

Wholehearted Worship

Session 2: Narrow Worship

The Kiss of the Hand (Proskyneo)

Notes

Outline of Session

1. The Dangers of Proskyneo
2. Its necessity
3. The guardrails to it
4. Some of its forms

The Danger: Form without Lordship

Proskyneo, intentional tokens of reverence, can be done without Lordship, making it an empty form of worship.

E.g. The rich young ruler from session 1 ran up to Jesus and fell at his feet (the bible doesn't use the word Proskyneo, but the form is similar)

Mark 5:1-6

¹ They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.

² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.

When it becomes too difficult for us as professing believers to smash the idols in our lives, we sometimes take the easy way out, camouflaging ourselves by demonstrating the form of worship in hopes that we look like the others.

Worse still, we even start to believe it ourselves, that we can have the form without the conviction, and it is alright.

We as a people of God should not be focused on the form without the right heart posture.

Isaiah 29:13

This people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Amos 5:21-23

²¹ “I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. ²² Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. ²³ Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.

The Other Extreme: Heart Without Expression

How much do you agree with this statement:

“As long as your heart’s posture is right with God, your arms can be folded, in your pockets, you don’t even have to be singing and that is perfectly alright.”

Isn’t the death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross way more victorious and way more relevant to our own lives?

Stoic worship to an almighty, awesome God is cognitively dissonant.

Why Proskyneo is Necessary

Some questions to think about:

- If even the demons in Mark 5 were compelled to Proskyneo the Lord, shouldn’t we be even more extravagant with our worship having experienced his love, grace, and mercy?
- If we fully grasped the fact that we were bound for hell, but Jesus gave his life as ransom for your life, for mine, shouldn’t we have a burning and bursting joy and worship that flows out?

When we allow the Lord to sit on the throne of our hearts, when we continually sensitise ourselves to what Christ has done on the cross for your sins and mine, Proskyneo will necessarily follow. When the Lord is the ultimate king over our lives, we would be compelled to express our worship before him.

Biblical Examples of Extravagant Worship

King David when the Ark of the Lord was brought back to Israel

2 Samuel 6:16, 20-22

16 As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.

...

20 When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

21 David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord's people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord. 22 I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

What are some of your thoughts about David's undignified response?

Mary of Bethany breaking the alabaster jar of perfume

John 12:3-8

3 Then Mary took about a pint[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.”

⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷ “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

What are some of your thoughts about Mary’s extravagant worship?

The Guardrails to Proskyneo

John 4:19-24

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.

²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ “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.”

If we picture this as the guardrails that we see in a bowling alley, what are the two guardrails to Proskyneo?

1. Worship in _____

2. Worship in _____

Activity Time!

Within your assigned groups, you will look only at one point (either
 worshipping in spirit or in truth)

Fill in the following:

Examples:

-

Dangers:

-

Practical Applications:

Worshiping in Spirit

In the Old Testament, God was always the initiator. A meeting between God and humans only happened because He initiated to meet with them.

Jesus is speaking forward to the time when the Holy Spirit would come to Tabernacle with us.

Proskyneo should be able to happen anywhere, any time because of that access that we have. This also means we can no longer put on our “Sunday best worship self”! Regardless of location or occasion, there should be coherence in our worship.

Worshiping in Truth

- 1. We must know the God that we worship.
(What does this mean?)
- 2. We must worship the God that we know.
(What does this mean?)

Part of our aim should be to be bible experts and amateur theologians.

The Biblical Forms of Expression

How do we express our worship unto the Lord? What forms of worship have stemmed from culture and tradition and what is biblical?

YADAH

Giving thanks, praise, to throw, shoot or cast, some think of this as worship with extended hands

Genesis 29:35

Where Leah conceived again and bore a son, and she said,
Now will I praise (yadah) the Lord: therefore she called his
name Judah...

Psalm 35:18

I will give you thanks (yadah) in the great congregation: I will
praise thee among much people.

BARAK

To kneel, to bless, to praise

Psalm 103:1

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his
holy name.

What does the posture of kneeling mean to you?

*“While people generally lie with their words, Christians are
notorious for lying in their singing.”*

If we allow a dissonance between the words we sing and the
physical postures we adopt, maybe at some point our hearts stop
believing the words we sing.

Don't worry about people looking at you. Often, everyone else is
focused on themselves and their walk with God.

TEHILLAH

Praise, song or hymn of praise

Psalm 22:3

But you are holy, O you inhabit the praises (tehillah) of Israel.

Psalm 40:3

He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise (tehillah) to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise (tehillah);
give thanks to him and praise his name.

From Expression to Service

Proskyneo — these intentional, visible expressions of reverence — were never meant to be theatrical displays or emotional accessories to a church service. At its core, these expressions are simply the embodied response of a heart that has bowed.

When someone grasps the magnitude of grace — that they were once alienated and are now adopted, once condemned and now justified — worship cannot remain abstract. Recognition gives birth to reverence. Seeing His worth stirs affection. And affection, when genuine, longs for expression.

as we emphasise expression, we must remember that worship does not end when the music fades. In fact, if proskyneo is the overflow of a surrendered heart, then it inevitably spills into something more sustained and more costly. The hands we lift in reverence must also become the hands that serve. The knees that bow in adoration must also bend in humility toward others. The songs we sing must eventually take shape in obedience.

Reflection Questions

- Which danger am I more prone to: form without lordship, or heart without expression?
- Is there a disconnect between the truths I sing and the posture I bring before God?
- What am I afraid of losing if I become more visibly reverent and wholehearted before the Lord?
- If Jesus is truly on the throne of my heart, what visible expression of worship or obedience should begin to flow from that?
- How can the reverence I show in worship gatherings spill over into a life of service, humility, and obedience this week?