

The Right Way to Worship

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[0 : 0 0] let's pray father thanks so much for your word the bible and thank you that although this word was written almost well almost three and a half thousand years ago it still has relevant relevance for us today and so far we do pray that you would help us to understand your word but more than that to apply it to our lives for we ask it in jesus name amen um well i wonder if someone asked you what is worship what would you say and if someone said how do you worship what would you say some kids were asked what they thought meant what uh meant to worship god and angie age six said it's being quiet in church otherwise you'll get in trouble from the people standing by the door they are the hushes everyone has different ideas of worship and sometimes people worship in different ways as well we have some good friends who like when they sing to raise hands and this is what they call it her name is paula and she says i like to do washing the windows um whereas i'm more of a elbow flapper kind of thing at both the right of course but is there a wrong way to worship is there a right way and is there a wrong way well as we continue our series in deuteronomy today god tells israel that there is a right and wrong way to worship him and as we look through the passage we'll also get an idea of what worship is but first just a bit of context uh chapter 12 uh moises is now moving from some general laws to some specific laws and so on the next slide is the structure of deuteronomy uh no not that slide um in fact i think i missed that in the intro uh for many people uh worship is just singing and uh so this was a slide yeah go to that picture go on and so someone put a photo of their kid worshiping god with their hair dryer um anyway go back to the structure uh so here's the structure of deuteronomy uh so you might remember it's makes basically three sermons by moises to israel just before they go to the promised land and so chapters one to four is really lessons from their history from their parents history firstly then from their own recent history and chapters five to twenty eight which is the big sermon uh contains all the laws and that they and encouragements to obey those laws so five to eleven are the general laws like the ten commandments the loving god with all your heart uh fearing him like we heard last week and so on but as we hit chapter 12 moises now gives more specific laws they are to obey like how to worship chapter 12 what to do with false prophets chapter 13 what foods to eat and not eat chapter 14 and so on and so when we come to verse one in your bibles that's what it's talking about he says these are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the lord the god of your ancestors has given you to possess as long as you live in the land and so these laws and decrees that he's talking about are the specific ones he's about to give in the following chapters but notice there in verse one there's a subtle reminder about why they are to obey these laws verse one reminds them that god has given them the land to possess and as we heard last week god is not giving them this land because they are righteous and deserve it as we heard last week god says three times they are not righteous and yet god still graciously saves them from egypt and has given them this land why well because as we heard in chapter 7 he loves them he chose them he made a covenant with them as

naomi was saying before and so he graciously gives to them even though they don't deserve it that's that's what grace is god's generosity which we don't deserve and so their obedience to these laws is really a right response a thankful response to god's love and grace to god saving them and giving them this land even though they don't deserve it and it is the same with us isn't it i mean none of us have always pleased god by the way we think or speak or act instead we continue to sin so we don't deserve to be given life eternal in heaven and yet god loves us and graciously gave his only son jesus to die for us to take the punishment for our sins and so we who believe can simply be given new spiritual life now with the guarantee of new physical life later in our promised land heaven and in response to god's love and grace we too are to obey him in thankfulness well so too israel their obedience was their way of saying thank you to god it was also their way of enjoying all that god is giving them and this obedience included a right way to worship him so that's the context we're at point one in your outlines and verse two in your bibles so he says destroy completely all the places on the high mountains on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods or break down their altars smash their sacred stones and burn the asherah poles in the fire cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places you must not worship the lord your god in their way so here we already see that we start to get an answer to what worship is um that's a bit hard to tell in our english bibles uh but if you have a look in verse two where at the end of verse two where it says the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods it is literally serve their gods and in verse four it says you must not worship the lord it's literally you must not act towards the lord and so worship is a pretty broad category it's about serving god it's about the way we act towards god uh whether it's singing or living or speaking or acting it's much bigger than that and the israelites must serve and act towards god in a way different to the nations he says and this is really the big idea of the chapter because it's what moose starts with and ends with and so have a look at the end of the chapter in verse 29 have a look there in verse 29 the lord your god will cut off before you the nations you're about to invade and dispossess but when you have driven them out and settled in their land and after they have been destroyed before you be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods saying how do the nations serve or worship their gods we will do the same you must not worship the lord your god in their way see same as verse 4 because in worshiping their gods they do all kinds of detestable things that the lord hates they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods and see so see that you do all that i command you and do not add it to it or take away from it you see the big idea that he starts and ends the chapter with you must not worship the lord your god in their way in the nation's way why well we've just seen one reason at the end of the chapter haven't we because the way the nations worship their gods involves all kinds of evil and detestable practices things like sacrificing their own children now usually at this point i'd make a silly comment

about my own kids behavior making me feel like i could sacrifice them from time to time but really this practice is so evil that i don't even want to joke about it but that's what their worship included and what's more their worship also included multiple gods so back in verse 2 you notice that moises talks about all the places plural on the mountains the high places and every spreading tree it seems there were lots of statues of different gods in lots of places in places on the mountains high up because presumably they thought it was closer to their god and under every spreading tree because the spreading trees were a sign of fertility and that was quite big in the canaanite religion but their worship included multiple gods yet what was the first commandment god gave israel you shall have no other gods but me now what's more their worship included statues or images of gods things like asherah poles which were just big poles of carvings or idols and statues and the like but what was the second commandment god gave israel do not make any graven or carved image why well because invariably people end up worshiping the statue rather than god but more than that it's because god relates to us not by images but by his word and so israel was to destroy all these images of other gods these high places these statues and practices so that verse 3 the name of these so-called gods might be wiped out you see the lord was to be israel's one and only god so on the flip side then right worship means having only one god it means serving god above all others it means acting towards god treating him as god in our lives as our top priority as our only god and to help israel remember that they have only one god moises continues by saying the right way to worship is in one place have a look at verse 5 he says but you are to seek the place the lord your god will choose from among all your tribes and to put his name there for his dwelling to that place you must go there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices your tithes and special gifts what you have vowed to give and your free will offerings and the firstborn of your herds and flocks there in the presence of the lord your god you and your family shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to because the lord your god has blessed you here we come to the right way to worship god and notice a few things about this way first god chooses the place not them god is the one who sets the agenda why well because he's the one who saved them and gave them the land and more than that he is god that's what it means to be god to be the top honcho the one that sets the agenda i mean if they told god where and how they'd worship him then they would be acting like god wouldn't they in fact i was recently told by one of my kids how i should parent them which included doing more of what they said more often but it's a bit back to front isn't it no the parents are supposed to set the agenda so also god god must choose but secondly notice the emphasis on the place that god chooses in contrast to lots of high places for lots of gods and lots of names there was to be one place for one god

and one name this place started off as ebel and then it moved to a place called shiloh but it ended up at jerusalem where the temple was built and so i think on the next slide is a picture of jerusalem with the temple it's a bit of a model but you can see that the temple dominates the city can't you and that's because it was the place that you went to worship god so three times a year every able body jew would travel to jerusalem to bring their sacrifices to the temple and worship god there and that's the third thing to notice that their worship of god involved sacrifices there were different sorts of sacrifices some were for sin some were tithes and offerings of thanks some were burnt up completely but some only had the blood taken away as a symbol of atonement for sins they could eat the rest of the meat with their families but the point is their worship included sacrifices to god giving back to god for all that he had given them and fourthly it also involved verse 7 gathering together and rejoicing did you notice that rejoicing with god in his presence but with one another by having one place it helped facilitate this gathering together it not only reminded israel that they were to worship one god in this one place but it also reminded them that they were one people of god it was a reminder that god was in the business of gathering people together in fellowship with him and each other and so in the bible scattering people is always a sign of judgment so think of the tower of babel where he scattered everyone and confused their languages or the exile where he scattered israel to the other nations but gathering was a sign of salvation and so for the time of the garden of eden where there was a gathering between adam eve and god and in judgment they were scattered out but from the time of the garden of eden where there was a gathering to god gathering people from every language in christ and to the heavenly jerusalem where there'll be people from every nation gathered together this is the business of god and so when they came to his presence they were to gather together to remember their salvation from egypt and to rejoice with one another for all god's blessings so it was meant to be like a big summer barbecue with the extended family without the tension that sometimes comes from those particular gatherings and this emphasis on gathering together with god and one another continues in the next section which repeats the pattern of don't worship this way but do worship that way so point to verse 8 he says you are not to do as we do here today everyone doing as they see fit since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the land the lord your god is giving you notice verse 2 don't worship like the nations and here in verse 8 don't worship like you're currently doing where everyone does their own thing rather when he gets the land worship like this verse 10 but you will cross the jordan and settle in the land the lord your god is giving you as an inheritance and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety then to the place the lord your god will choose as a dwelling for his name there you are to bring everything i command you your burnt offerings and sacrifices your tithes and special gifts and all the choice possessions that you have vowed to the lord and there rejoice again before the lord your god you your sons and daughters your male and female servants and the levites from your towns

who have no allotment of inheritance of their own and be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please like they're doing at the moment in verse 8 but rather verse 14 offer them only at the place the lord will choose in one of your tribes and there observe everything i command you see moose repeats his instructions doesn't he of how they're to worship god that he comes to the one place that god chooses and they were to bring their sacrifices for sin and their tithes and offerings of thanks to this place and they are to gather together in fellowship and rejoice notice here that their fellowship also means caring for those who do not have animals to sacrifice and eat like the levites the levites were not given any land to grow crops on or raise cattle on and so they had nothing to bring and barbecue but god's way of worship included providing for those who do not have and so do you see the difference between the ways of worshipping god here the nation's way was to worship multiple gods in multiple places as a multiple lot of people without unity and it included destroying your family by sacrificing your sons and daughters to get right with their gods on the other hand god's way is to worship one god as one people to offer animals as sacrifices instead to be right with god and then rejoice with your sons and daughters that you were right with god and for all his blessings one way of the nations was disunity and destruction of families the other was unity and rejoicing with families in fact as one big family of god now which way of worship would you prefer well we're going to skip over point three and we're going to come and think about what this means for our worship today because there's a number of points that you can draw out of this the question then is what is the right way for us to worship i mean do we still need to sacrifice our animals for our sins do we still need to go to the temple in jerusalem three times a year to worship god does it still involve serving god as our only god does it still involve gathering together caring for each other and rejoicing over god's blessings to us as you can see some answers are no and some answers are yes the way to work out which is to see what jesus has replaced and when we go to the new testament we see two things that jesus has replaced from this chapter we see that it's replaced the sacrifice for sin and the temple as the place of worship and so let's have a look at that last one the principle of the place it does continue into the new testament but it's just that god has chosen another place or rather a person for people to come to in order to worship god and as you know that person is jesus so i think on the next slide is some verses from john jesus writes this he's talking with some pharisees they ask for a sign and jesus says well here's the sign you destroy this temple and i will raise it in three days in other words you crucify me and i'll raise again three days time and that's what he makes clear in the next in the last sentence the temple he had spoken of was his body see jesus has replaced the temple he is the place we go to to meet with god to worship god to get right with god and just to make it clear later on john's gospel at the bottom of the slide there jesus says i am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me there are a number of implications for this i mean first if anyone wants to worship

[20 : 10] god they must come to jesus people sometimes say to me that oh look you know religions are just different ways to the same god i don't know if you've ever heard that before but they aren't god has chosen one way one place or rather one person and that is jesus so the question is have you come to jesus because you cannot be right with god you cannot worship god without jesus i received some sad news last week actually there's a guy that lives across the road from us who i know sharon from our congregation and heather reed from the morning congregation has been speaking to for some time about jesus you know being his friend his wife passed away and we thought well here's an opportunity to talk to him about jesus and then last week he passed away still resisting jesus and the saddest thing is he can't be right with god now jesus is the only way have you come to jesus and for us who have the second implication is that we can worship god everywhere indeed we ought to worship him everywhere because it's no longer about being tied to a particular place but it's about being tied to a person and we can believe in that person everywhere we go and what's more god gives us his spirit so that he is with us wherever we go that's what jesus was talking about in our second reading worship is not about a place whether it's in jerusalem for the jews or mount gerizum for the samaritan woman it's about worshipping god in spirit and truth that is by the holy spirit and through the truth of jesus who said i am the way the truth and the life it's kind of like those uh old telephones on the next slide i think i thought um i had one at home to show you but i must have thrown it out but the old television you remember these it wasn't that long ago you could only go as far as the cord let you couldn't you all right you were tied to a particular place and it was so also with israel's worship they were stuck in one place if they wanted to worship god and rejoice with each other but now we have mobile phones which are cordless and we can go anywhere and still be connected depending on reception and network coverage of course but by believing jesus we are giving god spirit who has perfect reception and network coverage this means we are always spiritually connected to christ and can worship god therefore anywhere everywhere we don't so does that mean then that we don't need to come to church well actually because we're all connected to jesus because we all come to the one person then we are actually connected to each other it's like this on the next slide so on the next slide i might i think i might have used it before i can't remember but yellow dot jesus blue dots us when we come to jesus look what happens hit next right oh do you like that but look when you come to jesus you come to each other and so we are already connected and we are meant to express our spiritual connection week by week by gathering physically you see and so we are to keep meeting together at church week by week to express physically who we are spiritually one family one body of christ one church and we also to gather together not only just to worship god but also ask after one another to care for one another and to rejoice with one another for all god's blessings to us not least of which is forgiveness of sins and hope

of heaven and can i say thank you to those who do make such an effort to get here week by week because i know for many of you it is not easy whether it's kids or health issues i am i was very impressed with someone from our congregation had foot surgery a little while ago and she was here in church up the back with her foot elevated i was very impressed bob well done i know for many of you it's not easy but it's an expression of who we are spiritually and we need to keep doing it that we might grow and care for one another and rightly rejoice with one another for all god's blessings what does that mean then that we still need to bring sacrifices when we gather together at church for sin but that's the second thing that jesus has replaced i mean we celebrated today the lord's supper he's right i know hey zach you come and preach for me okay okay he's something up here jesus has replaced the sacrifice for sin now i mean we celebrated today the lord's supper which reminded us of jesus's blood shed at the cross thanks bud and he pays for our sins i reminded us of jesus sacrifice at the cross to take the judgment for our sins that we could be safe from so on the next slide i think is the next slide is a picture of a i don't know if you remember this from last year do you remember this terrorist attack in nice in france where the truck just plowed through the crowd it killed the driver killed 86 people but what you may not remember is a man called timothy for near who on the next slide ran in front of the truck to save his pregnant wife from the truck and so the headline was nice terror attack hero husband sacrificed himself to save pregnant wife from rampaging lorry that's truck in australia but you see that's what jesus has done for us isn't it jesus died in our place he sacrificed himself and felt the full force of our judgment a big difference of course is that none of those in nice deserve to die but we deserve judgment for our sin but because jesus sacrificed himself for us then our judgment has been dealt with we who believe in jesus no longer need to fear judgment and we no longer need to bring sacrifices for sin jesus has paid it all of course just as the principle of one place continues in jesus so also the principle of sacrifice continues through jesus and so on the next slide from hebrews 13 we read this through jesus therefore let us continually offer to god a sacrifice of praise the fruit of lips that confess his name that's how we sacrifice praise him confess his name and more than that if we are to worship god everywhere if our worship is about serving god and rightly treating god as god in our lives then all of our life is actually meant to be worship to god and so as you can see at the bottom there he says therefore i urge you brothers and sisters in view of god's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to god this is your spiritual act of worship in view of god's mercy live like this constantly worship god by the way you think and speak and act this is part of worship to god and these sacrifices are out of a thankful response to god's mercy god's love in fact in a moment we're going to sing an old hymn called when i survey the cross and the last line is love so amazing love so divine it demands my life my soul my all we had to worship god with our all because of his mercy and

love for us and finally the last thing that i want to point out is that like with israel this way of worship is better than any other way you see everyone worships something the gods of this world are work money sport family the gods we worship is whatever is most important to us whatever takes top priority in our lives whatever dictates how we live and the decisions we make but worshiping the gods of this world only leads to destruction of life last week i was talking with one of our chinese ministers and they were saying that there are more and more children upper primary and teenage kids in china committing suicide it's been on the news a lot more recently apparently why well because the god in china is success and achievement and the kids are driven so much so to serve this god that the pressure is too much and they kill themselves you see the world's way of worship destroys families sons and daughters just like the canaanite way did but god's way of worship is to come to jesus who died to save you and your sons and daughters from judgment and to give you all life after death who has united us together as family to care for one another not to compete against one another who has given us every spiritual blessing and so every reason to rejoice and so god's way of worship through christ is not only the right way it's the better way you see let's pray our gracious heavenly father we thank you for this chapter which speaks to israel about the right way to worship you father we thank you for the way it points us to the one person jesus christ to whom we are to come to worship you we thank you also that it points us to the need for sacrifice for sin that jesus has also fulfilled and so in response to all that you have done we pray our heavenly father that you would help us to worship you with our singing with our speaking with our actions without all for we ask it in jesus name amen please stand