

Title: Worshipping and Serving God

Text: Leviticus 10: 1-20

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Believers “as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 2: 5)

Together, believers make up the house and church of the living God. When we assemble to worship we are the house of the living God.

It is an amazing reality that wherever God’s people assemble together for public worship, God has promised to meet with us there.

So how should we conduct ourselves in the presence of the living God?

Psalm 89: 7: God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

The saints loved the apostle Paul for Christ’s sake, for the gospel he preached. Likewise, we love our elders, who God has used to minister the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ unto us.

As God the Holy Spirit instructs believers to do, they rendered to Paul “honor, to whom honor was due” always obeying whenever Paul was present. (Rom 13: 7)

Application: I am always grateful to behold your order, when we have a visiting preacher. You put forth your best, in every way. I am always so thankful for you. I thank God for you.

But the apostle Paul reminded the saints that God was present with them, even when Paul was absent. He reminded them God is worthy of all reverence and all honor all the time. Therefore, he told the Philippians,

Philippians 2: 12: Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Work out all your daily affairs: in your personal worship of God, as well as amongst one another when you gather together as the house of God. Do so with fear and trembling because God is always present working in you—in you individually, as well as in you as his body, assembled together, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Application: Beloved, knowing that we are in the presence of Almighty God should cause us to fear and tremble with reverence.

How we conduct these services— singing, scripture reading, prayers, and preaching, as well as the manner in which we conduct ourselves—our attendance, our attitude, our attention, our attire, all convey the fear—reverence—that is truly in our hearts toward the true and living God. When you love and adore and seek to honor someone it affects everything about you.

The honor and reverence due to God is the chief reason Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles (1st, 2nd Timothy and Titus) to teach us how we are to conduct ourselves in the house of God. Paul said,

1 Timothy 3:15: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Proposition: Knowing we are the house and church of the living God, knowing we are in the presence of God and knowing the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, we must never gather together here with the lightness that we would in our own homes but greatly fearing and esteeming God, with the highest reverence.

I want to show you a few things that are necessary in the worship of God. Our text is Leviticus 10. We will take it a paragraph at a time.

I. IN ORDER TO TRULY WORSHIP GOD WE MUST DO SO WITH THE SACRIFICE GOD REQUIRES—Leviticus 10: 1: And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

God gave Nadab and Abihu great privilege among the children of Israel. They were sons of Israel's high priest, Aaron. These two were the nephews of Israel's prophet and ruler, Moses. The day before this, they had finished ceremonially being consecrated to the priesthood by God's express command.

Application: Believer, you are the child of Christ our Prophet, Priest and King and you are made kings and priest unto God by what Christ has done. But never be lifted up and presumptuous by the privileges God has given us here.

On this day, (I believe it was the same day because verse 1 begins with conjunction) the children of Israel were gathered for the first offering of sacrifices to God—this was their solemn time of worship—like we are doing now. The LORD said, **“to day the LORD will appear unto you.”** (Lev 9: 4)

Up to this point, Nadab and Abihu had been obeying Moses, as Moses gave them the word of the LORD. They had been assisting Aaron as they were commanded

After offering the sin offering and peace offerings as God commanded,

Leviticus 9: 23: And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. 24: And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat:

As promised, God made known his presence in their midst—in like manner, Paul said that God is in our midst when we gather to worship. When the fire of the LORD consumed the burnt offering and the fat, it pictured God accepting his people in Christ who “hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.”

Leviticus 9: 24:...which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

All the people rejoiced with joy unspeakable because God accepted their sacrifice.

Application: The Spirit of God produces this joy in our hearts through the gospel when he makes us know that God receives us through faith in his Son, Christ Jesus. That is when he make us truly worship. They fell down on their faces with great reverence and humility—with fear and trembling—because the presence of God was in their midst. We fall down in our hearts with fear and trembling when Christ is formed within us in Spirit and in truth. We he makes himself known in our hearts continually. That is how we are kept. How the word is applied by Christ.

Instead of rejoicing in Christ, instead of bowing before God, in faith and humility and reverence to God, Nadab and Abihu.

Leviticus 10: 1: And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.”

They offered a sacrifice of their own choosing—they offered strange [unholy, profane, polluted] fire before the LORD. God commanded no other fire and no other incense be used but that which God gave from heaven and set apart as holy. Instead, they took a sacrifice of their own choosing.

Also, they offered it as they willed to do—v1: **“which he commanded them not.”** They came at the wrong time and the wrong place (Leviticus 16: 1-2; 11-13). Nadab and Abihu were supposed to wait on Moses or Aaron to tell them when their services were needed, according to God’s command. Yet, together they by-passed God’s Prophet and God’s High Priest—and did that **which God commanded them not.**

Why was God so offended by this? They blatantly profaned the holy worship of God by mixing their will and their works. By-passing Aaron the high priest was the same as approaching God apart from Christ our High Priest, who offers the sweet incense of intercession to God in the holiest of all on behalf of his people; by-passing Moses the prophet and ruler, was the same as refusing to submit to Christ, and walking by faith which works by love—but turning back to flesh, to law. Doing so they exalted themselves and cast contempt upon God and his ordained order of worship. And for that, God killed them on the spot! v2: **“there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”**

Be sure you get the point: The only way to worship God is in spirit and in truth, bowing in humility of heart before God, through faith in the one sacrifice God has provided.

John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Any attempt to come to God any other way than through faith in Christ is to exalt your will over God’s will, your wisdom over Christ the Wisdom of God, to mix your marred works with Christ’s finished, perfect work—it is strange fire to God and God is a consuming fire—you will die! Religious exercises with no Holy Spirit-wrought, heart affection and reverence for Christ—is strange fire to God; zeal not according to knowledge, superstitious and hypocritical—is strange fire to God; strange doctrines that are not according to the scriptures—is strange fire to God; every invention of men in the worship of God—is strange fire to God. If God doesn’t command it, it is forbidden!

Nadab and Abihu were probably proud of their new positions, privileges, excited about the true miracle God wrought in their midst—but none of that produces faith. Pride of grace only profanes the holy worship of God!

It was presumption without faith and fear so God consumed them in the fire of his wrath and judgment. Christ must have the Preeminence in our hearts—he must increase; we must decrease! Bow and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for there is no other way to worship God! Christ is the only sacrifice God accepts.

II. IN GOD’S HOUSE, AND AT ALL TIMES, WE MUST SANCTIFY AND GLORIFY THE LORD—
Leviticus 10: 3: Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

God says that those that come near God must sanctify God—they must declare God holy—before all the people. When we worship God we must do so in a manner that manifests before all that God his holy and must be worshipped in a way that puts him above everything and everyone and gives him all the glory.

Brethren, by the electing grace of God our Father by the finished work of Christ Jesus our Redeemer by sanctification of God the Holy Spirit in our hearts, God has made us holy. And we have liberty to draw near to holy God our Father. We are welcome in Christ our new and living Way!

Illustration: According to God's law, if a man had even a blemish he could not be God's priest and draw near to God. He had to be perfectly holy!

Brethren, by Christ our Perfect and Holy High Priest we have been made priests unto God—a royal priesthood—a kingly priesthood. That means before God, in Christ, by his creating us anew, God does not see one blemish in us.

Colossians 1: 21: [And you hath] he reconciled 22: In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled...

Application: Therefore, brethren, having this greatest of all blessings freely given us, before all the people—at all times—our great God and Savior deserves to be—must be—obeyed and served by us as he is—holy, holy, holy! We can only do so by believing on Christ our Sanctification. When we gather to worship—in attendance, attitude, attention and attire—give God your very best! He will take nothing less! Doing so show all those around you that this is not just any ole ordinary time—you are drawing near to the presence of the thrice holy God!

Illustration: Why do we stand?

And God says that those who draw near to God must glorify God before all the people. You who are truly called of God—I know you desire in your heart more than anything else—for our God to be glorified! Well, rejoice because by the work of Christ Jesus on our behalf we have glorified God to the highest! Our Head and Representative glorified God by magnifying and making honorable his law on our behalf declaring God just and Justifying us so that none can lay anything to our charge. "He that glories let him glory in the Lord." And that means by his own precious blood "ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6: 20) God says do so before all the people.

Ecclesiastes 5: 1: Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. 2: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Here is our example: v3: "And Aaron held his peace."

Art, his two oldest sons lay dead at his feet. Dead by the hand of God—they refused to sanctify and glorify the LORD, so God sanctified and glorified himself before all the people in judgment upon them because God is a holy, righteous, and jealous God.

Can you imagine how Aaron's heart must have been breaking for his sons! Yet, Aaron knew there was something more important than his heart or his sons—declaring God holy and glorifying God before all the people—so "Aaron held his peace." His silence said, "God has done that which is right!"

Application: Oh, when we draw near to God don't offer the sacrifice of fools—believe on Christ and let our words be few. Men, when you read scripture—weigh your words—and when you do utter a word from this pulpit make certain it is Christ, Christ, Christ—for he IS the very glory of God.

If the passage is dealing with the believers walk—show how God came down because man could not do it to satisfy God. Declare Christ's glory in fulfilling it—declare Christ's glory in being the righteousness of God for his people for that very command. If God gives a spiritual understanding, the believer will be comforted that Christ alone has made them the righteousness of God thereby; their flesh will be mortified beholding how far short they come; and they will be given a desire in the inward man to heed the instruction constrained only by the love of Christ for them—our only motive.

III. TWORSHIPPING AND SERVING GOD REQUIRES STEADFASTNESS IN STANDING WITH GOD—Leviticus 10: 4 And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and

said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. 5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. 6 And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. 7 And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.

God required Aaron not to mourn for his dead sons, and required his remaining two sons not to mourn for their dead brothers, nor could they leave the house of the LORD to attend their funeral—**v7: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you.**

The people could mourn but not Aaron and the remaining two sons: they represented the people before God and God before the people. If they mourned for the two rebels they would be saying God was unjust and the two rebels did not deserve to be consumed—doing so, they would prove themselves rebels, die and the wrath of God would come upon the people. But by standing steadfast with God—they declared God holy and glorified God before the people.

Application: Brethren, when our sons and daughters rebel against God, when loved ones depart from us like ravens, drunk with Babylon's free will—it hurts! But as priests of God we must stand steadfast with God. We cannot take the offense out of the cross! We cannot leave God and his house to run mourning after those who will not bow to God. For the glory of God and our Redeemer, for the good of men's souls—we must stand with God who is their only hope.

Jeremiah 15: 19:...if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.

The glory of God and the well-being of our fellow brethren is more important than our broken hearts!

Romans 3:3: For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4: God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

But we see something else too—the blessings of God to our souls always outnumber the heartaches—**v7: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you.**

After all of the disgrace brought upon Aaron and his family by Nadab and Abihu—God assured Aaron and his remaining sons—nothing changed with their God—v12: **And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy: 13: And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for so I am commanded.**

We saw it Thursday night—these offerings pictured Christ our Inheritance given to his chosen child freely by God. Christ commanded Moses to assure Aaron and his remaining sons, of his immutable, unchanging, unalterable love for his people in Christ. He said **take the meat offering**—all this trouble must have made you weak, go take of Christ and nourish your souls! **Without leaven**—“by grace ye are saved through faith, not of works.” Eat it **beside the Altar**—“we have an Altar [Christ Jesus] whereof they have no right to eat” that come to God with strange fire. He is **most Holy** and you have boldness to freely partake of him **in the holy place** by a new living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is his flesh. **It is thy due and thy sons due**—by the free and sovereign grace of God, by the finished work of Christ. Moses said, **“for so I am commanded”**, by Christ. **Verse 7: And they did according to the word of Moses.**

Application: We must persevere steadfast in the faith but it is by the preserving, anointing oil, of God's Holy Spirit that we do so! The blessings of Redeemer are always greater than the heartaches.

IV. REMEMBER IN EVERY FIERY TRIAL GOD IS TEACHING YOU AND I WHO BELIEVE ON HIM. SO HERE GOD TEACHES US THAT IF WE WOULD WORSHIP AND SERVE GOD WE MUST WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT NOT AFTER THE FLESH.—Leviticus 10: 8: And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, 9: Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations:

God prohibited his priest from literal wine and strong drink when serving him in the tabernacle. Christ's preachers are not to be given to wine or strong drink. None should drink wine or strong drink then come to God's house attempting to worship God—that is irreverent. But here is the other side to that: if we would worship and serve God we must not “be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; **but be filled with the Spirit;**” (Eph 5: 18)

We must not be ruled by the flesh, by excitement and emotions. We must walk after the Spirit so that we are able to use spiritual discernment—**V10: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;**

- In our message
- In our methods
- In our manners
- In our music

Be filled with the Spirit so that we might discern between:

- Holy Fire and Strange Fire
- The pure wine of the gospel and the wine of Babylon's fornications—

The harlot is dressed ever so subtle in our day—so much so that “if it were possible she would deceive the very elect.” You must be on guard.

Again, Aaron shows us an example of this: walking by faith in the Spirit and not by the letter of the law. By law, Aaron was to eat the sacrifice but he did not.

Leviticus 10: 19: And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and *if* I had eaten the sin offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD? 20: And when Moses heard *that*, he was content.

Being circumcised in heart, Aaron worshipped God in Spirit and in truth, trusted Christ alone, and placed no confidence in the flesh. He walked by faith in love for Christ, constrained by Christ's love for him, with a desire to do that which honor Christ. Aaron looked beyond the typical sin-offering to the true Sin-offering, and Moses (the law and all its demands) was content with Aaron in Christ. Though the letter of the law (which kills) was broken, the spirit of the law (which is life) was fulfilled. This is why we do not want to be drunk our vain wisdom, will or works as were Nadab and Abihu—that we might discern between law and love. Here is another reason.

Leviticus 10: 11: And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

Except, for us now, we are learning the gospel not by the hand of Moses the Law but by Christ Jesus our Lord—the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

The point is: all eyes must be on Christ! A good rule of thumb: if anything about me is turning other's attention from Christ to me or if anything I am doing is giving me glory rather than Christ, it is not faith, it is not reverence to God and it is not pleasing to God.

Application: Have you seen here how jealous God is of Christ and of his glory in his house? If we would worship and serve God:

- 1) We must come with God's sacrifice—Christ Jesus
- 2) We must declare God's holiness and glorify God before all the people—which means we reverence God above ourselves, our rathers.
- 3) We must continue steadfast with Christ, even when our dearest loved ones rebel.
- 4) We must walk after the Spirit rather than be drunk with the wisdom and passions of our flesh.

Psalm 89: 7: God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

1 Thessalonians 5:21: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22: Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23: And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24: Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Amen!