

Washington church of Christ

27 Grand Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, May 5, 2013

Song Leader	Cameron Wydro
Prayer	Lee Redd
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Pete Ferencze
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Scott Thomas
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Morning Closing Prayer	Bob Celentano
Evening Opening Prayer	Stan Thompson
Announcements	Bill Duryea

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

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Are We Ready To Worship?

As Christians we, along with many others in many places, this day have assembled to worship God. But what is worship? This question can be answered in many ways. The Hebrew verb *"to worship"* literally means *"to bow down, to prostrate oneself."* It presents the attitude and position of a person relative to a reigning king. In Psalms 95:6 we read ...

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
(Psalms 95:6 NKJV)

To worship is to submit, to surrender. When we come to worship the Lord we come to surrender to Him.

Psalms 24 is commonly said to have been written when the ark was relocated from the house of Obed-edom to Mount Zion. In his commentary of this psalm Charles Spurgeon wrote ... "This sacred hymn was probably written to be sung when the Ark of the Covenant was taken up from the house of Obed-edom, to remain within curtains upon the hill of Zion. The words are not unsuitable for the sacred dance of joy in which David led the way upon that joyful occasion. The eye of the Psalmist looked, however, beyond the typical upgoing of the ark to the sublime ascension of the King of glory. We will call it The Song of the Ascension."

This Psalm in verses 3 – 6 seemingly speaks to the qualifications of those who would come before God...

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face.
Selah (Psalms 24:3-6 NKJV)

Here literally to *"ascend into the hill of the Lord,"* means to climb Mount Zion. This is where the divine presence dwells. We can read in Psalms 2:6, *"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."*

The parallel question *"Or who may stand in His holy place?"* underscores the issue of who is qualified to worship. The tabernacle and ark are in the "Holy Place." It is holy, separated, and sacred because here is where God dwells.

The Psalmist proceeds to identify the characteristics of those who would dare to stand there before God. Let's look at the application for our worship today.

To enter into the holy place we must have *"clean hands,"* that is, our hands must not be defiled by the corruption of this world. While for Israel this meant ceremonial defilement, it also means moral defilement. This is clear from the Psalmist's next phrase in which he demanded *"a pure heart."* It has been said that our hands express what our heart intends and that from the purity of our hearts true worship comes. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaimed, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God"* (Matthew 5:8).

We must be holy to enter the Holy Place, and, this is made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He is our holiness, having made peace with God through the shedding of His blood. The Apostle Paul writes that through Jesus we *"have access by one Spirit to the Father"* (Ephesians 2:18).

A second requirement for entrance into the presence of God mentioned is one *"who has not lifted up his soul to an idol."*

The worship of any so-called god disqualifies us from worshiping the living God. The first of the 10 Commandments is clear, *"You shall have no other gods before Me"* (Exodus 20:3). The temptation to worship idols is as much our temptation today as it was Israel's. We may not personify our lust as a Baal or our violence as a Mars, and, we may not claim goddesses like Athena as our guardians. Yet, we have our idols. They are abstract idols like "power," or concrete idols like "money" ... "Patriotism" guards our national destiny ... "Self" receives our personal devotion. Indeed, Paul warned us of these times ...

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5 NKJV).

David warns us that we must not lift up our "soul" to any of these "gods."

Additionally, the one welcomed to the Holy Place is also the one who has not *"sworn deceitfully."* This means that we have not perjured ourselves. We have honored the commandment not to bear false witness. We are people of the truth ... we *"walk in the light"*.

From this we can conclude that a *"pure heart"* is one that is pure toward God in single-minded worship and toward others in honest speech and trustworthy promises.

The Psalmist further states that as this person stands before God he is given the promise that *"he shall receive blessing from the LORD"* (Psalms 24:5). The blessing of the Lord is not just His benefits, it is His presence! Here I am reminded of one of my family's favorite songs whose words are from the book of Numbers...

"The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26 NKJV)

These then are the qualifications for worship. Holy people are welcome to come before the Holy God. The good news for us is that by repentance, by faith in Jesus, and by the gift of His Spirit we are made Holy and are able to have access even into the ultimate Holy Place, Heaven itself ...

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-22 NKJV)

...Bob

Our Prayer List...

Kathleen Wydro ... Jan DeGrado ... Doug Focht ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Donna Banghart ... Glenn Montgomery's father ... our young people here at Washington ... our young people away at college ... the men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

EVENTS AND NOTES

WE WILL HAVE THE THURSDAY MORNING STUDY THIS WEEK STARTING AT 11AM ... ALL ARE WELCOME.

THERE WILL BE A MEN'S SPIRITUAL AND BUSINESS MEETING TODAY @ 4PM.

THERE WILL ALSO BE A MEN'S BIBLE STUDY ON THURSDAY EVENING @ 7PM. ALL MEN ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE.

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ✦ NORTHEAST FC CAMP, JUNE 30TH – JULY 5TH.
- ✦ WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH.
- ✦ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.

ANYONE DESIRING A FAMILY OR AN INDIVIDUAL BIBLE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT ME (BOB JAMES).