

## ***Worship the Lord***

(Some thoughts with Dr. Joel M. Crichlow)

We are all worshippers. Worship is the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for someone or something. Many of us acknowledge our creator God, and worship Him. Many are awed by nature and worship objects of nature. Others worship things like money, career, homes, vehicles, clothes and so on. Some of us even worship ourselves. “I am Numero Uno!”, oh the big ego!

Our worship puts who or what we worship in an elevated position. In some sense we give to that person or object power or sway over ourselves. Therefore, our actions, our attitude, indeed our lifestyle is then governed by the object of our worship. Hence it is critically important that we make the right choice with respect to the object of our worship.

The choice we make is often governed by some perceived benefit that we figure will befall us. If I worship my career or my sport and I allow myself to be consumed by it, then maybe I’ll rise to the top. The choice we make is often governed by a sense of gratitude for something good that has befallen us. I like the feeling of freedom and power that driving a fast car gives me therefore I become consumed by fast cars, I worship them.

What about if I worship God my creator and let Him consume me? Does God deserve any of my adoration? Do I offer any gratitude to God my creator for anything good that He has sent my way? In fact, God (the Father) has sent someone very special our way. That someone that I am referring to right now is Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son:

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”* (John 3:16-17, New International Version, NIV).

In the gospel of John chapter 9 we have the account of one man’s encounter with Jesus. That man’s reaction, at the end of his encounter with Jesus, was to worship Jesus – the Son of God. Let us see how it all happened.

Jesus’ ministry on earth included a lot of walking about, meeting needy people in their own environment.

*“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* (John 9:1-5, NIV).

The man was blind from birth (physically blind). In a sense we were all blind at birth, and in many cases we are still blind. In order to live effectively we need a great deal of knowledge.

Whenever we lack the required knowledge we can be considered as blind in that area. In fact, we often hear someone say: "I was blind-sided by that".

The disciples associated the man's blindness with sin. They wanted to know whether the blindness was a result of the man's sin or his parents' sin. Our sin has separated us from God and that sin has caused a lot of ugliness in the world. But we cannot pin every unfortunate circumstance we may experience on a particular sin that we or our parents might have committed. However, every unpleasant situation or condition can be offered to God so that His works might be displayed in it. Jesus the light of the world is able and ready to shed His light on our darkness. The encounter continues:

*"After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing."* (John 9:6-7, NIV).

I do not know why Jesus used this method to heal the blind man. I can just highlight what happened. The man's eyes were touched by the Creator, using the same dust from which we were created and to which our bodies will return. Then someone among the onlookers had to help the man wash the mud from his eyes, and at last the blindness was gone.

If I can speculate just a little I would say that during his lifetime of blindness that man may have rubbed his eyes countless times, maybe in the vain hope that some streak of light would pierce the darkness. How much he must have welcomed that tender caress of the Creator's fingers as Jesus massaged those blind eyes. Jesus knew exactly what the man needed. He knows exactly what we need. In obedience the man went and washed his blindness away.

In a similar way we can have the blindness that is the result of our sin washed away. Jesus shed His blood on the cross so that we can use His blood spiritually to wash our sins away. In 1 John 1: 7 it says "... *the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*". Our friends and neighbors will notice that we have been changed just as the neighbors noticed the change in this formerly blind man. God wants to display His work in and through our lives.

*"His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.' 'How then were your eyes opened?' they asked. He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.' 'Where is this man?' they asked him. 'I don't know,' he said."* (John 9:8-12, NIV).

But after God has done a great work in our lives we are not guaranteed a life with no subsequent challenges. As we see in this account, the formerly blind man faced an immediate challenge.

*"They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed,*

*and now I see.’ Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.’ But others asked, ‘How can a sinner perform such signs?’ So they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, ‘What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.’ The man replied, ‘He is a prophet.’ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. ‘Is this your son?’ they asked. ‘Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?’” (John 9:13-19, NIV).*

The man’s testimony was attacked. The integrity of Jesus was questioned. But the work of God had been displayed and that presented a difficulty to the Pharisees. The Pharisees, the dominant religious people of the day, were not willing to give up their self-righteous positions and ascribe to Jesus, the Son of God, the honor that He was due.

*“A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. ‘Give glory to God by telling the truth,’ they said. ‘We know this man is a sinner’. He replied, ‘Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!’” (John 9:24-25, NIV).  
“‘If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’ To this they replied, ‘You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!’ And they threw him out.” (John 9:33-34, NIV).*

Jesus had transformed the man’s life. He was not going to deny that. He was grateful to God. He was not ready to be crushed by the opposition. He did not understand it all, but he knew one thing: he was blind but now he could see. The authorities increased the pressure, finally stripping the man of many privileges accorded a Jewish citizen. But God is faithful! Jesus showed up to provide support and supply the key missing piece in his knowledge.

*“Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ ‘Who is he, sir?’ the man asked. ‘Tell me so that I may believe in him.’ Jesus said, ‘You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.’ Then the man said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him.” (John 9:35-38, NIV).*

Jesus had now become the man’s Lord. He worshiped Jesus, his Lord. The Lord – the Light of the world, the way, the truth, the life, full of grace and truth, the good shepherd. We are all worshipers. What better example can we follow than the example of this man in John 9, and worship the Lord, the Almighty, all loving God! He will never leave us nor forsake us.

*“... God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)*