

Worship

True Worshipers • February 8, 2026

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time

- Pray that Brookwood would be a church where people can be real and meet Jesus.
- Ask God to help you bring your whole life into His presence.
- Ask God to let your story of His grace be a light to someone else.

Scripture Reading:

Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus told her, “I AM the Messiah!”

John 4:21-26 (NLT)

A. Introduction

You never really hear about love seminars or love workshops. You hear about love songs. Love poems. Love letters.

Because love isn't a neutral concept. Love creates. Love reveals. No one writes art about something they feel nothing for.

That's why someone can write a line like,
“Take my hand, take my whole life too.”

That line only makes sense if love demands more than admiration.

Or another song that simply says,
“All of me loves all of you.”

No footnotes. No qualifications. No need to explain the technicalities. Love speaks in the language of fullness and devotion.

And then there's the honest one,
"I would do anything for love..."

Every human knows there's usually a line somewhere. And that's why worship is never neutral either.

We often talk about worship as if it's passive, something that just happens to us. Music plays. Words are sung. A moment is created. But biblically, worship is never treated that way.

Worship always reveals something.
It reveals what we love.
It reveals what we trust.
And it reveals where we draw the line.

Throughout Scripture and church history, renewal doesn't begin with better music or clearer structure. It begins when God reveals our hearts.

Worship intensifies not when comfort is preserved, but when truth disrupts it. But we sometimes seek to avoid the truth and stay comfortable.

Which is why Jesus doesn't create a heart of worship in the Samaritan woman in John 4 by soothing this woman. He does it by telling her the truth.

And what He reveals doesn't drive her away. It draws her into something deeper.

So if worship is revealing, the real question this passage forces us to ask isn't whether Jesus can possibly meet our thirst, but whether we're willing to give Him all of us.

B. True Worshipers

1. Stop MANAGING your WORSHIP.

(John 4:7-22. C/R: Isaiah 29:13; Hebrews 4:12-13)

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" Jesus

replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.” “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?” Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.” “Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.” “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

John 4:7-18 (NLT)

Jesus begins this encounter with a simple request: *Give me a drink*. But this is a much larger request than you think, because Jesus and this woman are not from the same place and live very different lives. So what seems like a casual encounter gets pretty deep, pretty fast.

The woman keeps things practical. Jesus makes things personal.

She talks about wells, buckets, and water sources. Jesus talks about thirst that never goes away.

And eventually, Jesus names her life.

Most of us are comfortable with a version of worship where we control the distance. We decide how close Jesus is allowed to get. We let Him encourage us, but not confront us. We invite Him to meet needs, but not to name patterns. We want Him to refresh us, but not to reveal us.

And it isn’t only with Jesus that we do this; we also do this with His people. We are comfortable keeping things surface level. We don’t let people in; we avoid the crowds; we avoid getting connected; we manage our reputation not only online but also in person. We are all brand managers, and the brand is us.

So we manage worship. We keep the conversation safe. We keep God at a respectable distance. We keep worship from touching what actually sustains us day to day.

But Jesus refuses to be managed. Remember, Jesus, at the beginning of this passage, is *wearied*. He willingly took a difficult journey to meet this woman's deepest need. Jesus is willing to go further than we are sometimes willing to be taken.

The Lord said: These people approach me with their speeches to honor me with lip-service, yet their hearts are far from me, and human rules direct their worship of me.

Isaiah 29:13 (CSB)

He doesn't shame this woman. He doesn't humiliate her. He doesn't expose her to punish her. He tells her the truth.

As long as worship is managed, it stays shallow. And Jesus loves her too much to leave the encounter there.

Not only does Jesus meet our deepest needs, but Jesus will also drive to a person's deepest sins.

We keep the conversations surface-level, but Jesus isn't comfortable with that relationship. I think this is why some of us struggle with worship. Jesus is taking us deeper, and we know He is.

Are there places in your life where you are afraid to give Jesus access? Intimacy is a basic and essential need that we all have, but intimacy costs us.

How did this Samaritan woman respond?

"Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?" Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews.

John 4:19-22 (NLT)

She acknowledges the truth of the statement and pivots, she turns to her religious roots, she tries to hide.

Jesus confronted her management and she pivots to change the subject.

But Jesus shares with her that God is changing the venue in worship. One day, Jesus says, Jerusalem or the mountain won't be the concern. We will have a new venue.

2. Bring it ALL.

(John 4:23-26. C/R: Psalm 51:6)

“But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus told her, “I AM the Messiah!”

John 4:23-26 (NLT)

After naming her life, Jesus defines what He is actually after.

The time is coming—and is now here—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Not spirit without truth: emotion without repentance or right belief about God.

Not truth without spirit. Internal, spiritual worship that originates and is empowered by the Holy Spirit living in us.

Jesus is not asking for intensity. He’s asking for wholeness. He wants all of us.

True worship isn’t giving God your best moments. It’s bringing your whole life into His presence: the best and the worst.

This is where many of us hesitate.

We believe Jesus can forgive sin, but we’re not always convinced He can be trusted with the things we use to cope. The habits we rely on or the patterns we justify.

So, we bring worship songs, but not our wounds. We bring our right beliefs but not our harmful habits.

We bring Sunday versions of ourselves to God, thinking that maybe He didn’t notice Friday night or Monday morning.

But Jesus does not gloss over pain, shame, or consequence. He confronts them because He intends to cleanse us, not condemn. Jesus often wants us to experience freedom more than you do.

Surely you desire integrity in the inner self, and you teach me wisdom deep within.

Psalm 51:6 (CSB)

When people bring addiction, grief, trauma, fear, control, and brokenness into the light of Christ, that is worship in spirit and truth. This idea is so new to this culture that Jesus was bringing.

Jesus is not asking for a grand temple, a beautiful building, or the right music, while we want to offer all of those things. The thing that God is looking for is people who have surrendered to Him and really understand who He is.

Jesus is not asking this woman to deny her story. He's asking her to bring it to God. All of it, even the parts she may not want to share with others.

I think in today's churches, there are many that understand and accept that Jesus can meet our deepest needs, but we also need to remember that Jesus does not just cover over our sins; He sees exactly who we are and paid for our sins. And that Jesus isn't shaming you, He wants you to get freedom.

Jesus is not glossing over the pain, shame, hurt, and consequences of your sin. He desires to cleanse you and give you something new, and every promise of God is yes in Him.

Thursday Night Care Mention – Many of you in this room may not feel like any place on Earth exists like this anymore. But I will tell you, this place is here. Our Groups ministry does a really good job of this, but let me tell you what happened. I was at the launch of our new programming on Thursday Nights, which we are calling Thursday Night Care. I heard stories of folks sharing their issues with codependency, adultery, drug and alcohol abuse, broken families, anxiety, PTSD, military trauma, heavy grief and more. I was filled with so much joy hearing these stories. I was filled with joy knowing that I get to be a pastor at a church where people really do feel welcome, and we leave the judgment to Jesus because we recognize that when He is the standard, we all fall short, but He exchanges His life for ours.

If you know someone or are looking for a space to be in that type of community, every Thursday Night starting at 5:45. Real community, real resourcing for real issues and a place where everyone recognizes a real Savior.

I will love the Lord with ALL my heart, ALL my soul, ALL my mind, and ALL my strength.
Deuteronomy 6.

3. Drop the JAR.

(John 4:28-30. C/R: Galatians 2:20-21; Hebrews 10:12-14)

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

John 4:28-30 (NLT)

And then something remarkable happens. After this encounter, the text tells us the woman leaves her water jar behind. That detail matters.

That jar represented survival. Routine. Control. Self-sufficiency. It was one of the many parts of her life that she managed. She knew that when she went in the afternoon, she wouldn't face as many jeers or be confronted with much shame. It was more likely that she would not be taken advantage of by some despicable man who wants to harm her. It was how she met her needs without depending on anyone else. It was how she got through the day.

And she drops it.

She drops it because she's been found.

This woman is not the seeker in the story. Jesus is.

She wasn't searching for the Messiah. She was managing pain, shame, and a complicated life. And Jesus crossed boundaries: ethnic, religious, and moral boundaries to find her anyway.

Worship does not begin with our pursuit of God. It begins with God's pursuit of us.

And when grace finds her, it frees her.

She stops hiding. She starts telling the truth. She runs toward others instead of away from them. She moves from managing to freedom. She moves from protection to overflowing life.

Jesus tells her everything she has ever done, and instead of driving her into shame, it restores her. She is not crushed by the truth. She is liberated by it.

Some of you in this very room might need to hear this. Everything in this world and in you is telling you that if you come clean, if you ask someone for help, if you bow the knee to Jesus, you are weak. You will experience shame, but this is not the story of Jesus.

True worship is not a performance. It is a response.

And some of us are exhausted because we're trying to hold onto jars that grace is inviting us to set down.

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

John 4:28-30 (NLT)

Jesus, revealing her sin, did not drive her further into shame. He healed her relationship with her Heavenly Father in that moment and restored her instantaneously. She was regenerated and filled to overflowing, and she could not help but overflow into praise and evangelism.

She dropped her jar. But she didn't drop it because Jesus told her to; but instead, because she didn't need her jar anymore. Remember what Jesus started this conversation with: I can give you living water.

That's what she got.

COMMUNION CLOSING (WITH SEPARATE CUES) [Ask if people need elements]

And this is why communion matters here. This table reminds us why we can drop the jar.

Jesus did not come to manage our behavior. He came to give His life.

Scripture tells us that by one sacrifice, He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

The work is finished. The veil is torn. Access has been given to any who have been made new by His Spirit.

So as you come to the table today, you don't come to prove anything. You don't come to promise anything. You come to receive what was freely given by Jesus.

If you're trusting in Christ, even if it is imperfect, this table is for you.

THE BREAD

As you hold the bread, I want you to quietly name before the Lord what you've been carrying.
This is the place to drop your jar.
Not to fix it.
Not to justify it.
Just to acknowledge it.
Take your bread.
This is Christ's body, given for you.

THE CUP

Now, as you hold the cup, hear this:
You are not managing your way into God's presence.
You are welcomed because of Jesus's blood. Thank Him for His sacrifice right now.
Take the cup.
This is Christ's blood, poured out for you, sufficient for all of you.

Today I want you to take a moment to respond to God. Whatever you are carrying, lay it down.
When you sing, I'd like you to sing out of a spirit of thankfulness and commit to giving it all to Christ.

Let's stand and sing, responding with the same openness we just received from Jesus.