

## CREDO 11 — Worship

I want to start by saying that there are THREE things that make Metro tick —

A PASSION FOR: the WORSHIP of God  
A PASSION FOR: the WORD of God  
A PASSION FOR: the MISSION of God

And we trust that by the Lord's enabling we will see maturity and increased fruitfulness in each of them.

**Tonight** we are going to deal with the subject of worship.

**Our theology of worship** is crucial because it informs ALL of Biblical Living. Follow me —

**Our passion for the WORD** of God flows from a passion to WORSHIP God because the God whom we worship — His nature and attributes; His redeeming love; everything about Him that makes Him worthy of our worship; is revealed to us in His Word. The very expression of our worship is prescribed, defined and modeled in His Word.

**Our passion for the Mission of God** flows from a passion to see God receive worship. Turn with me to **Revelation 5:9**

*<sup>9</sup>And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,*

Our mission is to see men and women redeemed to the very thing for which they were made— the worship of God.

**Tonight we are going to set forth** our basic **theology of worship**

### **I. EVERYONE IS A WORSHIPPER**

**QUOTE: Harold Best** — in his book **Unceasing Worship (page 10)** states his thesis saying: *“As God eternally outpours within his triune self, and as we are created in his image, it follows that we too are continuous outpourers, incurably so.”*

**WORSHIP is the central fact of our existence.** Worship drives every other fact. As we read **Genesis 1-3** and **Romans 1** we find that at the very core of the story of creation, fall, redemption, new creation, eternal judgment and infinite loss lays the subject of worship! In fact, the theme of worship is a major thread that weaves through the entire storyline of the Bible — and through every major doctrine. One of the beautiful things in our CREDO series is seeing the unity of truth in Scripture.

In our very first CREDO study on the doctrine of the **TRINITY** we learned that there is one God, who eternally exists in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each fully and equally God. We saw that within the Trinity there is a ceaseless outpouring of love, communication, and joy.

In our CREDO study on the doctrine of **IMAGO DEI** we learned that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. As such we are, **by creation**, ceaseless worshippers pouring ourselves out to and for someone or something.

In our CREDO study on the doctrine of **SIN** we learned that through sin our worship is bent toward created things rather than God who is our Creator. (**Romans 1** specifically **v.25**)

**QUOTE: John Calvin** — *Every one of us is, even from his mother’s womb, a master craftsman of idols.*

In our CREDO study on the doctrine of **COVENANT** we saw how God, despite being utterly betrayed and rejected by man, has passionately and relentlessly sought out man for the purpose of relationship with Himself.

In the doctrine of **INCARNATION**, the **CROSS** and **RESURRECTION** we saw God come into human flesh (fully God, fully man); live a sinless life; die in

our place for our sins; and rise from the grave in order to redeem us and save us from our great enemies of sin and death and set us free us to worship our redeemer God.

**AWESOME** — Each member of the Trinity is involved in this incredible romance of redemption. The Father sent His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Out of His perfect love for the Father, the Son was gladly sent; and out of His infinite love for us He laid down His life to pay the penalty for our sin and three days later rose from the grave conquering death and hell. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin; illuminates our hearts to the truth of the Gospel and regenerates the repentant sinner. Then, in newness of life the redeemed saint **worships his redeemer God** — who will eventually usher in a New Heaven and a New Earth — where the redeemed will **forever** enjoy perfect life, perfect communion with God, and perfectly express worship to his Creator and Redeemer.

*Revelation 22:3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.*

**AGAIN** — **Harold Best**, *Unceasing Worship* (page 17-18)

*“We begin with one fundamental fact about worship: at this very moment, and for as long as this world endures, everybody inhabiting it is bowing down and serving something or someone.... a person — an institution — an idea — a fallen angel — **or God through Christ.**”*

**THIS IS HUGE** — Not only is everyone a worshipper — but everyone is **shaped** by that which he or she worships.

**QUOTE: G. K. Beale (We Become What We Worship)** — *“What you revere you resemble for your ruin or restoration.”*

And depending on the **object** of your worship you will grow more righteous or more evil. No one is exempt! All of us are unceasing worshipers and we will be worshippers forever. **Eternity will be the timeless extension and experience of** what you surrender to and worship here on earth. Those

who surrender to the truth and worship God the Creator through His Son Jesus Christ will know infinite gain. They love and worship Jesus in this world and they will live in the light of His presence forever. BY CONTRAST — Those who *exchange the truth about God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator* will suffer infinite loss. The Bible speaks of hell as outer darkness. The only ones who will experience that are those who in this life **LOVED the darkness and hated the light.**

So we have seen that

- 1.) We were made to be worshippers — *at this very moment, and for as long as this world endures, everybody inhabiting it is bowing down and serving something or someone*
- 2.) We've been redeemed to worship — God has unfailingly pursued man to redeem and restore man to personal relationship with God resulting in the worship of God
- 3.) Not only is everyone a worshipper — but everyone is **shaped** by that which he or she worships — and is growing more righteous or more evil.

**At this point** in our study of worship we need to address the subject of idolatry.

## **II. Idolatry**

**QUOTE: David Powlison** (the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation) — *“Idolatry is by far the most frequently discussed problem in the Scriptures.”*

Though it is by far the most frequently discussed problem in the entire Bible it is also — in the western world — one of the most misunderstood concepts of in the Bible because in our culture idolatry conjures up mental images of people living in primitive cultures of millennia gone by bowing down to a statue and sacrificing to it. The Bible tells us that the essence of idolatry is that of corrupted worship in contrast with true worship.

We closed our study on the doctrine of Creation by working through **Romans 1**. There in **verses 18-25** we are given the Biblical definition (a working definition) of idolatry.

***Romans 1:25** they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

True worship is living to the glory of God, the Creator. We were **created** to worship God and to enjoy and steward creation to the glory of God and for the glory of God. When you chose to not worship the True and Living God you **will** worship someone or something else.

**QUOTE: Timothy Keller** — *Since we were made to worship, we cannot eliminate God without creating God-substitutes.*

At its core — idolatry is the inversion and perversion of true worship — it is putting something created in the place of God the creator. Idolatry is when a created thing is glorified; becomes the source of our identity and our joy, the object of our affection.

There are consequences to eliminating God as the object of our worship and replacing Him with God-substitutes.

**QUOTE: C.S.Lewis** — *Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.*

There are two over-arching consequences to idolatry

- 1.** Deception — "their thinking became futile and their hearts were darkened" **Romans 1:21**
- 2.** Slavery — "they worshipped and served" created things. **Romans 1:25**

Whatever we worship we will serve, because worship and service are always inextricably bound together. (Bob Dylan song from the album "Slow Train Coming" *You're Gonna Have To Serve Somebody*. There's a line that

says “It may be the devil, or it may be the Lord but you’re gonna have to serve somebody.”) If any of you have listened to The Police — there’s a tune on the Synchronicity album called “Wrapped Around Your Finger”. There’s a line in the song that says “you’ll find your servant is your master — You’ll be wrapped around my finger.”  
The thing you thought was serving you — actually becomes your master)

**HUGE INSIGHT** — The man who wrote the Gospel of John, the book of Revelation and three letters in the New Testament ended the very last line of his first letter by saying, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*” That’s it! The letter just ends right there. That seems a strange way to end a letter, especially one written to men and women professing faith in Jesus. But there’s a critical and essential reason for such a sober closing — Idolatry is at the root of every sin. **Martin Luther** (in his commentary on the Ten Commandments) makes the observation that the Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20:1-4](#)) begin with two commandments against idolatry. Our infinitely wise creator places them first because He understands that if we worship Him, we won’t worship sex. If we aren’t worshipping sex, we won’t commit adultery. If we aren’t worshipping possessions, we won’t steal or covet. If we aren’t worshipping people’s perceptions of us, we won’t lie (lies always serve to preserve ourselves). If we don’t worship unrighteous anger, we won’t commit murder. If we don’t worship our jobs, we will never disregard the **principle** of the Sabbath.

Here’s the slippery nature of idolatry — **Most** of the time we make idols of things that are not necessarily bad. Idolatry is making a **good** thing a **god** thing. It is living for that **good** thing **rather than** the God who made it. When that happens that good thing becomes a **bad** thing.

**HUGE INSIGHT** — **Idols always present themselves as something they are not.** In [Romans 1:25](#) Paul says that man *exchanged the truth about God for the lie*. All idolatry is a variation on the theme that someone or something other than the God of the Bible is actually able to function as God and Savior.

1. Idols present themselves as functional saviors.

**EXAMPLE:** A woman wanting to be a mother is a **good** thing. But some women make that good thing into a **god** thing. They view being childless as their hell. For some women a **baby** becomes **their savior** — Saving them from a childless hell and delivering them into the “Heavenly” kingdom of motherhood and family.  
Again — A child is not a bad thing. A child is a gift from the Lord — but it can also become an idol.

**EXAMPLE:** For a single man to desire a wife is a good desire. The book of Proverbs tells us that that *He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord (Prov. 18:22)*. But some men view singleness as their hell, and marriage as their heaven. When they think in those terms, they do not see a woman as a God-given helper they don't see a woman as a God-given helper moving them to worship God as the gracious giver. **Instead** — that woman becomes their functional savior — and he worships her as such.

**2.** Idols tell you that you can only find your identity in them, rather than in Jesus.

Life is built on your identity. The world outside of Jesus finds its identity in what it does and what it owns. When we meet Jesus that value system — that identity — is exchanged. We find our identity in Jesus. The New Testament teaches us that Jesus IS *our life (Col. 3:4)*; *our peace (Eph. 2:14)*; our *hope of glory (Col. 1:27)*.

**EXAMPLE:** It's not a bad thing for a single mother to want a man who loves Jesus to love her; marry her and help her raise her child(ren). That's a good thing. But if she sees herself as a single mother more than a redeemed woman — she is going to look for a functional savior named “husband” — and she will look to him as the means of becoming a better Christian and giving her an identity as a loved woman.

**EXAMPLE:** Being in ministry or having a position of leadership in the church is a good thing.

*1 Timothy 3:1 If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.*

But that good thing becomes a god thing — an idol — when it is becomes the source of your identity, rather than Jesus. For some men (in the deepest part of who they are) being called “pastor” is more important than being called Christian.

**QUOTE: Oswald Chambers** — *"The greatest competitor to devotion to Jesus is service for him."*

Many professing Christian men and women seem to be worshipers of God until that which defines their identity is taken, removed or altered. When that happens they either hate God, or fall apart. Tim Keller — in his book *The Reason for God* talks about the mother whose identity is in being a mother. Her children grow up and leave home and she's devastated because her idols are gone and her identity is taken. Or, if her children hit a season of rebellion and unbelief, and the mother says something along the lines of — *Everything I've lived for is in vain*. If you are living for Jesus nothing is in vain. Can you, will you, and should you experience genuine heartache over what your children are going to experience in their season of rebellion? absolutely! But has your life been in vain? Absolutely not! Your identity is wrapped up in Jesus. You were a good mom because you loved Jesus and loved your kids for Jesus and His glory— not because you found your identity in raising good Christian kids.

I WANT YOU TO BEAR IN MIND the nature of idolatry when I tell you this — One of the great tragedies in modern church culture is preachers and theological systems that allow and even encourage you to maintain a treasure other than Jesus. They do this by essentially presenting Jesus to men and women as a savior who will give them their idols. *Come to Jesus, he'll make you successful. Come to Jesus, he'll make you healthy. Come to Jesus, he'll fix your marriage. Come to Jesus, he'll save your family. Come to Jesus, he'll save your job.* Please don't misunderstand me. Jesus does



save. Jesus does heal. Jesus does provide. But He does so as the sovereign Lord who is the object of your worship — not as *the great idol giver*.

Here's the problem. When Jesus fails to give idols (not IF but WHEN, because God says that He alone is to be worshipped), those who have been sold the *idol-giver Jesus* start asking, *Where's God? Where is God when it hurts? I thought God loved me!* As a result, some walk away from any practice of Christian faith. Others go looking for other religions — happy to have a demon give them their idol. And please know this — demons do, and demons will give idols. Demons don't care who or what you worship as long as it's not the Trinitarian God of the Bible.

**Idolatry destroys the people we love most because idols lie** — they are saviors who can't save. They can never be life to you; never give you meaning, purpose, encouragement, and significance. Ladies, if you want to destroy you husband; men, if you want to destroy you wife; just put on them all of the responsibilities that only God can undertake. Make them your source of joy; make them your source of value; make them your source of meaning, purpose, encouragement, and significance. Lay all of that on them and watch them crumble under your unmet expectations. Ladies, please know that your husband can never be to you that which only God can be! Parents, if you want to destroy your children, make them into little gods who exist to bless you. They can't live up to being your replacement for God and they will crumble under the weight of being that to you.

The things God gives to us (family, work, health, friendship, pleasure, leisure, hobby, etc.) are intended to be a means of worship — not objects of worship. They are intended to be the place where God is glorified — not objects that you glorify.

Are there things in your life that could be a means of worship but have instead become objects of worship?

### **III. What is worship?**

Worship is more than singing songs. Worship in the New Testament in the

local church takes two forms:

*Proskuneo* — *Pros* = turn to face — *Kuneo* — to kiss. Turning to face in order to kiss. The musical component of our gathering is intended to provide be the context for proskuneo — to facilitate proskuneo

*latreia* or *leitourgeo*, which is ministering, or doing work and service in the world in the name of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

When the local church meets the redeemed should be given the opportunity to *proskuneo*. But corporate worship doesn't stop there. Within the local church men and women worship Jesus by serving the redeemed; by serving those our savior is longing to redeem; by serving those who need to be redeemed.

But worship transcends a location and a specific gathering of people. We gather to worship and then we scatter on mission living with God to and for His glory

**DEFINITION** — “Worship is living our life individually and corporately as continuous living sacrifices **to the glory of a person or thing.**” (Vintage Jesus Chapter 9)

The Bible makes a clear and strong connection between **glory** and **worship**

**Romans 11:36–12:1** “To him be **the glory** forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

**GLORY** means weightiness; importance; preeminence, priority. It is that which is our greatest treasure; our deepest longing. The thing to which we ascribe glory is the **object** of our worship — it is in effect our real god. **FIRST** we hold a person or thing in the place of glory. **THEN** we worship that person or thing. We worship that person or thing we hold in glory **by**

---

<sup>1</sup> Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods (Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears)

**way of making sacrifices.**

**MAKE THIS CONNECTION** with me — That which we truly live to glorify and worship is the recipient of our greatest sacrifices. Jesus put it like this — *Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* In light of that the appropriate question is — *To what to whom do you sacrifice the greatest amount of your time; energy; body; money; mental energy; devotion and passion?* **EVERYONE** is giving those things to someone or something. Whatever or whoever it is, is your God (Big G or Little g).

**QUOTE: Harold Best** — *Worship is the continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do and all that I can ever become....* (Page 18, Italics in original). If you are not pouring out to the True and Living God — you have a Little “g” god. And as we have already seen — that makes you a Big “L” loser in this life and in eternity to come. Some people pour out all that they are, all that they do and all that they can ever become for **financial and material gain** (lust of the eyes). In Biblical times that was a Little “g” god named Mammon. Some people pour out all that they are, all that they do and all that they can ever become for **sensual pleasure** (lust of the flesh). In Biblical times that was a Little “g” god named Molech or Eshtart. Some people pour out all that they are, all that they do and all that they can ever become for **Success — recognition — power** (Pride of life). In Biblical times that was a Little “g” god named Ba-al.

**By contrast** — The Christian is someone who pours out all that they are to and for Jesus.

**REMEMBER** — **FIRST** we hold a person or thing in the place of glory. **THEN** — We worship that person or thing we hold in glory **by way of making sacrifices.**

In the worship of the creator/redeemer God — **man pours out** and **God receives.** In idolatry (the worship of created things instead of the creator/redeemer) — **Self is the intended receiver.**

**HUGE** — Narcissism and idolatry are inextricably bound to each other. You

serve idols because, <sup>1</sup> you don't want to serve the Living God because such a life centers on God and His glory rather than you and your glory; <sup>2</sup> you choose and serve your false gods because you perceive them as serving you! It's ALL ABOUT you. Sadly — in the end that person ends up as the slave of those things intended to serve and gratify self. (Old Police song — *you will find your servant is your master*)

## REVIEW

We've **determined** that EVERYONE is a worshipper

We've **defined** idolatry

We've **defined** worship

## IV. Biblical Worship transforms the SECULAR into the SACRED

Secular is the from the Latin meaning "world." It was used in to denote the divide between the "religious" and the "Non-Religious." Those who spent their lives in religious service were spoken of in terms of their "sacred vocation" while those who worked 9-5 jobs were said to have a "secular vocation."

As we have seen — there is a very real sense in which all of the world is religious. It is filled with altars where people sacrifice to their master passions.

**QUOTE: Harold Best** — *"Authentic worship is a continuous outpouring of all that we are and can ever hope to become in light of the saving work of Christ. It reaches into every quarter of our living, **informing all of our actions** and safeguarding them within the arena of Spirit, truth and sacrificial living."* (Page 111)

### HERE IS AN AMAZING CONCEPT —

***IF** Worship is the continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do and all that I can ever become in light of the saving work of Christ —  
And that worship reaches into every quarter of our living, **informing all of our actions** and safeguarding them within the arena of Spirit, truth and sacrificial living."*

**THEN** practically every moment and practically every arena of life and culture becomes a potential place of worship and a possible act of worship — of pouring out to the true and living God!

Suddenly the great divide between the **secular** and the **sacred** is broken down. The college classroom — that has been reserved as an altar of humanism — can become a place of worship where the redeemed can pour out in worship to their redeemer as they study, work on assignments, and love those around them to and for the glory of Jesus.

The stage at a jazz club becomes a place of worship. Back in November of 2010 I went with Danny Donnelly and Brian Helvick to a jazz club near Oakland named “Yoshi’s” to watch and listen to a drummer named Brian Blade. Brian Blade loves Jesus. The musicians supporting him were called “The Fellowship Band.” Here’s what I tweeted:

*“watching a man transform the secular into the sacred - the stage at Yoshi's has become an altar — talent is being poured out to and for Jesus.”*

The most unlikely places become SACRED because they are devoted to pouring out *all that I am, all that I do and all that I can ever become* to and for Jesus. **That means** even the office cubicle; the laundry room; the kitchen; the car pool; a surf spot; a snowboarding spot become sacred — places where redeemed men and women worship their redeemer.

**EXAMPLE: Sandy Ochsner** — Her house was her place of worship every Friday night. For almost three years she hosted and fed around 100 high schoolers who came to pray and study and fellowship. All that she did was pouring out to Jesus. It was a joy for her to think that somehow she could bless Jesus by providing a place for those kids to fall in love with Jesus.

**There’s a FLIP SIDE** to this same truth. Places that are associated with — and set aside for the **SACRED** activity of worship — **can be SECULAR**. Tragically, many churches can be filled with secular activity! Secular

because the activities undertaken within it's walls are not truly the *outpouring of all that person is, all that person does and all that person can ever become — unto to Jesus — and for Jesus*. Otherwise good people — doing otherwise good things — **but not** as an act of worship in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ. **They GIVE** — because they are told that it is a right thing to do — a good thing to do — an urgent thing to do — ends up in some benefit to themselves. **They SING** — because they like the songs or the leader of the band has charisma and gets them excited. **They SERVE** — because they like kids or have kids in the children's church or they have friends serving with them. **They go** on mission trips because it makes them feel good. **NONE of that is worship**. It is in fact SECULAR! It is the world value system.

**CHALLENGE TO METRO** — All that we **are** and all that we do **must be shaped and defined by** GENUINE WORSHIP. We must never allow Metro to be a place where the time and energy and treasures of men and women are **less than** a pouring out all that we are, all that we do and all that we can ever become — unto to Jesus — and for Jesus.

The beauty of genuine worship in the local church (within Metro) begins with the individuals within Metro. Worship is first and foremost a personal transaction between the individual redeemed man or woman and their redeemer. Individuals who are worshipping Jesus in their devotional reading of the Word. Worshipping Jesus by trusting Him and obeying Him. That life of worship is then expressed in marriage and family relationships, friendships, educational or work environment.

**THAT LIFE OF WORSHIP** translates into worshipping the Lord in the context of serving at church. The man or woman who is a genuine worshipper outside of these walls we be a genuine worshipper within them! You look at their lives here and you can see that the **time** they have given; the **talent** they have used; the **treasure** they have given; the preparation and energy involved in their task look so much like Mary's alabaster box of precious ointment ([John 12:3](#)) — broken open and poured out on Jesus with no concern of ever recovering it. Mary and her alabaster flask of precious anointing oil is a great diagnostic picture to put alongside of ourselves

individually — and corporately when we gather.

I want to leave you with a series of questions designed for us to bring our hearts before the Lord. During the remainder of the week revisit them privately with the Lord; with your spouse; or your children or friends.

*Who or what is my Lord — ruling over my life and determining how I live?*

*Who or what is my Judge — whose approval I live for?*

*Where do I give the first fruits of my wealth?*

*Where do I give the first fruits of my time?*

*What people and things take the majority of my life?*

*What do I plan and pray for?*

*Deep down in my heart who or what do I love, cherish, treasure, long for the most?*

*Deep down in my heart who or what do I despise and hate the most?*

*Who or what makes me happiest? Why?*

*Who or what makes me saddest? Why?*

*How do I define myself? (especially when introducing myself to others?)*

*Which things in my life that could be a means of worship have become objects of worship? (work, family, health, friendship, pleasure, leisure, hobby, etc.)*

