

Worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth

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In John 4, Christ has a famous conversation with a woman at a well who is a Samaritan. At the end of that conversation, he makes a very interesting comment. He said, God the Father is searching for people—He wants people—to worship Him in spirit and in truth. What we are going to do today is look at that story and understand what it means, when Christ said the Father seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. What exactly did He mean by that and what can we learn from this statement? What we're going to do today is look at this in detail. We are going to understand what Christ was talking about and what we can specifically learn for our lives today with regard to the lessons He was referring to. If you would like a title for this sermon, it is:

Worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth

To start off, we will turn over to John where, we are first going to read through the story and then break it down and go through it in detail seeing exactly the lessons we can learn and what Christ was talking about.

John 4:1 *Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*

2) (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

3) He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

4) But He needed to go through Samaria.

5) So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6) Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7) A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give Me a drink."

8) For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

9) Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

10) Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

11) The woman said to Him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?

12) Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

13) Jesus answered and said to her, Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

14) *but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

15) *The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."*

16) *Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband, and come here."*

17) *The woman answered and said, I have no husband."* Jesus said to her, *You have well said, I have no husband,*

18) *for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."*

19) *The woman said to Him, Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.*

20) *Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."*

21) *Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

22) *You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.*

23) *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*

24) *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*
(NKJV)

That's the phrase we are going to focus on today to understand what exactly does He mean?

25) *The woman said to Him, I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things."*

26) *Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He."* (NKJV)

It was clear that this lady didn't understand who Christ was. She didn't realize who she was talking to. Christ also said to her, you worship what you do not know. So, she didn't really understand or have a clear concept of who God the Father was nor realize that she was talking to Christ. She says the Messiah is going to come, but she doesn't realize He is standing in front of her. Christ says to her, the Father seeks those who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. What is He talking about? What exactly does that mean and what can we learn from this; what spiritual lessons can we glean from understanding this statement?

Just like any statement in scripture, the first thing we need to look at is the context in which the statement was made. We never want to just pull something out of context and try to interpret it ourselves. We want to put it in the context it was stated in and understand and harmonize it in that context as it was meant.

The story starts off at a well and Christ was there and asked this lady to draw Him some water. Then He comments to her, that if you knew who I am, you would ask of Me living water and you would never thirst. I can provide this for you. Let's first realize, what is

He talking about in this regard? When Christ says, if you knew Who I am, you would ask for living water, what does He mean? We don't have to interpret that because if we look in John 7, we'll see that Christ makes a very similar statement, but in that verse, we don't have to interpret it because it directly interprets itself for us. The Bible tells us exactly what this statement means. Turn over to John 7 and we will begin in verse 37.

John 7:37 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (NKJV)*

Notice this statement is very much like the conversation that He had with the woman in the well; it is essentially the same thing. If anyone thirsts, you come to Me and I can provide you with this living water and you'll never thirst again. That is essentially the same thing that He stated to the woman at the well. As I mentioned, we don't have to speculate or guess what He's talking about, all we have to do is read verse 39 and it tells us exactly what He's talking about.

39) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (NKJV)

As I mentioned, we don't have to interpret this statement because it tells us what He's talking about—He's talking about the Holy Spirit. He's saying you can come to Me and I can provide this for you. If we understand what Christ's role is—not only did she not understand Who was standing in front of her, she not only didn't get Who He is nor what His role is—He's our High Priest, He's also our atoning sacrifice. He says, if you come to Me as your High Priest, I can apply My sacrifice to you and you can receive the spirit from the Father; that's what He's saying, that's what He means by in spirit and in truth. He's talking about worshipping the Father through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the understanding the Holy Spirit gives us of spiritual matters. How it changes our heart—that deeper relationship that we can have with the Father as a result of that. This is what He's getting at.

Go back to the story again in John 4 and pick up the rest of the context and we'll see the rest of this completely matches this statement. Pick it up in verse 20.

John 4:20 *Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”
21) Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. (NKJV)*

What is this comment about? When He says, coming to Jerusalem to worship the Father, that's what the Jews did because the Temple was in Jerusalem. That's where God's presence dwelt, in His Temple, in the most Holy place. That's where they came to sacrifice to Him and that's where He had placed His name and that's where the Feasts

were—they would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to sacrifice and worship God. That's what the Jews would do. The reason they are talking about this mountain, you have to understand the history of the Samaritans. I'm going to briefly cover some of this now because a little later in the sermon, we are going to see in the book of Kings where it gives the actual history of the Samaritans, how they wound up in that area and we get a much clearer view of the picture.

Just to briefly summarize things, as we're going to see a little later, these were people who were not native to the area of Israel. When the Assyrians had conquered that area, one of the things they would do when they conquered other nations to control the population and to keep the people from rebelling and uprising to get their freedom, they would move people around. They would take people—say you have nation A and nation B—the Assyrians have conquered both of them, they would take the people from nation A and move them and put them in the land of nation B and then they took the people from nation B and move them to the land of nation A. It was basically destabilizing things to keep the people in submission and keep them from rising up. This is what happened with the Samaritans and they were moved into the area where Israel had lived when the Assyrians conquered the Northern Ten Tribes. We will see the details of the story a little later as it is described in Kings. They wound up developing their own counterfeit version of worshipping the God of Israel, worshipping Yehovah.

He had His Temple in Jerusalem and they built their own version of it and put it on Mount Gerizim. They had a counterfeit version of the worship of the God of Israel. It was similar to how the Jews would come to Jerusalem to worship and sacrifice. They had a similar practice but their temple was on Mount Gerizim. That's why He is referring to them wanting to do it on this mountain, while the Jews do it over in Jerusalem. Notice Christ's comment, because He is getting at a deeper issue than where the correct location for God's Temple was. Notice He doesn't say, of course it's not Mount Gerizim, God placed His name in Jerusalem. That's a true statement but that's not what Christ says here. He says the hour is coming when you will do none of the above; you will go neither to Jerusalem nor Mount Gerizim because you are going to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. He is basically making a totally different distinction. What He's talking about, as we've already seen in the whole statement of the living water, is about receiving the Holy Spirit.

We are talking about a New Covenant relationship with God the Father. That changes something else as well. In ancient Israel, God's presence dwelt in a physical building. When they went up to the Tabernacle and then later to the Temple in the most Holy place and where He dwelt with His people, it was in a physical structure. That's not how it works in a New Covenant relationship because we are the Temple and God dwells in us, not in a physical structure. That is why He says, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. It's a none of the above situation. What I mean by none of the above is, it is not the debate between Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem, it's neither. But because God is not going to be dwelling in a physical structure, He is dwelling in you as an individual through His Holy Spirit. We see that in 2 Corinthians 6, where we will see this stated directly in the Bible start in verse 14.

2 Corinthians 6:14 *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

15) *And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

16) *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. (NKJV)*

Notice He is saying, you are where God dwells; God dwells within you through His Spirit. Reading on...

16 continued) ... *As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

17) *Therefore Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."*

18) *I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty."* (NKJV)

What He is saying here, is we are the Temple of God. It's not an issue of God dwelling in a physical structure, He now dwells in those who are converted and have a New Covenant relationship with Him. This results in a much deeper relationship. For ancient Israel it was a letter of the law type of relationship. In other words, just try to conform to the letter of the law of the Ten Commandments and any other commandments that God gives.

If you look at our society today and if it was living on a letter of the law basis and if people strived just on a physical basis to obey the Ten Commandments, then wouldn't that alone make society dramatically better than what we see today? It certainly would. But what God is striving for and trying to accomplish in the New Covenant relationship goes deeper than that. It's not just us learning to live and conform our behavior to a physical, letter of the law level. This is about changing our hearts, our minds, our motivations—really changing our character of who we are and transforming us to be more like Him. To be molded into His image. We see this in Romans 8, starting in verse 5.

Romans 8:5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

6) *For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

7) *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

8) *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

9) *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

10) *And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

11) *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (NKJV)*

Notice again this statement of God dwelling in us through His Spirit. He's making His dwelling place within us and that is why it says we are the Temple. In ancient Israel it was a physical building and His presence was in that building and that was how He dwelt among His people. He was in that building over there. You would go to the building and offer your sacrifice and worship Him there. It wasn't the same relationship where He is literally dwelling in you, to change your heart, your mind and your whole perspective in life and try to mold your motivations. It is not just to conform our behavior, but to change our minds and motivations and how we think, to be molded like Him and to develop His character. It's a much deeper relationship.

Notice when Christ made the comment to the Samaritan woman at the well, He said the Father desires those to worship Him in spirit and in truth. What we need to understand is that these two are directly related. The spirit not only changes our minds, how we think and our motivations. It makes us go from being a carnal, selfish individual to more of a loving, Godly, obedient individual. It also has a direct correlation with our understanding of truth. In other words, revealing—not just changing our behavior—but helping us understand spiritual matters, factual matters of God and His plan. The spirit is what guides us into truth. That is why it is referred to as the Spirit of Truth. We see this in John 16 beginning in verse 12.

John 16:12 *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

13) *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

14) *He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*

15) *All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you. (NKJV)*

He's referring to the Holy Spirit here as the spirit of truth. He said this is going to guide you into all truth. The spirit also gives us understanding of spiritual matters. It helps us understand God and His plan and His role and Christ's role. What They are about and what Their plan is. One of the comments that Christ made to the woman at the well was,

... you worship what you do not understand.

Clearly, she didn't understand it was Christ who was in front of her. What we are going to see in a minute is that their concept of who God the Father was, was a very skewed, a very paganized concept. That is part of what He was getting at as well, when He said you worship what you don't understand. Notice in that discussion, she claimed to be an

ancestor of Jacob and says, Jacob our father and what he had developed but what we are going to see in a minute is that that's not what their lineage was. They have a very confused version of molding their pagan religions in with the God of Israel and His worship.

Let's also look at when Christ made the comment of worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. I would like to read you the definition of the Greek word that is translated *truth* so you have a concept of this as well. It's transliterated as *aletheia*, it's Strong's #225 and according to The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodiatees, here's how it is defined:

Truth as evidence in relation to facts, therefore aletheia denotes the reality clearly lying before our eyes, as opposed to a mere appearance, without reality. Spoken of what is true in itself, purity from all error or falsehood.

What he's talking about is worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, which is trying to do this without any error or falsehood. If we understand what the Samaritans concept of God was and how they approached their religion, it was full of error and falsehood as we are going to see.

To get the context, turn over to 2 Kings 17 verse 24 and what we will see here is the story of how the Samaritans wound up in that area, as well as and how they wound up trying to worship the God of Israel. Even more importantly, their concept of the God of Israel and how they approached religion. This is going to shed a lot of light on the context of the statement that Christ made.

2 Kings 17:24 *Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. (NKJV)*

As I mentioned earlier, one of the philosophies of how the Assyrians would control the populations of people that they had conquered was to move them around. Using the analogy of a nation A and nation B, you conquer the people and then switch them from their lands. That's basically what happened in the exporting of the Northern Ten Tribes out of that area and then move all these other people into that area and now they occupy the area of Samaria. That's why they are called Samaritans. In reading the rest of the story we come to understand how they started trying to worship the God of Israel and more importantly what their concept of Him was.

25) *And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the Lord; therefore, the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them.*
26) *So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; (NKJV)*

Notice that phrase—we're going to see that several times as we go through this. Their concept of Yehovah was He was just the God of the land. He's not the all-powerful One, the only true God who made everything that we know and rules everything in the universe. No, in their minds He is the God of the land.

26 continued) ... *therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land.*" (NKJV)

Keep noticing that phrase, that's their concept of who Yehovah is.

27) *Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land.*" (NKJV)

What he's referring to and what we have to realize is this was the Northern Ten Tribes that they took away and displaced. The Levites had stayed when this split happened, with the Southern Kingdom. In the first place, the priest he was talking about bringing to teach them about their religion was not one of the real, valid Levitical priests. So, you can see how polluted this all got. Now pick up in verse 28.

28) *Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.*

29) *However, every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt.*

30) *The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima,*

31) *and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.*

32) *So, they feared the Lord, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.*

33) *They feared the Lord, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.*

34) *To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the Lord, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the Lord had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel,*

35) *with whom the Lord had made a covenant and charged them, saying: You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them;*

36) *but the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice.*

37) *And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods.*

38) *And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods.*

39) *But the Lord your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”*

40) *However, they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals.*

41) *So, these nations feared the Lord, yet served their carved images; also, their children and their children's children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day. (NKJV)*

Notice what happened here. Their concept of Yehovah was that He is the God of the land but He is not the one true God. It was not their concept of Him that all other gods are false and He created everything and rules all that is. Their concept of Yehovah was, He is just the local God and He is one of numerous gods and they mix all this together. So, they continue their other pagan worship to their other gods but they also build a Temple to Yehovah and mix it all together. It is in this context that Christ is talking when He speaks to the Samaritan woman and says, you worship what you don't understand. She's claiming we worship the God of Israel and Jacob's our father and He says, no you don't really grasp what you're saying, you don't get Who this really is.

There are some obvious lessons in all this that we can learn for our day. Just look at the nation in which we live today. Of course, we are all over the world and a lot of you are hearing this in other nations, but just referring to the United States, historically throughout most of our history in the U.S., we claim to be a Christian nation. A lot of the Protestant or Catholic brother religions, yes, they espouse the Bible and say this is the book we should follow but what is the real religion they have? It's a mixture of paganism and their religion of the true Bible. Yes, they hold up the Bible and say, this is what we believe and we worship this God and Jesus Christ, but do they keep His days? No, their idea of the Sabbath is Sunday, it's not Saturday, they don't keep the feasts in Leviticus 23, they keep Christmas and Easter. So, what have they done? They have taken the worship of the true God and all these other pagan concepts and melded them all together.

As Christ said to the woman, you worship what you do not know, He was referring to a concept of God the Father. Think about if you were to ask the average professing Christian today, who is God? The answer you are probably going to get is, He's a trinity—He's this three in one combination of Father, Son and Spirit and they are all individual yet they are one individual. It's a confusing combination that you cannot even explain. Personally, I love the way an Elder I heard several years ago around the breakup of Worldwide described the trinity—I've always loved this definition. He said the trinity is the belief that God is an amorphous blob with a multiple personality disorder. To me, that is a very adequate explanation of this confused idea of Who God is.

In the church of God, we have often made fun of this, of what the world's concept of it is. But if we look honestly at ourselves in the church of God, through our lifetime, we have kind of had some similar concepts going on. If you look at how we never thought there was a trinity and we never treated the Holy Spirit as a person but what did we do with God the Father and Jesus Christ? We had a doctrine called the God of the Old Testament what did we do with it? We have in a way made God the Father and Christ, indistinguishable from each other in a kind of binary concept.

To defend this God of the Old Testament doctrine, what you have to do by necessity to be in any way consistent and to defend this idea, is to assume that God the Father doesn't have a name—He doesn't have a unique name to Himself and most of the titles that refer to Him have to be generic as well.

The reason is if you are consistent at all with saying He does have a name and this is His name and these particular titles apply to Him and you're consistent throughout the Bible, this idea that He is never involved with anybody and He's in the background and Christ is doing everything, falls apart really fast.

You find contradictions all over the place. Let's notice first of all, He does have His own unique name. Just to see an obvious expression, let's turn over to Proverbs 30, a verse I quite frankly never noticed until recently. A good friend of mine pointed this particular verse out to me. It's Proverbs 30:4.

Proverbs 30:4 *Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? [Notice the last part of the verse here] What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know? (NKJV)*

The question only makes sense if the Father has a name and the Son has a name and they're not the same name. He is basically saying, do you know the Father's name, do you know the Son's name? If they generically just share one name and you can't sort out which one is being referred to, then that question doesn't make a lot of sense. It only makes sense if the Father has His name and the Son has His name and they are different names. That's very clearly illustrated in the Bible. Turn over to Isaiah 42:1 and what I want you to notice in this is that it is Yehovah Who is talking in these verses and is talking about My Servant and My Elect and the one who I'll put My Spirit in. So, His Servant and His Elect is somebody different to Yehovah. We are going to see later that the Bible tells us absolutely who the Servant is, we don't have to speculate or guess because the Bible is going to blatantly tell us.

Isaiah 42:1 *Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; (NKJV)*

Notice the individual who is talking is referring to His Elect, His Servant and the one He put His spirit in, so this is somebody different to the individual speaking.

- 1 continued) ... *He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.*
2) *He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.*
3) *A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.*
4) *He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."*
5) *Thus says God the Lord [notice who is talking here, it is Yehovah], Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it:*
6) *I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,*
7) *To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*
8) *I am the Lord, that is My name [notice the individual who is talking says My name is Yehovah]; (NKJV)*

If you study through the Bible where Yehovah is mentioned, you are always going to see there are numerous comments that refer to it as a name. It is always referred to as my name, your name or his name; it is never referred to as our name and their name. It's never referred to as a collective, it's always singular.

- 8 continued) ... *And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.*
9) *Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; Before they spring forth, I tell you of them."* (NKJV)

As I mentioned previously that we do not have to speculate or guess at all who is being referred to here. As we're going to see, if we turn over to Matthew 12:15 in the New Testament, Christ is going to tell us directly that He is the One being referred to as the Servant and the Elect one. We are going to see that Christ is going to quote directly from the verses we have just read and make it clear that He is the one being referred to as the Servant and the Elect one.

- Matthew 12:15** *But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.*
16) *Yet He warned them not to make Him known,*
17) *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:*
(NKJV)

Notice He is saying, I'm quoting from Isaiah and notice what He's about to say here, it's a direct quote from what we just read.

- 18) *Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.*
 19) *He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.*
 20) *A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;*
 21) *And in His name Gentiles will trust.” (NKJV)*

Christ Himself directly says, I'm the one being referred to as the Servant and the Elect. If Yehovah is referring to Christ as His Servant, then obviously Yehovah has to be God the Father because we know for sure that Christ is the servant. So, this identifies who we are talking about. As I mentioned, God the Father has a name, as He went through this, I am Yehovah, that is my name—He directly stated that.

Also notice that this is a unique name and there's only one. We are going to see this in multiple scriptures. But if you go through and notice all the verses that mention this, you will never, ever see it as Yehovah is our name or their name. It is always, it's My name, it's His name, it's your name—it's always singular 100 percent of the time.
 Psalm 83:18.

Psalm 83:18 *That they may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth. (NKJV)*

Notice it says there is only one Yehovah and He's also known as the Most High. If you have two God beings and one says My Father is greater than I, you can't have two most highs because one has to be higher than the other. This tells you who you are talking about. The Most High is the Father and He's the one and only Yehovah, so Yehovah is the Father's name. We will see this again in Isaiah 45:5.

Isaiah 45:5 *I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,*
 6) *That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other;*
 7) *I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things. (NKJV)*

Verse 18.

18) *For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is no other.*
 19) *I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, Seek Me ⁱⁿin vain ; I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. (NKJV)*

He keeps saying that it's I, and I'm the one and only and there is only one Yehovah; the Father's name is Yehovah. Let's answer another question; why is this subject important? When Pacific first started talking about this subject several years ago, it's one of the questions that came up a lot. Isn't this just making a big deal out of technical details of meanings of words? You are kind of splitting hairs here and why are you making such a big deal out of this issue and thinking it's so important? The answer I've always had to that question is, it is a first commandment issue, that's why it's so important. Go over to Exodus 20 and we'll see this. Start in verse 1.

Exodus 20:1 *And God spoke all these words, saying:*

2) *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

3) *You shall have no other gods before Me.* (NKJV)

He is saying this is Yehovah speaking and He is saying you cannot have anybody else before Me. Rule number one—because the Ten Commandments are a big deal—is you have to honor Him first above all others and have nothing else in your life above Him. That's the reason it's important, because it is a first commandment issue.

In Isaiah 42, which we read before, notice a statement here.

Isaiah 42:8 *I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.* (NKJV)

In other words, He insists on being first in our lives. It's not a negotiable issue for Him. That's why He makes it rule number one. He says you have to put Me first. Christ was very clear on this as well. In John 17, notice the prayer Christ had at the very end of His life, not long before He was going to be betrayed and crucified.

John 17:1 *Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,*

2) *as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.*

3) *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.* (NKJV)

He's holding up His Father as the only true God. Let me be clear, we are not denying at all that Christ is a God being, He is eternal and not created but clearly the Father and the Son are not co-equals. They are not totally equal with one another, Christ made it very clear that My Father is greater than I. We honor the Father first and foremost and put Him in His proper place and honor Him in our lives. It is a very important thing we should do. We also have to realize, it's important to God that we know that He is Yehovah. He makes a very big deal out of that.

Over in Exodus 16 notice a few examples of this. This is a story where Israel has already come out of Egypt and is making its way towards the Promised Land. Typical of their history, whenever something goes wrong and life isn't comfortable, it's - God and Moses brought us out here to kill us and we're all going to die. They are complaining about this because they are hungry. God comes to Moses and says I've got a short-term plan for you and a long-term plan. The short-term plan is, I'm going to feed you with quail and deal with your immediate hunger and on a long-term basis I'm going to give you Manna and six days a week you are going to get Manna and on the sixth day you get twice as much and the you can rest on the Sabbath. But he's basically telling him how He's going to feed them and take care of them. But notice a comment that He makes in the context of that in verse 11.

Exodus 16:11 *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
12) I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying,
At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning, you shall be filled with bread.
And you shall know that I am the Lord your God. (NKJV)*

Notice it was an important issue for Him for them to know that He was Yehovah and you'll see this again and again throughout the Bible. In fact, if you search on the words—the exact phrase is I am the LORD, in all caps, I am Yehovah—search on that in the Old Testament and the New King James Translation you'll find that 165 times. It's obviously a very big deal getting to know Who He is. He doesn't think of this as some generic thing that's not important for you to know—He makes a really big deal about this all throughout the Bible.

Turn over to Exodus 29 and we'll quickly look at several examples where He is emphasizing this. Here He is talking about the Tabernacle and the fact that He is going to dwell among His people. As I mentioned previously in an Old Covenant relationship that He had with Israel where God dwelt, was in a physical structure—that was His way of dwelling with the people. In the New Covenant He dwells within us. Notice the comment He makes in the context.

Exodus 29:45 *I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.
46) And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of
the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. (NKJV)*

He just keeps saying this; He wants them to know who Yehovah is. He just keeps saying this again and again throughout the Bible. It is obviously a big deal to Him. He didn't just want Israel to know that He was Yehovah, He wanted the Egyptians to know that He was Yehovah.

Exodus 7:1 *So the Lord said to Moses: See, I have made you as God to
Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.
2) You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell
Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.*

- 3) *And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.*
- 4) *But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.*
- 5) *And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.” (NKJV)*

It was important and He was pointing out all these plagues and miracles not to just show Israel that He was Yehovah, He wants the Egyptians to know that I am Yehovah; this is obviously a big deal to Him. In Exodus 14 we see this again because this is a very common theme.

Exodus 14:1 *Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:*

- 2) *Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea.*
- 3) *For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.*
- 4) *Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.” And they did so. (NKJV)*

It was a big deal to Him that not just the Israelites knew who Yehovah was, He wanted the Egyptians to know who Yehovah was. This is obviously an important issue for Him. It wasn't just an issue that Yehovah was just a generic name and mutually shared by multiple individuals and you really can't tell who it is; no, He said, I want them to know Who it is. He made big miracles and a very big deal out of this. It obviously should be important to us. What's important to God is something we should take seriously and it should be important to us if we want to obey Him and to follow Him.

Let me also clear up, as I'm discussing this, another misconception that has come up since we have emphasized and talked about this subject. It is not just us emphasizing, the Bible emphasizes this whole subject. This really only came to light, I know for me personally, December 2016 when I first started to realize this particular issue. Honestly if you listen to my sermons prior to that date, you'll hear me saying God of the Old Testament and to teach the old idea because I believed that most of my life. When this transition came about and we started talking about this particular subject—I would mention this is a first commandment issue—a number of people would stop and say, you're saying that anybody that didn't understand this before, they can't be in the Kingdom of God and you're condemning anybody else that might not understand that. Let me be clear, no I am not. You have to understand that there is a difference here between things we can do out of ignorance and things we may do willfully or out of blatant neglect. There is a huge difference.

Let me give an example—this is an example I used for many people when this subject would come up. If you are familiar at all with the Radio Church of God and the Worldwide Church of God, which I think most people affiliated with Pacific today (it's not everybody) but the majority of people have some connection with that, with those organizations and are familiar with some of the history there. I reference that because for about a forty-year period—the 1930's to 1970's—the Radio church of God and Worldwide church of God kept Pentecost on the wrong day; they kept it on Monday. I won't go through all the details of how you render Pentecost but if you read in Leviticus 23, you'll see it says when you make the fifty day count you start on the day after the Sabbath and you end on the day after the Sabbath. That means you are starting on a Sunday and ending on a Sunday in that count. I won't go into all the details but at the time, they misunderstood how to do the count and ended on a Monday. Over a forty year period like that, you can guarantee there had to be a number of people who came into the church, were baptized, lived out their whole life as a Christian and died in the church, obeying God the best they understood and never once kept Pentecost on the right day the whole time. I don't for a moment think that God holds that against them and is going to keep them out of the Kingdom because of that. Were they keeping Pentecost on the wrong day? Yes, but they weren't doing it willfully. There is a difference between obeying God to the best we understand at the time and that's a big difference between rejecting something that is clearly laid out for you versus you just didn't know any better. God isn't going to condemn people for obeying the best that they understand when they just don't know any better. God just doesn't work like that. To notice this, go to Romans 5:12.

Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as through one man, sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—*
13) *(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. (NKJV)*

It's not saying if you don't understand the law then you're not really sinning—that's not really the issue. It's not a situation that if we violate God's law whether we understand the law or not, it's still sin. If we're wrong, we're wrong, but God judges it differently. He looks at it totally differently if you just don't understand any better, He's not going to condemn you for something when you just didn't know any better when you were doing it the best you understood. This is further clarified over in Luke 12:41.

Luke 12:41 *Then Peter said to Him, Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?"*
42) *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?*
43) *Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.*
44) *Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.*
45) *But if that servant says in his heart, My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,*

46) the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47) And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48) But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.
(NKJV)

Realize what He is saying here is, when we commit a sin, it's still error or sin but God judges it differently. The servant He is condemning here is someone who knew better but out of neglect just wouldn't do what he knew he should have done. If you're making mistakes and you just don't know any better, that's few stripes—in other words God is really merciful with that and says I'm not going to condemn them for something they didn't understand or didn't do and they did it innocently out of ignorance. There is a huge difference there. When I say this is a first commandment issue, I'm not at all saying that everyone that didn't understand this or wasn't exposed to this information that they can't be in the Kingdom of God—not saying that at all. There is a difference between obeying the best we understand and falling short because we just didn't know better versus neglect or not being willing to take a stand and do what we know we should do.

Let me explain the opposite extreme. I have already used the example with Pentecost for people that just never knew that was wrong and lived out their whole Christian life obeying the best they understood and just didn't have a clue that they were making a mistake. There's a difference between taking a perspective (I've seen a number of these over the last few years) of people looking at this like, you mean I have to spend time and study for hours to figure something out and I have to work to do this? That's burdensome, I'm busy and have things to do. Taking that kind of approach—does God want you to put effort in and work to study and put a priority to getting to know Him and try to understand Him? Yes, He does. In fact, He absolutely promises numerous times in the Bible that if we are not willing to put Him first, if we are not willing to prioritize Him as number one in our life, we are not fit for the Kingdom of God. That is a very blunt, very clear statement all throughout the New Testament. Christ gives numerous parables about that. If we are not willing to diligently seek Him, if we consider it just too hard to spend some time studying His word and trying to learn about Him and learn about His will—if we are not willing to do that in our lives, that's a problem. That is considered neglect and says if we are not willing to put that effort in, that is not being worthy for the Kingdom of God.

Let me give you an example which is even more scary than this. This is a true story. I have a friend who had been with Pacific for a number of years prior to all of this and as I first started studying this subject—the roles of God and Christ—I shared information with this individual and we talked about it in detail. When I first shared some sermons and information with him about it, we followed up about a month or two afterward and I

asked him what did he think. His direct quote was, “It’s blatantly obvious that this is correct”. We had multiple conversations over multiple months about this particular subject and a recurring theme was that it was blatantly obvious, it was very clear and he understood this. Then over time, this became an unpopular thing amongst a number of his friends who became very upset about this and thought it was heresy. They were outraged over it all because they all started leaving, this individual decided to turn his back and leave us as well. As he was making his exit, he made the comment, that you guys are willing to upset and possibly lose a hundred people just to teach the truth. The end of this sentence was “to teach the truth”. What he was basically saying was, putting other people ahead of God was supposedly what you’re supposed to do and was upset and scolding about putting God in front of all these other people.

I was dumbfounded. That’s what my Bible says you’re supposed to do. You are supposed to be willing to put God in front of everything else. If you are not willing to do that, if you’re not willing to, as the Bible tells us, to give up family, friends, your job, your life. if you’re not willing to do that, then you are not fit for the Kingdom of God. To take that kind of approach is downright frightening. So, when I say that this is a first commandment issue, understand I think it should have that kind of priority so that we put God the Father first. But I’m not condemning people who just didn’t know any better, weren’t exposed to this as it wasn’t known in their time. Of course, God is not going to condemn them for that. As He said Himself, those that make mistakes when they just don’t know any better, they are getting a few stripes—in other words it’s still wrong but He’s not going to condemn them for something that they just didn’t know. I just wanted to make that clear.

As we talked about in this sermon, God wants us to worship Him in spirit and in truth and to get to know Him. Yes, we want to understand Who He is and get to know Him. But we also need to realize that the most important thing in knowing Him is always how we behave and how well we obey Him. In 1 John 2 we are going to see, that regardless of knowledge, our behavior and how well we obey is always, every day of the week, the most important thing.

1 John 2:3 *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.*

4) *He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

5) *But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*

6) *He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*
(NKJV)

In other words, knowing God and having a good relationship with Him, it always has to go further than intellectual knowledge. Just saying you have all this knowledge and I understand this stuff—knowledge is good, it’s essential—but if we don’t put it into practice in how we live our lives and be willing to obey Him, honoring Him in how we interact with other people and showing that love in us, that is always, always the most

important issue and the most important criteria in how we act. 1 John 4:7 further emphasizes this.

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (NKJV)*

This is intimately connected with knowing God.

8) *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

9) *In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*

10) *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

11) *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (NKJV)*

As I mentioned, it has to go beyond intellectual knowledge. We should strive and work and study to know God, because knowledge is essential, but to fulfill that knowledge and to apply that knowledge, we should be willing to diligently study. It always has to go deeper than that. It can't just be a head full of knowledge or as I like to joke sometimes, people take the attitude of "me and God, we're great, I love Him, it's just all these idiots that I can't tolerate". In other words, you treat everybody else horribly but you think you are close to God. It doesn't work like that; we have to show God's love and His mind in how we treat and interact with others. We also have to realize that doing this also directly correlates with our understanding. The Bible tells us that it is those who put it into practice in their daily lives who will have a good understanding of His word and how it works. For a final scripture, turn over to Psalms 111:10.

Psalms 111:10 *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. (NKJV)*

To give an easy illustration of how this principle works, I'm sure a lot of you, especially if you are first generation Christian have probably experienced this. When someone new comes into the church they are just beginning to understand the truth. Initially they don't understand what the Holy days really picture, and what their real meaning is. At first, they kind of understand that these days still apply and the Bible seems to say that they should be keeping them. Normally they grasp that first and then after they actually start taking action and realize the Bible says I'm supposed to keep these, then they do it. Then they start keeping them. Then normally the light starts coming on and the days start making sense. They start filling in the pieces and connecting the dots and understanding what they're about. As they keep them that understanding grows. I've also seen people, through neglect in their relationship to God and turning away from it, they start to not diligently keep these days or they insert their own ways of keeping them, rejecting what God says about His Holy Days. They start to make up their own story if they start pulling away from them in the other direction. The process works in reverse. Instead of growing and understanding more and more, their understanding

starts waning and going in the other direction. There's always this correlation between how well we obey and put into action what we understand of the truth. The more we conform ourselves to God and put Him first and diligently obey, the more He will bless us with the understanding of His word.

As we can see here, when Christ told the woman at the well that God the Father seeks those people to worship Him in spirit and in truth, He was talking about conversion through the Holy Spirit. Not only having that spirit but using it in our daily lives. Showing the fruits of the spirit in our behavior and how we place Him first and diligently studying His word. We are never going to get to a point in this life where we will understand everything there is to know. Even if we have all the doctrines down in finer detail and there's nothing more to learn—we are always going to have a need to grow in grace and knowledge. There is always going to be more depth that we can reach because in this life we are just never going to be perfect and have it all filled out. We always have to be striving to get to that and being willing to put in the effort to place God the Father and His Son first in our lives above everything else. Even if that means giving up our lives, our friends, our family, our job—whatever it is—the first commandment is we have to place Him first in our lives. As we go forward from this Sabbath, let's make sure we are making a diligent effort to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.