

SBC – Feb 18, 2024

Psalm 15 (NKJV)

“Who May Dwell With The LORD?”

Psalm 15 (NKJV)

A Psalm of David.

Psalm 15 is another Psalm of David. David wrote at least half of the 150 Psalms in the Bible.

Psalm 15 deals with who is qualified to worship? Who is the worshiper that God accepts?

We were created in the image of God to worship Him. As people we have the ability to know God – to appreciate Him – to worship Him. We were created for this. We were created for God’s pleasure.

True worship begins with true faith.

Slide # 1

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

The first thing one ever does to please God is to put their faith in Him. We must come to God in faith. Faith takes God at His Word, and more specifically saving faith takes God at His Word concerning His Son.

Slide # 2

1 John 5:9–11 (NKJV)

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

The great issue before God is believing the testimony that God has given of His Son. It’s all about Jesus – WHO He is as Lord-God and WHO He is as Savior. Life is found through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And saving faith is an act of worship. One day Jesus was talking to a Samaritan woman and the conversation turned to worship. The context was one of evangelism as Jesus endeavored to share the truth of WHO He was with her. But in the midst of that evangelistic conversation Jesus said this to her.

Slide # 3

John 4:23–24 (NKJV)

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

This is really what Psalm 15 is about. It is about what constitutes being a true worshiper. We are saved by faith alone which is our first act of true worship. But true worshipers then live out their faith – not perfectly, but certainly, with the tenor of their lives being reflective of being a true worshiper. That is what Psalm 15 is about.

Slide # 4

Psalm 15

“Who May Dwell With The LORD?”

OUTLINE:

- v. 1 – Who May Approach the LORD?
- vv. 2-5a – The Character of the True Worshiper
- v. 5b – The Blessing for the True Worshiper

Whereas Psalm 14 was about the way of the wicked, Psalm 15 is about the way of the true worshiper. It is given in a Q and A format.

We do not know the exact occasion for the writing of this Psalm, but some suggest it may have been the bringing of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sam. 6). The subject matter in this Psalm would undoubtedly have very much been on David’s mind at that time.

1 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

The tabernacle was a tent in which God's special presence was manifested in the OT (cf. Ex. 25-40). It consisted of two compartments, namely the holy place and the inner sanctuary called the most holy place. The tabernacle was the special place of worship because it represented the unique presence of God in the midst of His people Israel in the OT.

David is obviously speaking somewhat figuratively here as only the priests could go into the tabernacle proper. But all Jews could get very close. And pious Jews desired to live right there with God dwelling in His presence.

Slide # 5

Psalm 84:2 (NKJV)

2 My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Psalm 84:10 (NKJV)

10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Interestingly, Psalm 84 was written by the Sons of Korah, who were Levites and not priests, and therefore, they also could not enter into the temple proper. But this expresses a desire to be near God – in His presence. That is the sentiment.

The word “abide” is the idea of “sojourn” as one comes as a guest receiving the fellowship of hospitality. The question then is who can approach God and be received by him as a welcomed guest with special blessing? Who can draw near to God in the special place of blessing?

The second question is very similar: “Who may dwell in your holy hill?” To make an emphasize the Hebrew technique was to ask the same essential question twice – only in a slightly different way the second time. God's holy hill is Mount Zion where ultimately the temple would be built. This was God's special place of dwelling of His own choosing.

Again, the sentiment is essentially the same. Who can have fellowship with God at His place – at His holy dwelling place? The answer to this probing question is then given in verses 2-5.

Note that David's answer does not require the prerequisite of doing all kinds of rituals. It is not about just doing the right thing right before you get there. No, David's answer is that the true worshiper demonstrates that he is a true worshiper in his everyday life – in the personal interactions of life – in how he treats other.

Don't expect that you can treat people like dirt and then show up with acceptable worship before God. This was so serious at Corinth – that is how the believers were mistreating one another - that many of them were sick and many had even died (cf. 1 Cor. 11). Obviously, their worship was unacceptable to God. Paul even said, "you come together not for the better but for the worse." (1 Cor. 11:17).

God demands that worship of Him be in TRUTH, which emanates from a lifestyle of integrity. And that is what David essentially goes on to say. Who can approach God as His welcomed and honored guest, who may dwell in fellowship with God at His holy hill?

2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

The answer David gives is representative. The characterizations listed in verses 2-5 are not exhaustive but merely representative of the character that defines those who are true worshipers.

David begins with "He who walks uprightly". This is the first thing mentioned, and it is sort of a catch-all description of what defines the true worshiper. "Uprightly" is also translated as "with integrity" (NASB); "blamelessly" (ESV); or "honestly" (HCSB). This is a person who as a lifestyle pattern lives an HONEST TO GOD way of life. They consistently live a life of spiritual integrity. They live a life of consistent obedience.

The opposite of walking uprightly is that of being a hypocrite. A hypocrite did not belong in the house of God. This would be an insult to God.

In the OT, God's blessing was promised for obedience and His cursing for disobedience (cf. Le. 26; Deut. 28). The disobedience could not expect God's blessing or the privilege of bringing acceptable worship into God's presence.

In addition, he “works righteousness” – that is, he consistently does what is right before God. He is known by his fruit of doing what is right. How a person lives is reflective of their relationship with God.

Then too, he “speaks the truth in his heart”. Note he doesn’t just say the truth, but rather it emanates from his heart. Jesus said, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34). The mouth tells on the heart!

The true worshiper speaks truth out of his heart. He is known for doing right and speaking truth. This person lives a full orb ed life of integrity in terms of both doing and speaking.

3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

Furthermore the true worshiper “does not backbite with his tongue”. The tongue is more telling than any other member of the body (pun intended). James warns that “the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity” (Ja. 3:6).

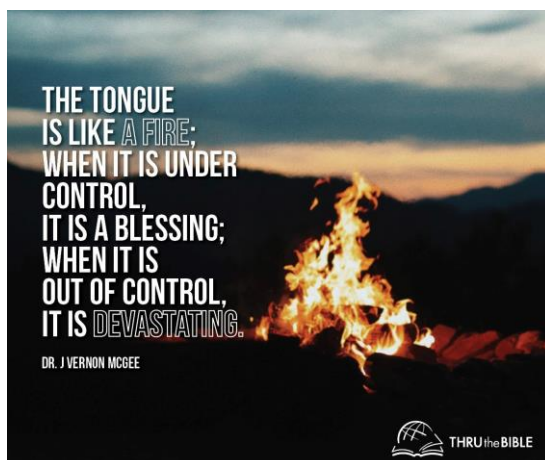
Slide # 6

James 3:8 (NKJV)

8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

We're gonna need God's help on this one. No person within themselves has the power to control their tongue. It's out of control.

Slide # 7



Backbite is the word for slander, which means “to wander about on the tongue” and pictures one who walks here and there, pouring out verbal venom and poisoning others behind their backs.

– **David Jeremiah**

This is totally unbecoming of a true worshiper.

God is intolerant of those who destroy others with their speech (101:5). Slandering and discrediting come from an attitude of hatred and a desire to harm others (10:12, 18). - **HCSB**

In Psalm 101 David writes...

Slide # 8

Psalm 101:5 (NKJV)

5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, **Him I will destroy**; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure.

A true worshiper is one who does not do evil to his neighbor. A life of integrity is serious about treating other people properly. This is pleasing to God. The greatest command is to love God, and the second greatest is to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:36-39).

David then says, “Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend”. A person of integrity does not quietly discredit a friend behind their back. He does not run him down.

We might have thought David would have given greater priority to religious obligations such as sacrifice or purification ceremonies – which certainly have their place, but are useless without the practical godliness of being good and honest and honorable to neighbors and friends. – **David Guzik**

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

A vile person is one who is literally a “worthless reprobate” who has no interest in God or spiritual things. They are spiritual “rejects” (Jer. 6:30). The true worshiper is not neutral. He sides for God and the things of God and is opposed to those who are vile. A true worshiper loves what God loves and hates what God hates.

This is not about a personal vendetta but rather about standing with God and against that which is opposed to Him.

To truly love what is right and holy one has to be opposed to what is evil and what those who are vile stand for.

Slide # 9

Proverbs 8:13 (NKJV)

13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.

Psalms 97:10 (NKJV)

10 You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

Sometimes, Christians think that the really godly person just skates along with everybody and everything. David had a different take. He said, true worshipers despise the vile – in that they don't appreciate what they stand for. To despise is to strongly dislike what someone stands for. True spiritual integrity takes a strong moral stand for what is right! You can't truly love God if you don't love evil.

Yes, in a sense we do love the sinner but hate the sin, but the sinner is so identified with his sin that he is called a vile person, and the true worshiper cannot go along with what this person is all about. Rather he despises him.

But in contrast the true worshiper "honors those who fear the Lord". It is clear where his allegiance is at. He despises the vile, but he honors those who fear the Lord. To fear the Lord is to reverence Him (Ps. 111:10).

Furthermore, the true worshiper "swears to his own hurt and does not change". This person is a person of their word. They keep their promises. That is indicative of having a true reverence for God.

To swear is to make an oath. An oath to the true worshiper is sacred. An oath brings God into the equation in a very specific and accentuated way. To swear is to make a promise to God and call on God to hold you accountable for it.

How someone views a vow before God says volumes about their true heart attitude towards God.

Slide # 10**Ecclesiastes 5:4–5 (NKJV)**

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

The true worshiper is a truth teller (v. 2) and keeps his vows (v. 4). And he keeps his promise to God even though it may be to his own hurt. He keeps his word even when it will cost him to do so. This is sacred to him and no matter what he won't violate the vow.

5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

Usury is the idea of lending money for interest. In the OT, the Jews were not allowed to charge usury to a fellow Jew.

Slide # 11**Exodus 22:25 (NKJV)**

25 “If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest.

The Jews could charge the Gentiles interest money, but not their fellow Jews (cf. Deut. 23:19, 20).

The principle here is that a true worshiper will not exploit his people and take financial advantage of them. He is always ethical in money matters.

Again, he is doing things God's way instead of his own way. The true worshiper aligns his life with God's truth instead of thinking selfishly.

And in this same vein he “does not take a bribe against the innocent”. He refuses to abuse or take advantage of people. He is all about true justice.

The say, “Every man has his price” but the true worshiper cannot be bought. Again, he is a man of integrity through and through.

Slide # 12

Deuteronomy 16:19 (NKJV)

19 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, **nor take a bribe**, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

Deuteronomy 27:25 (NKJV)

25 **'Cursed is the one who takes a bribe'** to slay an innocent person.' "And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

There are 11 descriptions here of the one who may approach the Lord and have worshipful fellowship with Him.

Slide # 13

1. Walks uprightly
2. Works righteousness
3. Speaks truth
4. Does not backbite (slander)
5. Does not wrong his neighbor
6. Does not reproach his friend
7. Despises a vile person
8. Honors those who fear the Lord
9. Keeps his oath
10. Does not charge usury
11. Does not accept bribes

In short, the true worshiper is a person who lives in obedience to the revealed will of God as a way of life. This is the person who can abide in God's presence in sweet fellowship with Him.

And then David concludes this Psalm with, "He who does these things shall never be moved." A person with this kind of character shows that their position with the Lord is firmly established.

The way this terminology of never being moved is used by David throughout the Psalms is telling.

Slide # 14**Psalm 16:8 (NKJV)**

8 I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand **I shall not be moved.**

Psalm 21:7 (NKJV)

7 For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the mercy of the Most High **he shall not be moved.**

Slide # 15**Psalm 62:2 (NKJV)**

2 He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; **I shall not be greatly moved.**

Psalm 62:6 (NKJV)

6 He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; **I shall not be moved.**

The true worshiper is one who lives a life of obedience and in that position he shall never be moved. There is absolute security there before the Lord. He will be in fellowship with the LORD forever!

Slide # 16**1 John 2:17 (NKJV)**

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; **but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

I read a story about a man who spent some time in England. While he was there, a man introduced him to another businessman. The business man blurted out, "Is this young man all "O and O?" The man who had introduced him said, "What do you mean by "O and O?". The response was, "Is he "out and out" for Christ?"

That is a great question: Are we all out for Christ? That defines true worshipers who worship in spirit and in truth.

God help us to be among them! It is they who will dwell in the presence of the Lord forever. They shall never be moved!