulberry trees. So he did what any brilliant man does when faced with a problem he can’t handle: he turned it over to his wife! When Empress Ce Ling Shee looked at the trees, she noticed a moth laying eggs on the mulberry leaves, eggs that of course hatched into caterpillars. After a few days, each caterpillar spun a thread that it wrapped itself in, forming a cocoon. The empress plucked one of the cocoons from the leaves & dropped it in hot water. Slowly, the delicate & beautiful thread began to unwind. It was a half mile long when the empress stretched it out and measured it! Then it occurred to her: perhaps this thread could be woven into cloth. That was the moment the silk trade was born. An empire of extraordinary beauty & wealth began with an emperor’s garden disaster!*” Walsh concludes, “*How could the emperor have ever imagined & how could we imagine, that unfathomable beauty & blessing could rise out of the thing that seemed to be his destruction? Making beautiful endings out of impossible situations is God’s specialty. He never wastes a single trial. He transforms it all for our good & His glory... nothing can stop the amazing redemptive power of our God*”. Whatever Satan throws at us, ultimately it is God who has the final word & we know He has good plans for us. Our relentless hope is in the One who creates, sustains & perfects all things.

**3. Rejects impurity** – it is our responsibility to make right choices as per Bible guidelines about every area of our life & living. Last week I quoted 1 Cor 10:8 & Heb 10:26-27, but if we truly love & revere Jesus as in Pt.1 above, then we do not want

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to disappoint Him by sinning. Through the week Home Groups looked at Colossians 3:12-15. The study began with the challenge for us all to “remember who you are”. Who we are is a constant which does not change from situation to situation. In v.12 we are described as “*chosen by God, holy & dearly loved*”. It’s relatively easy to grasp what it means to be ‘chosen by God’ & ‘dearly loved’ & we concluded that to be ‘holy’ was to obey the LORD by following what biblical teaching. To partially obey things that suit us, but to reject or ignore other things that we don’t like or that societal norms pressurize us to, is to disobey. US politician Charles Colson said “*holiness is the everyday business of every Christian*”. Leighton Ford (who shared preaching duties with Billy Graham) says, “*there is no detour to holiness. Jesus came to the resurrection through the cross, not around it*”. Whilst holiness goes way beyond moral living, as it affects the heart & respects the motives of the entire person. It is not just about doing the right thing, but is about who we are preoccupied with. True worshippers display an attitude that daily, minute-by-minute, remember who they are (*holy*) & constantly make the right behaviour choices rejecting impurity.

**4. Endures through suffering with a consistent faith** – after Hebrews 11 outline of lives challenged by sin & suffering of many types, but with the underlying message that true worshippers DO NOT GIVE UP, Hebrews 12 then tells us to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us”. This is a journey with challenges that require endurance as shown in Romans 5:3-5 “*We can rejoice in our sufferings [problems & trials] because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; & character, hope. And hope does not disappoint*”. The 2<sup>nd</sup> point in the Colossians 3 midweek study (v.12) was that for this faith journey we need to “*clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness & patience*”. This reflected the Galatians 5 teaching on the “Fruit of the Spirit” and underlines the need for our ongoing stamina. It’s that idea of self-will, persistence & staying power that we are told to be clothed in. Isaiah’s famous words in Ch 61:1,3 “*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me... to bestow on them... the oil of joy instead of mourning & a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair*”. True worshippers display an attitude that endures in all circumstances.

**5. Submission to God’s correct disciplines** – international speakers & authors John Blanchard comment that “*discipline is proof of sonship (Heb 12:6)*”, whilst Don Whitney observes, “*in my own personal & pastoral experience, I can say I have never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline*”. God disciplines out of a heart full of love & for our benefit. Job 5:17 tells us, “*Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty*”, and Psalm 94:12 “*Blessed are those you discipline, LORD, those one you teach from your law*”. Jesus’ words to the Church in Laodicea (Rev 3:19), “*Those whom I love I rebuke & discipline. So be earnest & repent*”. The references from last week remain important: Heb. 12:4-11; Pr.22:15; Pr. 13:24; Heb 12:11. Discipline is about correction, not punishment! The attitudes of those worshipping in Spirit & truth understand that there is no point in praying for spiritual growth & to see God at work around us, if we do not make a serious effort to live disciplined lives & to submit to God’s discipline.

## MISSION PRAYER MEETING, 10.30 WED, WITH UPDATES FROM AB, MYANMAR & MIM

