Sermon – Worship in Spirit and Truth
Sunday October 26, 2025

Introduction

Let me start with a question: Have you ever felt like your soul was dry — like no matter what you do, nothing seems to fill the emptiness? Maybe you feel it…

- When you're with people, and you're having a good time with them but you still feel alone.
- When you finally achieve a goal you've been working on, but you still don't feel fulfilled.
- When you scroll through social media and think, *Why does everyone else seem to have it together except me?*
- When your life is actually going well — your job, your family, your relationships — and you know you should feel happy, but you don't. And you don't know why.

So you do everything you can to fill the void:

- You chase after success, hoping it will finally make you feel enough.
- You chase after relationships, hoping someone can fill the emptiness.
- You chase after new experiences, hoping to feel alive.
- You chase after approval, hoping to finally feel special.

But none of it works. You're still thirsty, you're still searching, you're still wondering, Will anything ever satisfy my soul?

It's easy to think that this emptiness is a sign that you're broken and missing something everyone else seems to have. But here's the good news. That emptiness isn't a sign that you're broken. It's a sign that you were made for something more.

So what were you made for? How do you satisfy that deep thirst in your soul?

Sermon Series

We're in a new sermon series on the Holy Spirit. Over the next few weeks, we'll be walking through the Gospel of John and explore who the Holy Spirit is. As the third person in the Trinity, he brings new birth, fills us with new life and empowers us to live as his witnesses in the world.

Our prayer is that as we learn about the Holy Spirit, we would also *experience* the Holy Spirit — breathing new life, renewing our faith, and helping us live in God's presence.

Today, we're looking at one of the most beautiful encounters in the Bible – where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at the well.

Bible Passage

"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] 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."

[25] The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

[26] Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he." (John 4:21-26)

Background

Now who is this woman?

She's a Samaritan — part of a group that's despised by the Jews and considered religious outsiders. Most Jews would go out of their way to avoid Samaria entirely.

She also comes to the well at noon - in the heat of the day. Women usually came early in the morning with other women, but she comes alone. Which tells us something - she's isolated, lonely and carrying shame.

We also learn she's had multiple husbands. She's experienced heartbreak, disappointment, and rejection. She's tried to find love but still hasn't found it yet.

So here is this woman – she's thirsty in every possible way — physically, emotionally, spiritually. And that's where Jesus meets her.

He doesn't avoid her. He doesn't condemn her. He meets her right in the middle of her brokenness. And He says to her:

You've been drinking from every well you can find but none of has satisfied you. Because what you're really looking for is Me.

Now you and I don't draw water from a well, but we all know what it's like to thirst.

- We thirst for acceptance - longing to be known and loved.
- We thirst for meaning - longing for our lives to matter.
- We thirst for peace - longing for freedom from our anxieties.
- We thirst for healing - longing to escape our wounds and mistakes.

And like the woman, no matter how many wells we dig, we still end up empty.

But in this passage, Jesus points to the only source that will never run dry. And he tells us that the way to satisfy our thirst isn't through another achievement, another relationship, or another distraction. It's through the Holy Spirit who helps us to encounter Jesus through worship.

Last week, Pastor Steve talked about how throughout the Bible, wind is used to symbolize the Holy Spirit – the breath of God that gives life and power.

In our passage today, Jesus uses another image – water – to describe the Holy Spirit. Water gives life, it cleanses, it refreshes and it overflows to bring life and blessing to others.

Just like wind and water, the Holy Spirit moves in unseen but powerful ways, leading us into worship.

What I want to do today is explore this by looking at three questions. What is Worship, Why Should We Worship and How Do We Worship?

First, **What is Worship?**

In our passage today, the word *worship* appears ten times. The word Jesus uses is the Greek word *proskuneō* — it means seeing something's true value and responding to it with your whole life.

There's a true story that illustrates this.

A woman in Virginia bought an old painting at a yard sale for seven dollars. Not because she liked the art, she just wanted the frame.

Later when she cleaned it up, she discovered something hidden behind the canvas — a folded, yellowed piece of paper. When she carefully opened it and she discovered that what she was holding was one of the original printed copies of the *Declaration of Independence* from 1776.

Do you know how much that seven-dollar painting turned out to be worth? Over $2.4 million! Now do you think that changed her life? Of course it did! Before, it was just an old picture. But once she realized what she had, everything changed.

- She began to fill her mind with its beauty.
- She learned to appreciate its value.
- She started imagining how this would change her life, her decisions and her priorities.

And if someone had told her that she needed to spend a few hundred dollars to protect it, do you think she would hesitate? Of course not! Why?

Because when you see something's true worth, it changes the way you live.

That's what worship is. **Worship is recognizing the worth of Jesus and allowing the reality of it to reshape your life.** When you worship,

- You fill your mind with the beauty of Jesus.
- You remember who he is and what he's done.

- You let the truth change your life, your imagination and your priorities.

Because let's be honest. Most of the time, we treat Jesus like that old painting. He's there, hanging on the wall. He's something we appreciate but we don't think too much about.

But when you see Jesus for who he really is: The One who knows you completely, meets you in your shame, forgives you and gives you life… everything changes.

- Your problems don't go away, but they take their proper perspective.
- Your worries don't disappear, but they stop controlling your thoughts.
- Your fears don't vanish, but they don't control how you feel.

When you worship Jesus:

- Your heart finds rest.
- Your soul finds peace.
- And even in the midst of life's storms, you no longer run on empty.

Why? Because Jesus says, rivers of living water will flow from within you and He will give you what your heart has always longed for.

Why do we worship

Jesus says, "**Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."(John 4:23)**

At first, this sounds strange. Why does God want people to worship him? Isn't that a little arrogant?

Because if I asked you to worship me, you'd be right to think that I was arrogant. But when God wants your worship, it's not the same. Why? Because God doesn't need our worship. He's infinite and complete.

God calls us to worship not because he needs it but because we do. You see, **We were made for worship** which is why we all worship something.

- Some of us worship money, thinking it will give us security.
- Some of us worship success, hoping it will prove our worth.
- Some of us worship relationships, trying to fill the emptiness inside us.

But here's something else that's true: **We become what we worship**.

- If you worship money, you'll become greedy.
- If you worship success, you'll become restless.
- If you worship approval, you'll become afraid of fear of rejection.

So what happens when you worship God? You become more like him. The Holy Spirit transforms you. He gives you new desires and perspectives so that you become more patient, more kind, more loving.

You were made for worship. You were made in God's image to reflect his love, truth and beauty in all you do.

To worship anything less than God is like digging your own well hoping to find water. It's only when you turn to the True Source, Jesus - that you become fully alive and fully human.

How Do We Worship?

At one point, the Samaritan woman tries to deflect and shift the conversation by asking, Where does true worship take place?

You see, Samaritans believed that true worship took place on Mount Gerizim, while the Jews believed it was in Jerusalem. The Samaritans believed that only the first five books of the Bible—the Pentateuch—were authoritative, while the Jews believed the entire Hebrew Scriptures, including the prophets and writings, were authoritative.

But Jesus doesn't get caught up in this debate. Instead, he says, you're asking the wrong question. The question isn't *where* you worship but *how* you worship.

a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. (John 4:23)

What's Jesus talking about? He's pointing ahead to the cross. That's the time he's referring to here, the time when he will open the way for us to come directly to God. He's saying, After I die and take away your sin and shame, you won't *need to go to a temple, you won't need to go to a mountain to meet with God — because I will make my home in you.*

That's what worship is: **A personal encounter with Jesus made possible through the Holy Spirit.**

<u>Worship in Spirit</u>

To worship in spirit means that worship begins in our inner being. It's not about ritual or performance but about having a real encounter with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Because without the Spirit, worship is lifeless and empty. You simply can't manufacture a worship experience or encounter with God. You need to ask the Holy Spirit into your heart so that:

- He opens your eyes to see the beauty of Jesus.
- He gives you the desire to love and worship him.
- He fills you with his presence and makes Jesus real to you.

Have you ever had a moment in worship — maybe during a song, a prayer, or even a moment of silence — where you just *knew* God was with you in that moment? Where he spoke to you through the music or

words, speaking encouragement, challenge or wisdom so specific and so perfectly timed — you knew it was just for you?

That's the Holy Spirit helping you encounter the living God in a way that changes you from the inside out. That's what it means to worship in spirit.

Worship in Truth

But Jesus doesn't stop there. We don't just worship in spirit, we worship in spirit and in truth. The two go hand-in-hand. Because it's not just about having a real encounter with Jesus. It's about having a real encounter with the real Jesus.

Now we live in a culture that tells us:

- Be true to yourself.
- Do what feels right.
- Follow your heart.
- Make sure you're happy.

All this might sounds freeing. But when you think about it, aren't these a form of worship? We're just worshipping our own feelings, our own desires, our own ideas of what's good and right.

That's why Jesus says our worship must be grounded in truth; not in our emotions and experiences but in the unchanging reality of who God is as revealed in scripture.

Because worship not grounded in truth drifts into idolatry. We can worship a God of our own making instead of the One True God.

And again, we need the Holy Spirit to help us worship in truth. When we do:

- He opens our minds to understand God
- He makes the truth of Jesus come alive.
- He reveals where our hearts have drifted toward self-centredness and gently draws us back to God.

Worship in spirit helps us have a real encounter with Jesus.
Worship in truth helps us have a real encounter with the *real* Jesus.

We need both. Because when truth fuels your spirit, and the Spirit fills your truth — that's when worship comes alive, that's when you have a real encounter with the real Jesus.

The songs you sing become prayers from your heart. And God's presence become more real to you than any challenge you face.

So let me ask you — what well have you been trying to dig lately? What do you turn to hoping it will fill the thirst in your soul?

God says in Jeremiah 2:13,

"My people have committed two sins:
they have forsaken me, the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

Maybe you've been digging your own well, chasing after things like approval, control and success that have you left you empty and dry. But Jesus is standing before you today saying the same thing he said to the Samaritan woman:

Whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

So just remember: You don't have to strive. You don't have to earn. You don't have to lose hope. All you have to do is open your heart to the Holy Spirit and receive him.

So today,

- Will you come to the True Source?
- Will you stop digging your own cisterns?
- Will you open your heart to the Holy Spirit and worship the One who alone can satisfy your soul?

Let's pray.

Prayer

Father, we come before You just as we are.
Some of us are joyful and thankful.
Some of us are weary, anxious and running on empty.
But You see us completely — our stories, our struggles, and our secret longings.
You know the things we've been chasing, hoping they'd fill us.

Jesus, we confess that we've tried to satisfy our thirst in all the wrong places —
in success, in approval, in control.
But none of it can compare to You.

Holy Spirit, come.
Breathe fresh life into us right now.
Open our hearts to sense Your presence and awaken our souls to the beauty of Jesus.
Help us see Him not as someone who is distant and removed,
but as the living Savior who knows us, loves us, and meets us right where we are.

Bring Your clarity to our confusion,
Your peace to our anxiety,
Your hope to our weariness.

We lay down the things we've been clinging to —
our fears, our striving, our need to be enough —
and we open our hands to receive Your living water.

Fill us again, Holy Spirit.
Fill every dry and hidden place in us.

Make this moment more than just a song or a prayer.
Make it a real encounter with You —
the kind that changes us from the inside out.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,
our Savior, our Redeemer,
and the Living Water who never runs dry.

Amen