

A WAKENED

TO WORSHIP

LESSON 4 // THE COMMITMENTS OF WORSHIP

One area in our spiritual journey where we all have a tendency to fall asleep is in our worship. We need regular wake-up calls to worship. We need to be freshly awakened to worship the Lord.

Worship always involves commitments and Jesus gave us a story about someone who made the right commitments as a worshiper.

Luke 7:36-50 (NIV) *When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. ³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. ⁴¹ "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. ⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

What a study in contrast! Simon and the sinful woman responded to Jesus in very different ways. One chose to be a worshipper and the other refused to worship. These verses reveal four commitments this woman made that we must make also if we're going to truly worship the Lord.

1. Believe and receive the gospel.

This woman could worship because she believed. She had faith in Jesus and the good news He proclaimed. She received His forgiving grace in her life and had been changed by His life.

This is the essence of the story Jesus told Simon in verses 43-47. The sinful woman loved Jesus deeply because she had received abundant mercy and forgiveness from Him. Her faith was not merely intellectual. It was heart-felt and resulted in a life-changing encounter with the Lord of glory!

2. Be done with your pride.

Pride and worship are mutually exclusive. To worship the Lord, we must learn to reject and renounce pride. The sinful woman let go of her pride and this was evident in several ways. She went to a home where she was not invited or welcomed—a situation where her pride would be offended by the self-righteous Pharisee. She did not let her pride keep her from Jesus!

This woman also wept publicly. She was not ashamed or afraid to express her worship of Christ with emotions and tears, no matter what others might have thought. She made of “fool” of herself, kneeling at Jesus’ feet, crying, wiping His feet with her hair and anointing His feet with perfume. The Apostle Paul said that we are “fools for Christ” (1 Corinthians 4:10) who choose worship and a commitment to Jesus over pride and popularity.

3. Bring the Lord your best.

When this woman came to worship Jesus, she did not come empty-handed. According to verse 37, she brought “an alabaster jar of perfume.” Instead of cheap olive oil, she poured out precious, lovely perfume. This was perhaps the most expensive thing she possessed—her best!

The Bible calls us to bring nothing but our best to the Lord when we come to worship Him.

Numbers 18:29 (NCV) Choose the best and holiest part from what you are given as the portion you must give to the Lord.

4. Bring the Lord your all.

While worship includes internal and private devotion to God, it involves much more than this. Biblical worship involves every aspect of who we are. We are not engaging in full worship unless our whole being is engaged in the process—body, soul and spirit. The woman in this story was consumed and lost herself in worship to the Lord, physically and spiritually.

One of the most frequently used words for worship in the Greek New Testament is *proskuneo*, which literally means “to kiss in front of.” It was used to describe “the kissing of the feet of a superior, as a servant would to a master.”

Worship is physical and active. It involves lifting and clapping hands (Psalm 47:1; 63:4; 1 Timothy 2:8), shouting in exuberant praise (Psalm 66:1), bowing down (Philippians 2:10), being still (Psalm 46:10) and singing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19-20). In worship, we are committed to bringing all we are and all we have to honor and bless His great name!

Discussion questions

1. How does believing and receiving God’s forgiveness in Christ make a difference in your worship?
2. In what ways does pride affect your worship? In contrast, how does it impact your worship when you humble yourself before the Lord?
3. What does it mean for you to “bring the Lord your best” in worship?