

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

April 18, 2010

In spirit and in truth

by David King

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father **in spirit and truth**; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship **in spirit and truth**" (Jn. 4:23-24).

The topic of discussion in this context was the correct place of worship: Jerusalem or Mt. Gerazim in Samaria (v. 20). The Samaritan woman argued for the latter, and expected Jesus to defend the former. But rather than take sides on this one issue, Jesus took the discussion to a higher level, addressing a much more important question: What defines a true worshipper of God? The geographic place of worship was a legitimate topic of discussion, but until this greater question was resolved, this lesser topic could wait.

Jesus identified two factors that define the true worshipper of God: "spirit" and "truth."

To worship God "in spirit" means to do it with a whole heart, to really believe in what one is doing. Our worship is not an empty ritual or habit; it is not done to please men, but is an expression of our genuine love for God.

To worship God "in truth" means to respect what God has revealed in His word. It is a commitment to align with the "true" standard that God has given to guide our behavior.

Of these two factors, one is subjective, inward, involving attitudes (spirit), the other is objective, outward, involving behaviors (truth). Together, they define the "true worshipper" whom God seeks. Those who worship God in spirit (with the heart) but ignore His truth are

libertines; those who worship in truth (careful to keep the details) but ignore the attitudes are legalists. Ignoring either element renders one's service to God unacceptable.

Contrary to common belief, what Jesus was teaching here was not new. Centuries before, Joshua taught the Israelites the same principle using almost exactly the same wording: "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him **in sincerity and in truth**" (Josh. 24:14).

Actually, what Jesus and Joshua taught in these two passages is a formula that is repeated often throughout the Bible, using a variety of expressions: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments**, for this is man's all" (Eccl. 12:13). "In every nation whoever **fears Him and works righteousness** is accepted by Him" (Ac. 10:35). Sometimes the order might be reversed: "Blessed are those who **keep His testimonies**, who **seek Him with the whole heart**" (Psa. 119:2).

One could argue, in fact, that God's plan of salvation has never really changed throughout the entire span of human history. From the very beginning, all God has ever required of mankind is that we give Him our hearts completely, and honor what He tells us to do. What else is there?

The Samaritan woman saw religion as the offering of sacrifices on a holy mountain. Jesus challenged her to see religion not as a ritual confined to a holy place, but as a way of life that dominates how we think and how we act, everywhere and every day.