

SERMON: Who do you worship? / 22.10. / Jarka Kořená

Summary of the previous sermon " Let me drink!" - John 4:1-19

- Boundaries vs. center and community defined by boundaries vs. center.
- We need to drink from God - it is not enough to "drink" from Jesus once, we need to drink repeatedly, "what gives me life?"

The Story of the Samaritan Woman continues: John 4:19-24

"19 The woman said to him: Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers gave worship on this mountain, but you Jews say that the right place for worship is in Jerusalem. 21 Jesus said to her, Woman, take my word for this; the time is coming when you will not give worship to the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You give worship, but without knowledge of what you are worshipping: we give worship to what we have knowledge of: for salvation comes from the Jews. 23 But the time is coming, and is even now here, when the true worshippers will give worship to the Father in the true way of the spirit, for these are the worshippers desired by the Father. 24 God is Spirit: then let his worshippers give him worship in the true way of the spirit."

Summary of the Bible story:

- Worship - showing honor to God, "You are greater than I", in Jesus' day the Jews worshiped by giving animal sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem.
- The historical context of Samaria -> when you want to subjugate a people, you give them "their gods (idols)", "their rules of worship", because who people worship affects the whole culture and its setting.
- woman's reaction - she checks what the rules are; she goes to a specific point of conflict (where to physically worship? You say there, our fathers say elsewhere...)
- she asked about boundaries
- Jesus (as usual) answers unexpectedly
- Worship will not be performed anywhere, not even in Jerusalem!
- "it doesn't matter what you deal with", on the contrary "it matters very much"
- He responds by lifting the attention from the boundaries and fixing it on the center, making it "worship in spirit and in truth" and repeats it twice.

What does it mean to "worship in spirit and truth" in general and what does it mean for us?

We have a natural desire to worship - Thomas Aquinas calls it proof of God's existence. It means to relate to something greater than ourselves. Each of us worships something, the question is not whether we worship something, but what do we worship? Money, work, Baník Ostrava... What is so important to us that we organize the rest of our lives accordingly?

We become like what we worship. In fact, we live by worship.

The image - Jesus in the middle - the connection to the previous part of the text, what happens when we "drink the living water" that God gives us? We worship God with our lives (in every situation).

In the spirit (Spirit)

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, Jesus Himself, lives in us. When we don't know how to pray, he prays for us.

John 20:19-23

19 At evening on that day, the first day of the week, when, for fear of the Jews, the doors were shut where the disciples were, Jesus came among them and said to them, May peace be with you! 20 And when he had said this, he let them see his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 And Jesus said to them again, May peace be with you! As the Father sent me, even so I now send you. 22 And when he had said this, breathing on them, he said to them, Let the Holy Spirit come on you: 23 Any to whom you give forgiveness, will be made free from their sins; and any from whom you keep back forgiveness, will still be in their sins.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 As it says in the holy Writings, I will put an end to the wisdom of the wise, and will put on one side the designs of those who have knowledge. 20 Where is the wise? where is he who has knowledge of the law? where is the man of this world who has a love of discussion? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

In the truth

John 8:31-32

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had faith in him, If you keep my word, then you are truly my disciples; 32 And you will have knowledge of what is true, and that will make you free.

We are to worship in the truth of Scripture (God saved us through His Son Jesus), in truth to ourselves - authentically, with integrity. To worship as it is natural to us - not to force ourselves into something because it is expected or because others do it.

We honor God with our lives by letting Him be our center in every area and in every moment of our lives.

Summary:

The essence of worship is not "pleasing God" but living in truth. It depends on whether our beliefs about God (He is God, nothing else), knowledge of the world, and understanding of ourselves are based on lies or truth. Truth sets us free.

Worship is more than just declaring God's greatness. Worship is a practical life filled with an awareness of God's greatness and the ability to truly trust Him. We often fall for the lies that tempt us to unconsciously rely on false certainties, values (gods) and therefore fall under their dictates (manipulation, abuse,... lying is the main essence of Satan's strategy), but the truth sets us free, which is why it matters so much if we want to live truly and freely.

Historical interest:

Hus's statement about truth, from which two words have made their way onto our Czech presidential flag: "Truth triumphs". Hus' full statement is a bit longer: "The truth of the Lord triumphs, though it is defeated for a time." The words about truth triumphing appeared on the presidential flag with the creation of Czechoslovakia after the First World War. T. G. Masaryk brought flags with this inscription on his return from abroad. And the creators of the presidential flag were inspired by it. Since then, with the exception of the Nazi occupation, the inscription "truth triumphs" has been on the flag continuously.