

True Worship  
Mark 11:15-17  
Charlie Brackett

In the temple, Jesus found merchants changing money and selling items of sacrifice to those who came to worship. He did not allow it to continue. Overturning the money changers' tables and driving out those who sold doves, He said in the hearing of all, "Is it not written, 'My house is a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

I see a lesson here for churches today in how they use the Lord's house. But, first, some differences must be noted about the Lord's house for worship then and now. The Jerusalem temple was a special place of worship. It was the only one of its kind for all the nation of God's people. When Jesus said it was a house of prayer for all nations, He quoted from Isaiah 56:7, a prophecy pointing to the days when not only Jews, but all nations would be found in God's house joining hands together in worship of the one true God. The temple Jesus purged was a holy place. God dwelt there. Only there could one find the ark of the covenant. Only there the high priest officiated. Only there could certain sacrifices be made.

By contrast, our worship today is not bound to a certain place. When Christ was raised from the dead, He liberated us from the restrictions of Moses' law. On one occasion, recorded for us in John 4:20-24, a Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "...you say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus answered, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.... 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. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

We, of course, are blessed and privileged to live when worship can be offered anywhere, anytime, as long as it is offered in spirit and truth. Many today abuse this privilege by failing in one or the other - spirit or truth. Worship in spirit is worship from the heart. Insincere or distracted worship is not worship in spirit. Worship in truth is worship in keeping with God's instructions. One cannot worship according to his own pleasure and expect to be pleasing to God. Worship of God must be God directed. It must please Him to be true worship.

Some say it makes no difference how you worship as long as you are sincere. Consequently, people are worshipping God today in hundreds of different ways. How can God accept such worship let alone be pleased by it? Doesn't it cause you to wonder? It's not like God left us to fumble at worship. He told us in His word, the New Testament, what He wants. Let's give care to our worship, that it will always be in spirit and in truth.