

FROM THE 2018 NEW YEARS RETREAT

HEALING THROUGH WORSHIP

LECTURE 1

REV. IN KEE KIM

WELCOME!

Welcome to the new year retreat. It is wonderful to start the new year like this. It is a good time for prayer, reflecting on the spiritual theme and how you want to live this year, and having a quiet place to be reconnected to God. It is a wonderful time to gather as a community to praise, pray and get to know each other more deeply.

This year's theme is HEALING
THROUGH WORSHIP.

WORSHIP IN OUR MODERN LIFE

This year's theme is a very important topic. Worship is something we do all the time and we should do all the time. It is something we have to understand very well.

One sad thing about our modern culture is that people don't put a **high priority** on worship. People these days don't see the significance of worship in their lives. Worship is not at the centre of their lives. For many, life does not flow out of worship. There is worship, which is exclusively reserved for Sundays, and then there is life

In the old days, worship

was at the centre of their existence. The Jerusalem Temple was the centre of their existence. When they lost the temple, they lost everything. Their life cycle moved around with the worship at the centre. In other words, God was at the centre of their existence and their daily consciousness. Where God is present in your life is directly connected with your **worship life**.

DISCUSSION

1. What is worship to you?
2. What is worship to people in our modern world?



WORSHIP IS NOT FOR US

I think it is our first responsibility to bring back worship to the place it belongs in our lives. We need to restore worship in our lives. We need to restore the spirit of worship in our lives. We should make worship the centre of our lives and let everything flow out of the life of worship. The life of worship is finding balance in life. If the centre of life gets weakened, the life gets weakened. A strong centre means a strong life. Worship should be the strong centre in our lives, as **we are people of worship.**

Worship is not for me. Worship does not even exist for my own benefits. "What can I get out of worship?" **is the wrong question.** Sometimes churches make worship entertaining to be seeker friendly. I understand their desire to reach out to those who don't believe. But worship is not an evangelistic tool. It is for those who already believe.

Worship is not to entertain people.

No matter how good your intentions may be, when you start using worship for people, the original purpose of worship will be tainted. Worship is not a **SHOW**.

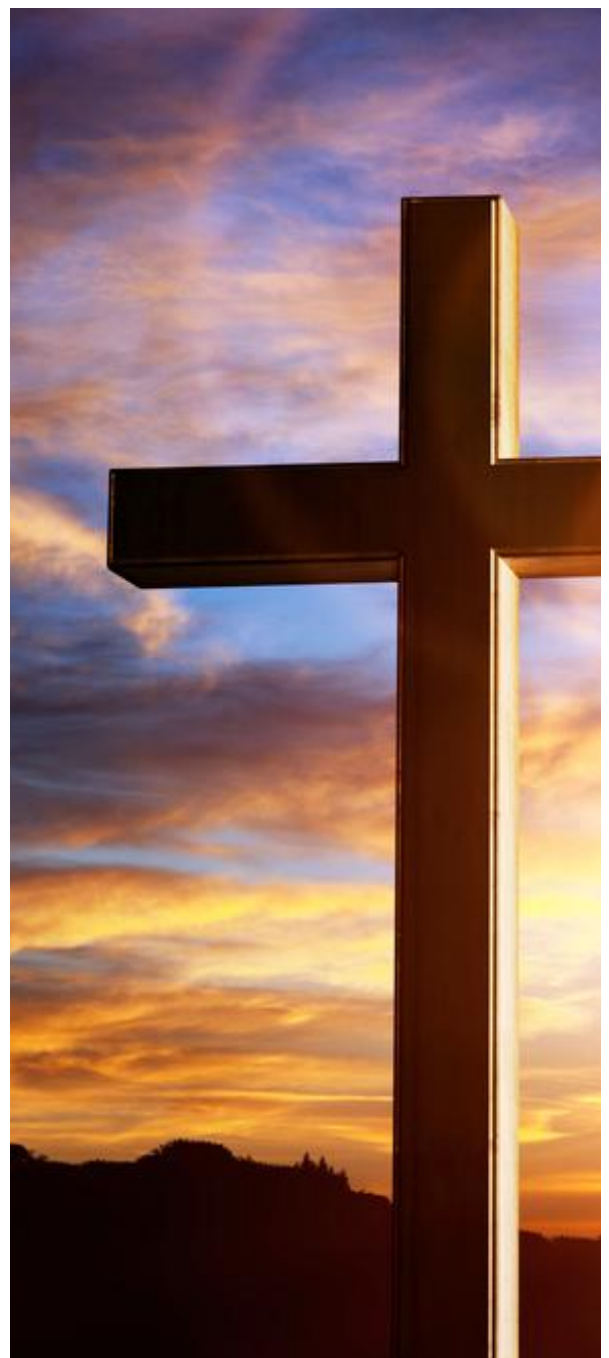
We worship for God, because of God, thanking Him and remembering what God has done in our lives. We give praise to God. We thank God. We lift up God's name and that alone. In worship, **I disappear, and God appears.**

GOD'S WORK OF SALVATION

Worship is deeply connected to God's work of salvation. Without experiencing God's work of salvation and in your lives understanding its significance, **worship cannot be meaningful.**

It will just be a nice ritual, but it won't be a deep spiritual experience. Worship itself cannot give people inspiration.

Inspiration comes from each person's spirituality. Worship service may give you some emotional uplifting, but it cannot give spiritual inspiration on its own. Inspirational worship comes from the hearts of people who worship God in Spirit and in



Truth. Worship should not be a spiritual show. I am not a spiritual entertainer who makes people inspired.

The flow of worship is from inside to outside. Thankfulness inside of you flows out and becomes your **offering**. Deep repentance inside of you flows out and becomes the **prayer of repentance**. Everlasting joy inside of you flows out and becomes **our praise**. Faith inside us flows out and becomes **our confession**.

I said worship is deeply connected with God's work of salvation. *"The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."* (Exodus 3:9-12) Exodus is very much connected with the worship of the Israelites. Passover, The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Booths are all in remembrance of what God has done in their lives. Remembering what God has done to save them, they worship God. Remembering what Jesus has done to save us, We worship God.

You don't worship God to be saved. Salvation was already there. That's why without understanding and appreciating God's salvation for you, worship **cannot be meaningful**.





God Looks In Our Hearts

Meaningful worship is not **what you do** in the worship. It is **what's in your heart.** A few years ago at the prayer retreat I said the language of prayer is not English or Korean but your heart. The language of worship is not English or Korean but your heart. God can only listen to your heart.

The best preparation for worship is the preparation of your heart. Bring to your consciousness what God has done for you. God has done a lot. This is the best preparation. Without that heart, we cannot give a sacrifice that God is pleased with. There is an interesting story in Genesis. The Cain and Abel story.



“In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.’ Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let us go out to the field.’ And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.” (Genesis 4:3-8)

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God accepted Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's sacrifice?

God accepts our heart. Cain's heart was filled with violence, jealousy, rivalry, hatred, and greed. He was full of himself. No matter how good the sacrifice may be it won't be pleasing to God. God is not pleased with sacrifices himself. God accepts the heart that gives sacrifice. God doesn't need our sacrifice. The Scripture says, *"Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt-offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house, or goats from your folds. For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine. 'If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and all that is in it is mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High."* (Psalm 50:8-14)

If God doesn't want sacrifices from us what is the sacrifice he wants? This is what David said in his psalm. David knew what sacrifice God wanted. *"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; **a broken and contrite heart,** O God, you will not despise."* (Psalm 51:15-17). A broken and contrite heart, a repentant heart, is what God wants.

The sacrifices of God are

**A BROKEN SPIRIT; A BROKEN
AND CONTRITE HEART, O GOD,
YOU WILL NOT DESPISE.**

Psalm 51:17



COMING AS A SACRIFICE

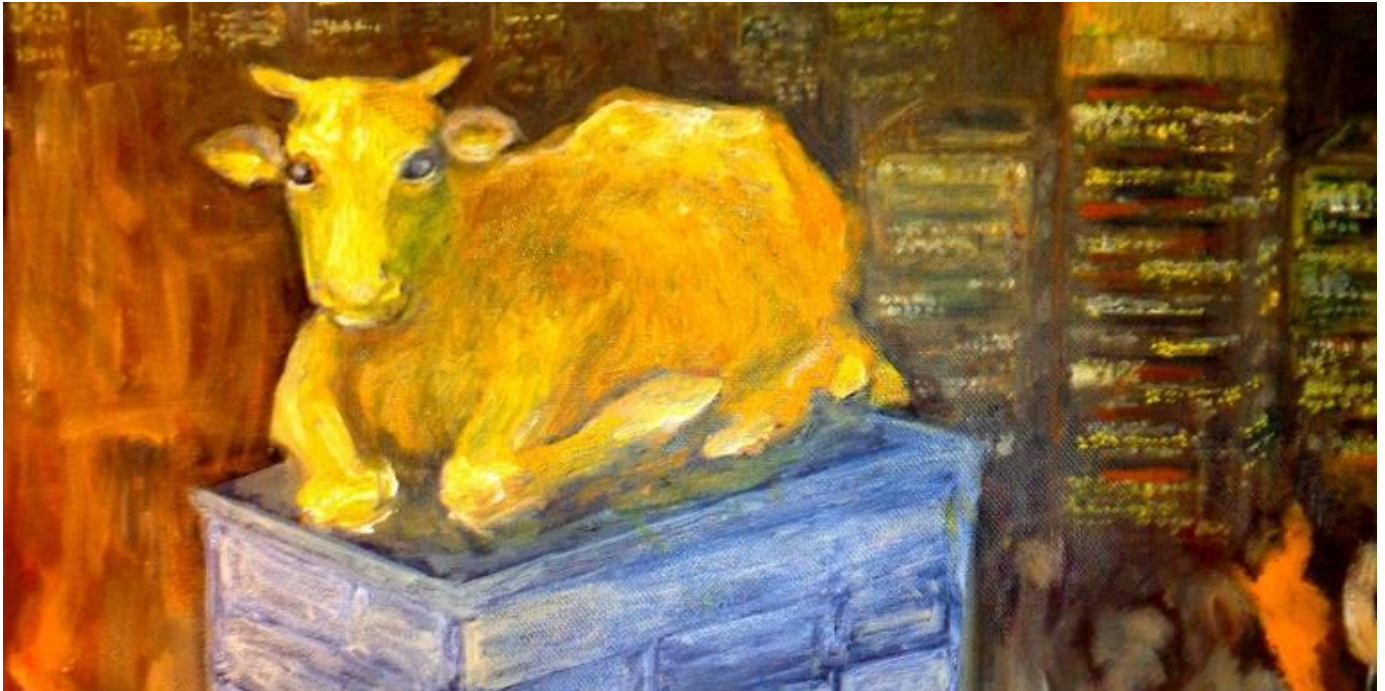
We cannot come to God with an attitude of entitlement. We don't deserve to be in God's holy presence. Only by God's grace we are allowed to be in God's presence.

Worship by its nature is very counterculture. We are living in a world where "I" is the most important. What is the most important is SELF-AFFIRMATION. Even in worship, we try to worship God on our own terms. Worship means the very opposite of what the world preaches. In worship we confess that "I" is not the Lord of my life. Jesus, God, is the Lord of my life. Speak O Lord your servant is listening. I don't bring

the sacrifice. **I am the SACRIFICE.**

That was Paul's understanding of WORSHIP. To Paul worship was not **what to do.** Worship was **what to be.** In worship we must be a sacrifice. Paul said, *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Romans 12:1, 2)

Paul said not be conformed to this world. He knew very well the counter cultural nature of worship. The modern world suffers from narcissism. Everything is about me. Even worship is for me and my worship experience.



The Israelites worshipped the golden calf in the wilderness. That worship was self-centred worship. They worshipped not for God but for themselves. The visible golden calf gave them a more real worship experience than the invisible God. It was all about them not about God.

When you come to worship God you completely forget about yourself, even your needs. You completely surrender yourself to God. All you think about should be God. You give exclusive attention to God. You come to worship **not to affirm yourself but to affirm God.**

In Greek they use the word “proskynein” for worship. Pros = Towards. Kynein = Kiss. An old hymn says: More to love Thee, Oh Christ, more to love the Thee! Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee. This is my earnest plea more love, Oh Christ, to Thee. More love to Thee, more love to Thee!

The prayer I make **on bended knee.** I see repentance, deep desire, and total surrender. I see tears, warmth, love, self-sacrifice, and deep care. That is what worshippers should look like. Like Mary washing Jesus’s feet with her perfume.



GOD CALLED US FIRST

We don't worship God with our initiatives. We worship God because God called us. We are invited by God to worship God. That's why we have "Call to Worship" in the beginning of our worship.

God called people from the east and west, from north and south to come and worship God. This is what Jesus said: *"Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the Kingdom of God."* (Luke 13:29)

God called us out. "Ecclesia" means call out. That is what church is. We responded to God's call. Leaving behind even some of our family members, we responded to the call.

We are summoned to come. The fact that we came is a sign of salvation. "Come" has a spiritual meaning. As you read the Gospel of John you can see that clearly.

John 3:21 “But those who do what is true
come to the light...

John 5:40 “Yet you **refuse to come** to
me to have life.”

John 6:35 “I am the bread of life.
Whoever **comes to me** will never be
hungry, ...”

John 6:37 “Everything that the Father
gives me will **come to me**, and anyone
who comes to me I will never drive
away.”

John 6:45 “Everyone who has heard and
learned from the Father **comes to me.**”

John 7:37 “Let anyone who is thirsty,
come to me.”

The reason we worship God is because God called us. We didn't come on our own by our own will. We can't come on our own because God called us. God delivered the Israelites and made them free to worship God.

God called us to be the people of worship. That is how Peter saw our **identity**. *"But you are a chosen race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who **called you out of darkness** into his marvellous light."* (1 Peter 2:9) We are called to be **A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD** to carry on the life of worship. *"O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."* (Psalm 95:6, 7)