

Luke: The Story of Christmas Invites Our Worship

Opener: What's the best compliment you've given or received?

Scripture: And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors." Luke 1:46-55

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Romans 12:1

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. ¹⁶ And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:15-16

Discussion Questions

1. The Gospel of Luke, written by Paul's physician, includes Mary's song of worship and praise to the Lord for choosing her to give birth to the Christ child. Worship and praise are related, but "worship" can be defined as a reverent response to God's presence and "praise" as boasting on God. What makes Mary's song such a good example of worshipping and praising God? Luke 1:46-55
2. What attributes of God did she point out? Luke 1:46-55
3. In John 4, why does Jesus say that true worshippers must worship in Spirit and in truth? Note the uppercase "S" in Spirit. John 4:23-24
4. Romans 12:1 says that true and proper worship includes offering ourselves as living sacrifices that are holy and pleasing to God. What does that entail?
5. Hebrews 13:15-16 makes the point that praise is a sacrifice. What does that mean? It also clearly states that praise should be spoken out loud. Why does that matter?
6. What keeps us from worshipping and praising God?
7. It's been said that everyone worships something. What do people worship when they don't worship God? Can Christians also worship other things? If so, why would they?

Wrap Up: Worship is not the slow song that the choir sings. Worship is not the amount we place in the offering basket. Worship is not volunteering as a greeter. True worship happens when we recognize the truth about God, submit to that truth, and respond by living a life that honors Him. Mary understood this and proved it as she openly praised the Lord and lived a life that was devoted to Him.