

**Sermon Study Guide Based on
Pastor Weber's Message of July 19, 2009
"Worshipping with Jesus"**

[Today's message will give insight into how we enter into worship with Jesus and how Jesus is actually worshipping with us.]

[Topics: Worship; Service; Living Sacrifice]

Excerpt: What did you experience in worship this morning in its various forms it's taken so far? Did you respond to God and connect with him or did you just have a sing-along? Let's hope we've experienced God in our worship.

Last week, we talked about how worship transformed the young people at summer camp. You can see these young people, who are hardened by society and whose hearts are broken by a messed up family life, and watch them respond to worship, and Christian living classes and chapel services. You just see them begin to blossom and open up and how it transforms their lives.

Likewise God wants us to, through worship, to experience more of him and to have our lives transformed. When Fred Stevens talked in the Worship and Giving portion of our services, he said when you dedicate something to God, it was holy and you had to pay 20% more if you were going to take it back. Now some might ask, "Why would that be?" Why would God say, "When you give it to me, it's gone"? So what is the principle involved here? We'll talk about that today.

One of the Core Values of New Hope Christian Fellowship is "*Worship which honors God and changes hearts.*" We want to keep building on that. Now worship doesn't just mean singing, but worship in all its forms like Worship in Giving.

And hopefully all of us realize that our giving isn't just to support the church. Actually that's the minor part. That's the side affect of us responding to God. God has us give offerings so that we respond in our hearts to him. It's about changing lives and changing hearts.

Now let's think about how Jesus responds to all that. How is Jesus involved in our worship? And how does that impact us? Not only are we worshipping Jesus, we are also worshipping with Jesus. We are entering into what he is already doing. And hopefully over the course of this sermon, it will help you think about the various forms of worship you participate in.

In the beginning verses of the 2nd chapter of Hebrews, it asks the question from Psalm 8, "Why do you, God, bother with all these human beings?" It was a question David asked God. And Hebrews 2 answers why God bothers with you and me and with our foibles and our weaknesses.

Hebrews 2:10, "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." In essence it says that Jesus had to come and become one of us so that God, through his suffering, could bring us along and usher us in.

11) "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family." So we've all entered into the family of God though what God is doing through Jesus Christ.

"So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers." Jesus wants to walk with us as brothers and sisters, and experience life with us as part of the family of God.

12) "He says, 'I will declare your name to my brothers;'" Now the book of Hebrews is going to talk about how Jesus is our High Priest. And, as our High Priest, he declares who God is. He helps us experience God. Without Jesus, we wouldn't know very much about the Father. Jesus helps us understand God.

"in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." So as Jesus comes among us, the ecclesia, what does it say he does? It says Jesus sings God's praises in our meeting. When he gathers with us, he comes to praise God. So we aren't just worshipping Jesus, we are worshipping with Jesus. He's here with us.

He put it on the hearts of some of you to put money in the offering. And he may even nudge us to put a little extra in. Jesus moves in us. Hopefully we are responding to him in our singing. Do you ever think of Jesus standing next to you while you are singing? We're going to sing new songs in the Kingdom because God is going to take us to new places and move us to new ways of glorifying him.

13) "And again, "I will put my trust in him." How do you worship God, if you don't trust God? To worship God, you've got to believe that he's really on your side. If you think he's ticked off with you, you'll shut down and not worship him. But if you are trusting him and experiencing him, now you can open up and praise him.

"And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." As Jesus comes before God, he says, "Here am I." As Jesus gathers all of us up in the sanctuary, he goes up to the Father and says, "Here I am Lord, and here's the children you've given me." And Jesus, as our High Priest, ushers us up into the throne room with him. Jesus brings us into that relationship with the Father.

So, as we worship, this is Jesus entering in with us, to help us experience worship with God. Jesus has entered heaven on our behalf. It says that we are seated in the heavenly realms with him (Eph. 2:6).

Now Hebrews chapters 6,7 and 8 are about Jesus being our high priest and what that all means. **Hebrews 8:1, "The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven."** Now chapter 7 talked about how we had these other priests and they died because they were physical. But now we have a high priest who's entered into the very throne room of God. Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father. And he's actively functioning all the time on our behalf.

He's worshipping the Father on our behalf, and he's bringing the Father to you so you can experience him and you can drink in of him. So in turn you can worship him more.

2) "and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man."

Now Jesus serves in the throne room. But where else does he serve? Where is the temple of the Holy Spirit? It's you! It's me! So in a sense you and the sanctuary become one because we sit in the heavenly places with Jesus Christ.

Jesus is serving, as a high priest, in the temple. The Greek word is *leitourgos*, which means ministering. It can also mean a worshiper. We get our word "liturgy" from this Greek word. So Jesus Christ is our minister, leading us into worship.

Now here's a quote from a book by Gerrit Dawson titled, *Jesus Ascended*. Gerrit is the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Baton Rouge.

So in worship, we may visualize Jesus standing in the midst of our sanctuary. His arms are outstretched and his head is raised to heaven. He has gathered us all and has offering us to his Father even as he offers his praise. In our congregation, Jesus sings to his Father, "Father, here I am with the family you gave me. Father, here I am. Within the gathered church, I will lead your praise. To my brothers and sisters, I will make you known. Father, here I am.

So, as we come here at New Hope and gather, we are being invited in with Jesus. And he brings us along and says, "Father, here they are. Look, they've come to worship today. Now that should transform what you do here on Sunday morning. Or when you are worshipping spending time with God at home during the week.

How many of you have felt that your prayers never go above the ceiling? We've all had those days, haven't we? But that's not true. Jesus is down there as you pray, with you as you worship, ushering it up to the Father. There's no such thing as a prayer that doesn't get above the ceiling. With Jesus, it's automatically taken to the throne room of God.

Continuing with the quote. *This means in the midst of every sanctuary, Jesus is leading our praise. In the tiniest church in the remotest region to the grandest cathedral in the heart of the city, Jesus is worshipping the Father, bringing his brothers and sisters into the presence of God.*

Pastor Glen wishes that all the tiny churches all across America, in our fellowship and outside our fellowship, realize that Jesus meets with them and he's there. Doesn't the Bible say, if there are 40 gathered together, Jesus will be there? No, it says two or three. Because in Jesus' opinion that's a congregation. If you have a house church or a home Bible study and two or three people show up, Jesus considers it a congregation with his involvement.

Continuing the quote. *For the Son of God, who became man, is still fully human, still in the flesh, still incarnate. As a man he worships God. [Remember 1 Tim. 2: 5, the man Christ Jesus, our mediator in heaven?] He has blazed the way before us. He has*

pioneered the path in his own flesh. He collects us and gathers us up in his arms and presents us in praise to God the Father as those whom he has cleansed, redeemed and sanctified.

All of that is going on in the midst of our sanctuary as we gather here. When we are sitting here some Sunday mornings like bumps on a log, sleepy, distracted, bored, confused and waiting for lunch, Jesus is here gathering up what you have to offer. That's why Pastor Glen likes churches that say, "Thank you" and "Amen" and "Praise the Lord" because you know that the members are participating and getting involved.

Continuing the quote. *We may call the people to worship with the astonishing news that Jesus is here with outstretched arms declaring to us the name of God and declaring to God the names of his brothers and sisters assembled. So as a high priest he connects both ways. He connects the Father to us and us to the Father.*

Jesus says, "Look Father, who came today. And also God, look at those who stayed home, because they are not feeling well today. But they are worshiping at home, reading their Bibles, praying and listening to some good music."

And Jesus also says to us, "Look at your Father! Look at your God! Look at what he's offering to you. Give glory to him!" Jesus takes us up to the Father.

Now let's look at **1 Chron. 23:24-27**. The Israelites have now built the Temple. They're going to get rid of the Tabernacle that they've been packing around. David said, the Tabernacle wasn't good enough; we need a temple. So Solomon builds the Temple. And now they're establishing the Levites to work in the Temple. Some of their duties would be different.

1 Chron, 23:28, "The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron's descendants in the service of the temple of the LORD: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God. 29) They were in charge of the bread set out on the table, the flour for the grain offerings, the unleavened wafers, the baking and the mixing, and all measurements of quantity and size."

To put it in modern day language – they were in charge of children's church, they were in charge of hospitality, they were in charge of the food downstairs, they were in charge of ushering and they were in charge of all the stuff that makes church work.

30) "They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD." The Levites were given two areas of responsibilities: service jobs, because always in God's work, there's stuff that needs done. That's what God called a church for. He's got all these jobs that need to be worked out in order to make things function in the church and our various outreach programs. But also the other area is to thank and praise the Lord.

"They were to do the same in the evening 31) and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the LORD on Sabbaths and at New Moon festivals and at appointed feasts. They were to serve before the LORD regularly in the proper number and in the way prescribed for them."

Now it's an interesting thing in America that 80% of the people don't participate in church that much. Now we know that we have a much lower percentage here at New Hope. But the point is that only about 20% of the membership in churches in America does all the work.

People don't realize that they entering church to worship Jesus and to serve as well. When we participate in serving at church it helps us to worship Jesus in a greater way, because we are participating with him.

So we see that the Levites had physical jobs but they also were involved in the worship of God. Many of them were musicians and played musical instruments as well.

Now in **Romans 12:1** Paul tells us something very interesting. **"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."**

Do you realize how strange that was for Paul to say that to a Roman-Greek world? Because the whole society he was writing to thought bodies and flesh were bad and evil. It was a Gnostic society where they believed that spirit is good and flesh is bad. Since the Gentiles are trying to get rid of their bodies, why would they offer it to God in service? So Paul is shocking them with his statement. They're thinking how can I offer something evil to God.

But, you see, flesh isn't evil. The only thing evil about flesh is the human nature that drives it. But flesh by itself isn't evil or Jesus wouldn't have become flesh. Jesus took on our flesh. But he had the Spirit of God to overcome human nature so that he can do it again in us through the Holy Spirit.

We need to realize that our flesh has value. And the reason it has value is because Jesus made it so by coming and living in flesh. And by being resurrected into glorified flesh.

Then it says, "This is your spiritual act of worship." Part of worshiping with Jesus Christ is offering our bodies to him. So how do we offer our bodies to do what God would have us do – to be the legs and arms and hands of his church?

Worship isn't just when we come together here, because we are the temple of God. And as Jesus lives in the sanctuary throne room and lives in you through the Holy Spirit, wherever you are at all times, you are in worship of God. Hopefully we know that so we act accordingly.

So if we are doing something physical with our body, it's an act of worship to God because hopefully you are doing it with all your might and you're doing it well and you're doing it to please and honor God. And as people see you, hopefully that will draw them to God, because they see you living a certain way.

For some of you – it's the suffering in your bad health. As you do that and keep your eyes on Jesus, people will ask you, "How do you stay so positive?" "How do you not get angry?" They see you offering your body, even your suffering body, in an act of worship. Something will click with them.

Or maybe you're the best employee on the job, because you offer your body as a sacrifice to him. In all that we do becomes worship to God. And Jesus takes it up to the Father and says, "Look at how they are worshiping you, look at how they are living out their life, look at how they are connecting with others, look at how they are expressing your love."

Now several of the songs we sang today in our worship talked about offering ourselves up and how we live. We sang, "Glory to God" and "Take my life and use it." At summer camp we sang that song many times. And as those kids were singing it, pastor Glen would walk up and down the aisles praying to God and asking, "Let them mean it! Let them do what they are singing. Take their life and use it."

So he was praying for those campers that God would be working in their life as they sang that song. That God would take their life and use it. That the Holy Spirit would stir within them so that they would mean it even though some of them were just mouthing the words. That's part of worship – that God takes their life and uses it for his glory.

Now God also prays with us. One of our initiatives in our strategic planning for New Hope is that we would have a prayer team. It's been on the plan for at least two years. Willie and Esther come and pray before church begins on a regular basis. Pastor Glen and his wife Connie join them when they're not at Fair Oaks. It's just to pray for our service. We ask that God move in our service.

It would be wonderful if Jesus would stir some of you to become part of the prayer team that really concentrates on prayers for our congregation. That you ask God to move us as a congregation and to show us how to connect with our community.

Pastor Glen hopes that we have pulled out all our stops with prayer for Vacation Bible School (VBS) right now. That we pray God will bring us some new families to participate in it – that we respond by bringing our grandkids and neighbor kids to VBS.

Mark records in his gospel (**14:36**) that in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "**Abba, Father, everything is possible with you. Take this cup from me. Yet, not what I will but what you will.**"

Jesus had that intimate father relationship with God. He was in essence saying, Daddy, hear my prayer." And we read in **Gal. 4:6**, "**Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'**"

That same feeling and Spirit that Jesus had in the Garden when he was facing death comes into our life. So when we are going through difficulties, the Holy Spirit is praying for you. He's pulling with you. He's never leaving nor neglecting you. He's worshiping with you and praying with you. Now that should encourage us. It should help us worship and enter in to what God is doing.

Pastor Glen and his wife had a good time last night. The Henschers invited them out to Glendale's Cruise Night – where they park all these old classic cars up and down the street. Everybody oohs and ahs and takes pictures. The main stage was playing Jan and Dean and everybody was bobbing and moving to the Rock and Roll. And people were singing a bunch of the golden oldies as they also played Sha Na Na.

Pastor Glen had such a blast watching people of all ages respond to the music. And he thought about how God gave us music. And people connect with music. They don't know God but they are experiencing him, because he gave us music. They were worshipping God without even knowing it, because they were enjoying good music and having a good time together. And that's a part of worship.

Now it's ideal when they come to understand and take it to glorify God. But God moves where he can get them, until he brings them to that place. You know that Jesus had a blast there last night looking at all these old cars and admiring all the work that these people put into it to make something beautiful. Jesus was also enjoying that Rock and Roll music because he created it. He created it for us to enjoy it and experience it.

So that's what it's all about, whether prayer or worship. Jesus is entering in with us. Look around you and see where God is working and then enter into what he's doing. Let's remember that wherever we are, we are worshipping God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Whatever you are doing make it for the glory of God, because he's there with you.

Worship isn't what we just do here on Sunday morning, even though we know that Jesus is here with us. But we need to experience him out there as well.

General Group Question: In context of today's message, what is involved in worship?

Additional questions for the entire group or in groups of two or three of the same gender (15-20 minutes). If appropriate, please pray for each other's needs afterwards.

1. Is Jesus involved in our worship at church services? If so how?
2. What are some other activities of worship besides just singing hymns and songs of praise?
3. What does service both at church and in our neighborhoods and communities have to do with worship? Briefly explain.
4. Is Jesus involved in our physical activities and interpersonal relationships? How?
5. How do we present our bodies as "living sacrifices that are pleasing to God"?
6. What is the role of Jesus Christ, as our high priest, in our prayers?
7. What can you do to more wholehearted worship God?