

**Lesson 17: John 4:20-26. “Truth in Love” or “Love in Truth?”**

<sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

- a. “Our fathers worshiped...but you say that in Jerusalem” – Samaritan religious teachers taught that Mount Gerizim was the sacred mountain of God (not Mount Ebal).
  - a. ***Deuteronomy 27:4.*** *And when you have crossed over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, concerning which I command you today, on Mount Ebal, and you shall plaster them with plaster.*
  - b. At the heart of her statement is the conflict: “Is the worship of God limited to a certain place?”
- b. “salvation is from the Jews.”
  - a. Salvation would come from Christ, through the Jewish heritage, to the world.
  - b. Samaritans worshiped out of ignorance of the real Savior, partly, due to the fact that they accepted only the first 5 books of the OT as the Word of God.
  - c. Out of ignorance, Samaritan worship was laced with “the fear of...” (terror) of God’s wrath
    - i. Adding the false gods of the culture, to their worship life, resulted in the incorporation of “terror” of the gods’ wrath.
    - ii. Covering all the bases, “just in case...”
- c. “But the hour is coming and now is here, when true worshipers will worship...in spirit and truth”
  - a. God is not confined to a building, i.e. temple or mountain
  - b. Rituals or endless words do not draw you closer to God
    - i. **Question:** Why worship God in a church? Do you have to go to church to be a Christian? What could prolonged absence from church do to one’s Christian faith?
      1. ***Hebrews 10:23-25*** *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* <sup>24</sup> And

*let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

2. No matter what else you do at worship, make sure you include: stirring up one another to love and good works.

**d. “God is spirit, and those who worship Him, must worship in spirit and truth”**

- a. “True” worship (as opposed to false worship) commits your spirit/soul to a communion with God.
- b. This is only possible, through Christ, because He is the fulfillment of God’s just demand for a payment for SIN, and He is the ultimate expression of God’s Fatherly love.
- c. “True” worship commits itself to the absolute “truth” in Christ as revealed in scriptures.
  - i. The Bible is the Word of God; not merely containing the Word of God.
  - ii. The Bible is inerrant and infallible.
  - iii. The Bible is the norm for our Christian living.

**“God is spirit, and those who worship Him, must worship in spirit and truth”**

- a. In our world today, many people teach and believe that “truth” is relegated to the “interpretation of truth,” as in the idea that there are multiple ways to interpret and understand truth. Therefore, no one can legitimately claim to have ultimate “truth,” not even the Bible!
- b. In John’s gospel, “true” can be understood as “real” and so reliable, that you can put the temporal and eternal well-being of your life into its hands.
- c. Pitted against “truth” is “deception,” particularly self-deception.
  - a. **1 John 1:8-10.** *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
    - i. Giving into the temptation of self-deception has eternal implications: we deny the need for repentance and faith, we and remain in our sins. Thus, we are all filled with an unrighteousness which separates us from God.
    - ii. Self-deception always involves self-justification for sinful choices:
      1. “What else could I do? I had to survive somehow.”
      2. “I don’t deserve to be treated this way.”
      3. “No one else was there for me: I had to take care of myself.”
      4. “Everybody’s doing it.”
      5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- iii.* **“Confess”** – admitting to God and to ourselves, that we pull away God’s gift of love, and we seek our own ways in disobedience to His Word.

**Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?”** <sup>28</sup> **So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,** <sup>29</sup> **“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”** <sup>30</sup> **They went out of the town and were coming to him.**

**a. “Come, see a man who told me all...Can this be the Christ?”**

**a.** The woman’s witness to her neighbors is that Jesus spoke the “truth” about her, forcing her to look at herself, her choices, and perhaps her self-justifications for living her life of sin.

**b.** Jesus loved her enough to call out her sin (Law as “Mirror”) in order to call her to Himself.

**b. “They went out of the town and were coming to Him.”**

**a.** The Samaritans responded to her witnessing about Jesus.