

Lost & Found Center Teaching Series



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: THE ESSENCE OF WORSHIP

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Introduction

The plea of God from the hand of the prophet Hosea still speaks to this generation today.

**“...Let us acknowledge the LORD;
let us press on to acknowledge him.
As surely as the sun rises,
he will appear;
he will come to us like the winter rains,
like the spring rains that water the earth.”** Hosea 6:3 NIV

This is the plea for us to acknowledge God. Acknowledge the Lord he says. Press on or strive to acknowledge him. What does it mean to acknowledge God? Have you ever thought about that? What does acknowledge mean in general?

I have grown to love this word. If you go to an online etymology dictionary you’ll discover that the word acknowledge is a combination of two verbs. The first means to understand or recognize and the second means to admit. So to acknowledge God is to get to the point where we say to ourselves, “yes this is what God is like.” We admit it to ourselves; we admit it to each other; and we admit it to God himself. That my friends is real spiritual growth. That my friends is worshipping God.

Let’s try to dig a little deeper for a moment. We’ll use Hosea’s help again and examine one of my most recent favorite verses:

**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.** Hosea 6:6 NIV

This is an awesome verse. This is God talking through Hosea to explain himself to us. Can you see this? Almighty God is trying to explain himself to us. Look at the first part of this verse. He wants us to know that he desires mercy and he does not desire sacrifice. Does that make sense to you? It should make you go: huh? We know that Jesus has died for our sins. He has sacrificed himself so that we could be made acceptable to God. Doesn’t God then desire sacrifice? Nope. Well why was Jesus sent to the earth? This was because of God’s love. We know this right? That’s John 3:16. Why then did Jesus have to die? God’s holiness and purity, his justice, his aversion to sin required the sacrifice of his own son so that we could enter into his presence. That’s Hebrews 9:22.

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22 NIV

Was God looking for sacrifice? Does God desire sacrifice? Here’s his answer again.

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For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,

But there's more to it than that. Let's take a step back. What big concept is God trying to convey to us? Does he want us to be merciful? Yes, but he's saying more than that. Isn't he? Think of this verse this way. Mercy represents the character of God. Sacrifice represents an external act of worship. We have it in our minds that sacrifice is the highest form of worship. We remember again that Jesus' death on the cross is the single greatest act ever accomplished in time-space. Still God says mercy, not sacrifice is what he desires. Sacrifice is what had to be done. Sacrifice was never desired. No one desires his son to be humiliated and murdered at the hands of his enemies. God sent his son because it was the only way for our salvation. Once more:

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,

What he is saying is that he desires us to emulate his character more than any external form of worship we can perform – yes, even one that involves sacrifice. Can you see this?

God would much rather us grow up to be like him (merciful) than for us to punish ourselves for not being like him (sacrifice).

If we could only understand this truth about God, it would do us wonders. It's more important to emulate God's character than it is to do good deeds. It's more important to emulate God's character than it is to fast. It's more important to emulate God's character than it is to do any physical thing in this earth, and that includes any act of sacrifice you are capable of making.

God values character above sacrifice. This is not meant to put any kind of pressure on you whatsoever. This is just meant for you to understand a little about God. This is not meant to heap on you some burden of what you must do. The goal of developing the character of God in you is something that is done with the help of the Holy Spirit in you. We simply cannot, through the power of our own will make this happen in our lives. I hope that is a recurring theme that you have picked up from my studies.

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.
Philippians 2:13 NIV

And let's continue to the second part of this verse:

and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Do you see he continues to explain himself? God desires acknowledgement of him above burnt offerings. Both parts of this verse have a level of similarity. He says mercy is

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greater than sacrifice and acknowledgement of God is greater than burnt offerings. In the first part we just stated that he prefers character to an external act even involving sacrifice. In this part of the verse he prefers acknowledgement to burnt offerings. He's repeating himself but not exactly. Think of both acknowledgement and burnt offerings as types of worship, the former spiritual and the latter physical. Remember acknowledgement means to both know and admit.

I look at it this way: our acknowledgement of God is our highest form of worship.

House of God Analogy

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. 1 John 3:2 NIV

This verse begins with a statement of the present reality of those of us who are in Christ. Our present reality is that we are children of God. So let's consider that we are part of his house. As a child of God's house, what do you think he desires for you? He wants you to obey the house rules for sure, but do you think that makes him happy? He wants you to be sorry when you break the rules of the house. He may correct you or punish you. Do you think that pleases him? Now listen carefully. You may even self-impose your own punishment upon yourself to prove to him that you are sorry about the rules you broke. He may understand your sincerity but is that what he's looking for from you? Your eldest brother Jesus may stand in your place and take your punishment. This may satisfy our father but is that what he really desires from us?

What is our father's overall goal? That we would grow up to be like him, that we would begin to understand him, that we would truly know what he is like. He desires that we acknowledge him.

and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

He desires that we let him know that we know what he is like. This is what I wanted to say that is the essence of our worship: to let him know that we know what he is like. Now he knows what he's like. That is obvious. In our acknowledgement of him, we let him know that we know. I wanted to call this study: let Him Know That We Know, but I thought it would be a bit confusing without my explanation.

A Prime Example

It is not enough to reason that the acknowledgement of God is the essence of worship. We need a prime example. For this we look to the book of Revelation. No matter how you look at Revelation from an end-time perspective, always look at it for a greater

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understanding of who Jesus is. Since Revelation is about the end of times, then pay special attention to the worship of God and Jesus there, because that represents what I would consider perfect worship. Here's one of the verses I'm talking about:

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

**"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"** Revelation 5:13 NIV

Now when we see this verse just think about what it represents. It represents the unity of the worship of God of every created being in heaven and on earth and literally all who have ever been alive. This is an awesome verse but I want to focus on the verses right before. This is worship that is from the angels of heaven, those who have been closest to God and Jesus, and have greater insight into who God is. Both verses are awesome but this verse has a little more in it. I call it one of the perfect verses in the Bible.

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

**"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"** Revelation 5:11-12 NIV

Notice there are seven things they say the Lamb, who is Jesus, is worthy to receive because of his act of sacrifice. What the angels of God are doing is acknowledging the Lamb. They are letting him know that they know who he is. What they say is perfect. They say seven things. The first four represent God's ability. The last three represent their response. Let's look at each of these, because this is how we should worship.

1. Power

The word means what we would expect it to mean: ability, might, the miraculous and the inconceivable.

Unstoppable

All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" Daniel 4:35 NIV

Like thunder

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God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. Job 37:5 NIV

Like an earthquake

The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Psalm 18:7 NIV

Like fire

For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. Deuteronomy 4:24 NIV

He is able, mighty and miraculous.

He can implement his will.

Nothing stands in his way.

He can move all things.

That he creates is the essence of power.

He conceives, designs and brings into being according to his own desire.

He is the source and originator of all power.

There is only one ultimate power source.

All things that have power originate from him.

That is power. We acknowledge it. We don't say it because we want to believe it. We just desire to let him know that we know – what he is like.

2. Wealth

The word means not only riches but also fullness and abundance. It means the possessing of the things that are of the MOST value. What kind of riches would that be?

Riches of his glory

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, Ephesians 3:16 NIV

Riches of his grace

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace Ephesians 1:7 NIV

Riches of his kindness

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Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? Romans 2:4 NIV

He is fullness.
He is complete.
He is overflowing.
He overflows into all creation including our lives.
He lacks nothing.
He needs nothing.
He is self-supporting.
He is self-sustaining.
All things came forth from him, so he owns everything.
He creates, therefore he cannot need.
He creates, therefore he cannot lack.
He creates, therefore all things belong to him.

That is wealth. We don't say it to make it true. We acknowledge it. We want him to know that we know what he is like.

3. Wisdom

Everything he does is perfect

**He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.** Deuteronomy 32:4 NIV

Everything he does is right

Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them. Hosea 14:9 NIV

Everything he does is based upon knowledge of the future

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. Isaiah 46:10 NIV

Every move he makes is right.
Every decision he makes is perfect.
He is the source of all knowledge.
Everything that is knowable comes from him.

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He sees the origin of all things and their final state simultaneously.
He sees the original idea and the end of every matter.
He can never be wrong.
He can never be less than perfect in what he says or does.

That is wisdom. We don't say it because we hope it's true. We acknowledge it. We want him to know that we know what he is like.

4. Strength

Sustains all things

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Hebrews 1:3 NIV

What he has no one can take

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. John 10:29 NIV

What he opens no one can shut

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. Revelation 3:7 NIV

He sustains all things.
With power he creates all things.
With strength he maintains all things.
With power he can moves all things.
With strength he holds all things in their place.
With power he opens any door.
With strength he holds any door shut.
The universe was created by his power.
It survives by his strength.
Time space is his creation.
He keeps it going.

That is strength. I'm not saying this to curry favor from him. I only want to let him know that I know – what he is like.

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Power, Wealth, Wisdom and Strength are real attributes of God. The next group Honor, Glory and Praise are our responses.

5. Honor

Honor means worthiness, distinction, respect, reputation. The root of the Hebrew literally means weight or weighty. People with honor carry weight in what they say. People with honor cannot be ignored. When you hold something up in honor you serve it.

Everyone bows.

It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' " Romans 14:11 NIV

Think honor think weight.

Think weight think gravity.

We gravitate toward him.

All creation gravitates toward him because he is the origin of all things.

Everyone bows.

Even the rebellious will bow.

Every created thing will one day acknowledge his supremacy.

We don't need to pretend to make it so. It is so. I only want to let him know that I know. I also want to participate in honoring him.

6. Glory

Sometimes there is no good definition for a word or an attribute of God. Glory is one of those words. I see glory as the emanation of the majesty of God. It often comes across like light. And in the same way if we are to give God glory it would be the exact same way we would respond to a brilliant light. We would give it our attention.

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. Revelation 21:23 NIV

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. Isaiah 60:1 NIV

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. Luke 2:8-10 NIV

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He is worthy of our focus.

He is worthy of our complete attention.

He is worthy of a focus that leaves us without regard for any physical need like food or water or air or sleep, without regard for any emotional need or any other person, without regard for ourselves in anyway.

That is the glory of our creator. That is our suitable response to him. He is that amazing.

That is glory. We don't say it to make it so. We only want him to know that we know what he is like. We also want to participate in giving him glory our focus and attention.

7. Praise

Praise means adoration or blessing or commendation. I like to use the word celebrate. To celebrate is to exalt, to adore, to rave, to brag and to admire.

The celebration of creation

Brace yourself like a man;

**I will question you,
and you shall answer me.**

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it?

**On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone-**

while the morning stars sang together

and all the angels shouted for joy? Job 38:3-7 NIV

He alone deserves our celebration.

He is the source of everything of value, everything that has meaning, everything that has significance.

He is the source of love and joy and peace.

He above all is to be celebrated.

That is praise. We don't say it to make it so. We only want him to know that we know what he is like. We also want to participate in giving him praise in celebrating him.

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Conclusion

Now wasn't that fun? Use Revelation 5:12 to worship the Lord. Meditate on his power, wealth, wisdom, and strength. Meditate on giving him honor and glory and praise. That is what I have shared with you. Grow in your understanding of who he is. Think about him and he'll help you. That's how it works for me. Remember he desires that you let him know that you know what he is like. Acknowledge him.

**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
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Notes

For Questions or Comments please respond to lostandfoundcenter@yahoo.com and visit www.lostandfoundcenter.org for additional information.

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