



March 4, 2018  
“Right Worship”  
Ecclesiastes 5  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

The Bible teaches that it’s not only important to worship the *right* God, but it’s also important to worship the *right* God the *right* way. In Ecclesiastes 5, Solomon wrote about the right way and the wrong way to worship God. Worship is not just about singing, although that’s part of it; worship is living a God-ward life of reverence and devotion to God. Solomon also wrote about the right protocol for coming into the house of God. In this message, Pastor Gary provides a practical look at how we should prepare ourselves for meeting with God when we come to church.

### Worship And The House Of God

1. Worship is living a life of reverence and devotion toward God.
2. We are to ascribe supreme worth and value to God in our actions and our words.
3. Before King Solomon built the Temple or “*house of God*,” there was a Tabernacle, which was made to be transported from place to place by the Israelites during their wilderness wandering.
4. King David was inspired by the Lord to make the plans for the Temple, but he was told that his son, Solomon, would be the one who would have the privilege and responsibility to lead the building project.
5. It took seven years to build the Temple, and it was constructed by 183,000 men!
  - a. **1 Kings 5:13-16** – “*King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel – thirty thousand men. He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, as well as*

- thirty-three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen.”*
- b. **1 Kings 6:7** – *“In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.”*
  - c. The first Temple stood until 586BC, when it was destroyed by the Babylonians who besieged Jerusalem.
  - d. The Temple was rebuilt during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, only to be destroyed in 70AD by the Romans.
6. Subsequent to the destruction of the Temple, wherever there were 10 or more Jewish men, a synagogue was built.
  7. The synagogue was the place where the Torah would be read, and God would be worshiped.
  8. A local church would be the Christian equivalent to the Synagogue, which means that Cornerstone Chapel is a house of God.
  9. God dwells in the church, but that doesn't mean he is restricted to the physical building.
    - a. **Acts 17:24** – *“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.”*
    - b. **Matthew 18:20** – *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*
    - c. **1 Timothy 1:17** – *“... the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God...”*
  10. The protocol that Solomon wrote about had nothing to do with “outward” things such as style of music, what people wear, “high church”<sup>1</sup> or “low church.”<sup>2</sup>
  11. Solomon's focus was on the inward aspects of the worship of God, which is of far greater concern to God than the style of clothing worshipers wear.
  12. God is more concerned about the attitude of our heart and mind than he is concerned about external things.
  13. **1 Samuel 16:7b** – *“The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”*

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<sup>1</sup> A more formal style of church that would include vestments, robes, liturgy, etc.

<sup>2</sup> A more informal style that would include casual clothing, and the absence of liturgy, etc.

14. **Ecclesiastes 5:1a** - *“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God.”*
- The literal meaning of this verse is that a person needed to slow down and watch where they were going because of the uneven distance between each step.
  - The southern steps <sup>3</sup> leading to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem were intentionally created with offset steps of 12” and 35” so that greater care was required when a person ascended to the entrance of the Temple.
  - The worshiper was required to slow down and contemplate where they were going!
15. Pastor Gary said: “We need to understand from the implications of the literal text... that the idea of coming to church - coming to the house of God - means [that] we slow [things] down, [and] contemplate where we’re going, why we are coming to the house of God. [We should examine our] hearts. And we come in an approach to God [in a] worshipful [way]. ... So that when we enter the house God, where there is sin, there is confessing to God. Where there is joy, there is rejoicing. Where there is sorrow, there is praying.”
16. Pastor Gary said: “You see, we are living in a day [in which] our culture has a low view of authority. It used to be that teachers, parents, coaches, police officers, elected officials [were generally respected]. ... The culture has trended away from really respecting authority, and, if we’re not careful, the Church [will be] prone to carry that diminished view of authority into the house of God. ... [We need to stop and consider that] God is holy, God is majestic, [and] God is awesome in all his ways. [And we need to remember] that we are coming into his presence when we come into the house of God, and he deserves our utmost respect and reverence and worship.”
17. The figurative meaning to *“guarding your steps,”* is that we must remember that we can’t live one way on Sundays and with hypocrisy or duplicity the other six days of the week!
- 2 John vs. 6a** - *“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.”*
  - Colossians 1:10** - *“... we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work...”*

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<sup>3</sup> Archeologists uncovered the southern steps in 1967.

## Worship Is About A Reverential Attitude Toward God

18. Pastor Gary said: “[Part] of having a reverential attitude toward God in coming to the house of God, is coming to the house of God on time. ... I think a lot of the reason why [some people] are late for church is because [they] are lazy. ... When you go to a ballgame, you’re not late. ... If you were invited to dinner at some superstars’ house, you’d be there on time. ... If you have to catch a flight to an important place, you’re going to make sure you have extra time to get through security... So, why can’t we get to God’s house on time?”

## Worship Is About Listening Much and Saying Little

19. **Ecclesiastes 5:1b** - *“Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.”*  
a. Pastor Gary said the basic meaning of this Hebrew word for listen, is that we must take heed and follow the will and ways of the Lord.  
b. **James 1:22** - *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”*
20. **Ecclesiastes 5:2** - *“Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.”*
21. Pastor Gary said: “Basically, the ‘*sacrifice of fools*’ is the hasty speech of broken promises. [Solomon wrote] about how making the vows that you don’t keep is the ‘*sacrifice of fools*.’ Being rash with your words is the “*sacrifice of fools*.’ Offering empty promises is the ‘*sacrifice of fools*.’”
22. Pastor Gary encouraged us to avoid the temptation to offer the “deal maker prayer” to God.
23. Pastor Gary encouraged us to remember the importance and sacredness of keeping our marriage vows, which were made in his presence.
24. **Psalms 15:4** - *“... [God] honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts.”*
25. **Deuteronomy 23:23** - *“Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.”*

## Worship Is About Giving

26. **Ecclesiastes 5:6** - *“Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest*

to the temple messenger, 'My vow was a mistake.' Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?"

27. **Deuteronomy 16:16-17** - "Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. **No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed.** Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you." (Emphasis added)
28. Pastor Gary said: "Now, again, [coming to the house of God] can include [bringing] an offering. Yes, I do believe in the basic principle of tithing: giving a tenth of [our] income, joyfully celebrating with God and God's people [all] that he's done, [in that] he's lavished his goodness and given his blessings [to us]. And so, the least we can do is to return a portion of it as an expression of worship. That is an aspect, but don't default with the word, giving, [thinking only] in terms of money. [In the same way], don't default with the word, worship, and think it only means singing. Giving is a disposition. It's an attitude of the heart. It's the idea that when you come to the house of God, it's the one place that you're not coming to get; you're coming to give. You are coming to offer. You are coming to worship the Lord. You are coming to surrender your thoughts, your heart, [and] your sin. You are coming to worship and celebrate him because of your joys and [his] blessings. You are coming to give him your very [life]. It's all about giving!"
29. **Ecclesiastes 5:7b** - "Therefore stand in awe of God."

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read **Ecclesiastes 5:1-7** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. How did Pastor Gary's teaching change or support your understanding of what it means to worship?
3. Spend time talking about the experiences of the people in your group regarding "high church" and "low church." (See #10 above)
4. Read and discuss **1 Samuel 16:7b**. (See #11 through #13 above)
5. Spend time talking about the way God designed the steps leading up to the Temple, and how it forced worshipers to slow down. (See #14 through #17 above)
6. Allow the people in your group to share their thoughts about what it means to have a reverential attitude toward God. (See #18 above)

7. How would you rate your listening skills when it comes to worship? (See #19 through #21 above)
8. Spend time talking about what it means to offer a “deal maker prayer” to God? (See #22 above)
9. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about what it means to give in worship. (See #28 above)
10. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).